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Utilities Commission Overhaul Moving In Last Days Of Session

 [Ben Bradford](#)

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The California Public Utilities Commission oversees electric utilities, and also telecommunications and transportation--although perhaps not for much longer.

A trio of bills moving through the state Legislature would change the commission's responsibilities, after several high-profile controversies.

Commissioners' handling of the San Bruno pipeline explosion and the San Onofre nuclear plant closure have both begat criminal investigations.

On Thursday, the state Senate sent the first of those bills to Governor Jerry Brown. Democratic Senator Mark Leno authored the measure.

"The Assembly amendments remove the ban on ex parte communications, which the governor vetoed, and instead will allow those communications to continue, but with very rigorous reporting and accountability," said Leno.

Brown reached a compromise with lawmakers, after they proposed a ballot measure that would have effectively dissolved the commission.

This week, the Legislature could take up the other two bills. One would begin a process to rid the agency of its telecommunications and transportation responsibilities.

The other would create a new safety investigator position at the commission and prohibit the appointment of commissioners who recently worked for a utility.



Ben Bradford

State Government Reporter

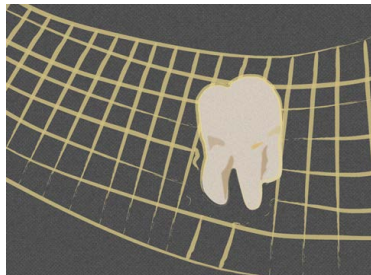
As the State Government Reporter, Ben covers California politics, policy and the interaction between the two. He previously reported on local and state politics, business, energy, and environment for WFAE in Charlotte, North Carolina. [Read Full Bio](#)

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