



Wildfire Safety Advisory Board Quarterly Meeting

February 07, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

*Hybrid Meeting
California Natural Resources
Agency, Room 2-221C
715 P Street, Sacramento, CA*

Participation Information

Using more than one participation option may create feedback.

Please begin your comment by stating your name and organization

- **Zoom:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83216091981?pwd=XnKY01INEiCxYKpyuQxLHyjDI4mRxA.MNsU7ocEhIbM8X3->
Webinar ID: 832 1609 1981 **Passcode:** 084864
- **Phone:** 404-433-6397 US Toll | 877-336-1831 US Toll-free | Conference code: 167251
- Participants are placed in "listen/watch only" mode until the public comment portion of the meeting. During the public comment portions, participants may use the raise hand function on the Zoom videoconference or may dial #2 (pound/hashtag two) to be placed in a queue when they wish to speak. The hosting team will unmute callers in order of request.
- **Email:** Written comments may be emailed to WSAB@energysafety.ca.gov.
- **Tech Issues:** For technical issues, please e-mail WSAB@energysafety.ca.gov or call Mary Ann Aguayo at 279-336-1731.



Locating Meeting Materials

Meeting Materials Available at:

<https://energysafety.ca.gov/what-we-do/wildfire-safety-advisory-board/wsab-events-and-meetings/>

Public Comments Available at:

<https://energysafety.ca.gov/what-we-do/wildfire-safety-advisory-board/public-comments-received-by-the-wildfire-safety-advisory-board/>



1 - Call to Order and Roll Call

- Jessica Block, Chair
- Chris Porter, Vice Chair
- Ralph M. Armstrong Jr.,
Board Member
- Diane Fellman, Board Member
- Tim Haines, Board Member
- John Mader, Board Member
- Alexandra Syphard,
Board Member



Pledge of Allegiance



Agenda

- 1) Call to Order and Roll Call
- 2) Public Comments
- 3) Administrative Update
- 4) Energy Safety Update
- 5) Utility Vegetation Management (UVM) Recommendations and Policy Paper
- 6) Above-Grade Distribution Systems Recommendations and Policy Paper
- 7) Updating Utility Regulations in light of Climate Change and Wildfire Risks Policy Paper
- 8) Adjournment



2 - Public Comments

Please begin your comments by stating your name and organization (if applicable).

- a. On Zoom
- b. On the Phone
- c. Via Email



3 – Administrative Update



4 - Energy Safety Update



Nicole Dunlap
Supervisor, Electric Safety Policy Division

Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety
California Natural Resources Agency



5 – Utility Vegetation Management Policy Paper

Board Discussion and Adoption

5 – UVM Policy Paper – Summary of Changes

- GO 95 Rule 35 references in recommendations changed to “new or amended regulations”
- Clarifying the responsibilities of private landowners with hazard tree mitigation on their property
- Guidance to minimize conflicts related to pesticide or herbicide application near private properties
- Energy Safety should consult with the GO 95/128 Rules Committee to evaluate the WSAB’s recommendations
- Statewide promotion of right tree, right place programs

5 – UVM Policy Paper – Summary of Changes (Continued)

- Energy Safety should examine research or studies to better understand the variation in fire risk variables in California and their implications to utility wildfire mitigation
- Energy Safety should examine the implications of the California Forest Practice Rules 916.3, 936.3 and 956.3(d) on UVM work and if some sort of revision or mediation process would be warranted
- Energy Safety should work with CAL FIRE to re-examine the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 14 Sections 1250 to 1258 and determine if there should be changes or new allowable exceptions made to PRC 4292

6 – Above-Grade Distribution Systems (AGDS) Recommendations and Policy Paper

Board
Discussion
and
Adoption



7- Above-Grade Distribution Systems Policy Paper

- Consider additional workshops or a working group
- Encourage further utility-funded pilots of AGDS systems
- Conduct studies on the safety and efficiency of different AGDS systems designs.
- Consider AGDS as a permissible system design under GO 128 or in a new GO.
- Further consideration and piloting to determine if above-grade, at grade or slightly below-grade construction would be appropriate.

7- Above-Grade Distribution Systems Policy Paper (continued)

- Consider requiring all reconstruction of distribution systems following natural or manmade damage to either be constructed as underground or AGDS systems.
- Include a clear and efficient path and regulatory process from the testing of experimental system design, construction, and technologies.
- Consider engaging with stakeholders and local governments to include AGDS.

BREAK



California Wildfire Safety
Advisory Board



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WE ARE BACK!

7 - Updating Utility Regulations in light of Climate Change and Wildfire Risks Policy Paper

Board Discussion and Vote



7 – New and Amended Utility Regulations Policy Paper – Summary of Changes

- 6-year update process to the HFTD maps to better align with WMP3-year comprehensive updates
- Additional considerations for alternative pole materials (including include grounding concerns, environmental exposure (corrosion), soil conditions, third-party attachment requirements, and proximity to the public)
- Crossarm construction – added suggestion that guidance on alternative material crossarm construction should be informed by local conditions, environmental factors, and construction limitations
- Pole height – reference to GO 95 changed to “further consideration and regulatory guidance”

7 – New and Amended Utility Regulations Policy Paper – Summary of Changes (Continued)

- Equipment rated capacities – added suggestion to align with current, applicable ANSI and IEEE standards for the equipment
- Operation of switches – reference to GO 95 changed to “new regulatory guidance or a best practice”



8 - Adjourn Board Meeting

- For more information:
- Website:
www.energysafety.ca.gov/wsab
- Email: WSAB@energysafety.ca.gov

Recommendations on Utility Management Practices:

- **Shaded Fuel Breaks, Greenbelts** – Electrical corporations should maintain shaded fuel breaks or greenbelts of irrigated, native vegetation, depending on the local conditions, in the HFTD.
- **"Right Tree Right Place" programs** – Need to be better defined and promoted to encourage strategic tree planting near powerlines by electrical corporations and property owners alike.
- **Monitoring Invasive Species** – Electrical corporations should develop programs for monitoring and managing the spread of flammable invasive species in and adjacent to their ROWs and on their property in the HFTD.
- **Alternative Circuit Configurations** – Electrical corporations should pursue alternative circuit configurations or construction methods that account for existing/changing vegetation in each area.



Powerline Tree Work

(Image courtesy of PG&E)

Regulatory Recommendations:

- **Vegetation Inspections** – A separate vegetation inspection process should be included in an updated version of GO 95 Rule 35 or GO 165. Consideration should be given to the frequency and timing of such inspections in the HFTD.
- **Minimum Approach Distances (MAD)** – GO 95 Rule 35 MADs should be updated to at least align with the US Federal Government's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) MADs for energized lines for each voltage level.
- **Pruning Limits** – GO 95 Rule 35 should provide guidance on the appropriate maximum limit for pruning of healthy branches for trees and when it is prudent instead to remove the tree.
- **Pole Brushing** – GO 95 Rule 35 should include pole brushing requirements for all responsibility areas within the State's HFTD aligned with PRC 4292.



Powerline Tree Work
(Image courtesy of PG&E)

Procedural Recommendations:

Energy Safety

- Host a follow-up scoping meeting in 2024 to discuss these recommendations, and industry best practices.
- Consider additional stakeholder input on their proposed process for alignment of best practices and develop a timeline for the implementation into the next WMPs.
- Energy Safety should commission a study to measure and quantify the benefits of UVM work in both ROW and off-ROW contexts.

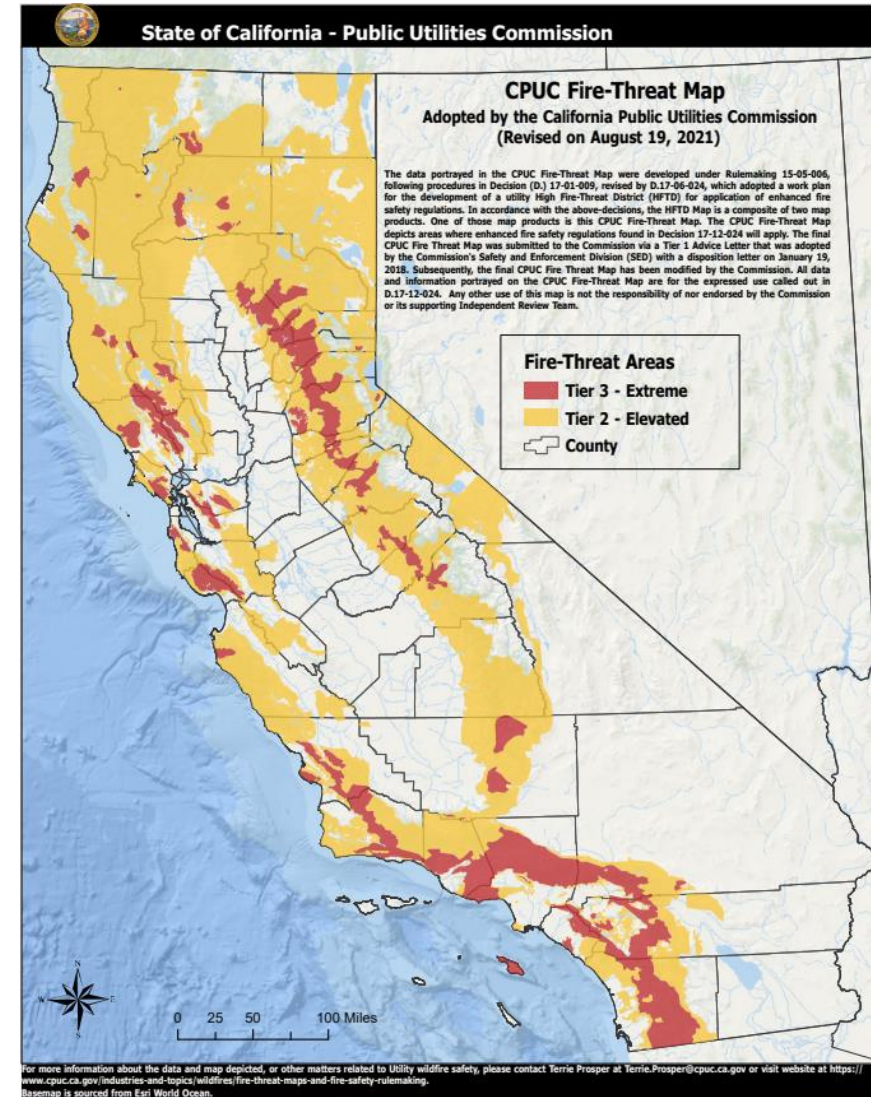
Utilities

- Test or pilot the use of native, woody herbaceous shrubs and other less-flammable native plants at the base of poles
- Maintain databases of trees and other tall plant species in their HFTD.
- The electrical corporations should collaborate with stakeholders to determine the appropriate protocols to mitigate customers refusals when vegetation work is needed to comply with UVM regulations.
- Develop partnerships with external parties for:
 - Transportation and use of woody biomass (e.g. composting, electricity generation, wood pellet production, etc.)
 - Amending local tree ordinances to prevent the planting of incompatible species near powerlines
 - Research into bark beetle mitigation measures and breeding of compatible tree species

Procedural Recommendations:

- 5-10 Year Review Process of GOs
- Continual Engagement as Part of PUC 326.a.7
- HFTD Map Updates
- Engineering Studies on Pre-GO 95 Equipment, PRC 4292 Non-Exempt Equipment

CPUC Fire Threat Map



Regulatory Recommendations – Grid Design and Construction:

- Experimental Design Rules in GO 95 and revised for GO 128
- System Hardening for Pad Mounted Equipment
- Fire, Wind-Resistant Poles
- Cross Arm Construction
- GO 95 Exempt Equipment
- Equipment Rated Capacities



Fiberglass composite pole installation

Image courtesy of SCE

Regulatory Recommendations – Inspections, Operations and Maintenance:

- More frequent Patrol, Detailed and Intrusive inspections in HFTD
- Hardware Database
- De-Energization
- Fast-Curve Settings
- Operation of Switches
- Pole/Tower “Walking”



Pole-loading Inspection (Image courtesy of SCE)

Regulatory Recommendations – Remote Sensing and Situational Awareness:

- Cameras
- Lidar
- Sensors
- Weather Stations
- Communication Networks



Weather station installation (Photo: Business Wire)