

Comments on Wildfire Safety Advisory Board Recommendations

From: David McCoard <dmccoard@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2020 4:19 PM
To: Wildfire Safety Advisory Board
Subject: Input to the Advisory Board's draft report to the CPUC's Wildfire safety Division

Honorable Board members:

I appreciate your careful analysis of the issues around Wildfire Safety. However, I see a glaring omission that I urge you to fill.

innumerable reports show that the poor condition of PG&E wires has been the main source of human-caused wildfires in California. However, the report only lightly touches on grid hardening--as only one way to reduce PSPS. This is in Recommendation #8, Criteria to Prioritize Reducing PSPS Events for Critical Infrastructure.

However, grid hardening is a critical area that needs to come front and center in the report. The cause of the 2018 Camp Fire has been laid to a worn C-clamp that allowed a conductor to slap against a transmission tower, creating sparks that ignited dry grass. There's an old saying: "For want of a spare horseshoe nail a kingdom was lost."

The Board needs to emphatically recommend to the Wildfire Safety Division that the Commission and its staff must require the regulated utilities to prioritize in their budgets and operations the upgrading of their power lines in wildfire hazard zones. A small increase in customer rates will be acceptable for this critical purpose. Otherwise, a ratepayer could be the next victim of a utility-caused wildfire. This includes:

- Replacing outdated, thin 6-gauge uninsulated wire with steel core insulated wires capable of withstanding impacts by falling vegetation.
- Installing automated sensor systems and fuses that quickly shut down limited segments of line when they sense a hazardous situation.

David McCoard