



California Public Utilities Commission
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PRESS RELEASE

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CPUC APPROVES WILDFIRE SAFETY DIVISION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UTILITY 2020 WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLANS

SAN FRANCISCO, June 11, 2020 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today ratified its Wildfire Safety Division’s Action Statements and associated Resolutions that approve with conditions electric utility wildfire mitigation plans. The approval imposes additional conditions utilities must meet to justify and explain how their wildfire mitigation initiatives increase safety and decrease the likelihood of catastrophic wildfires in 2020 and beyond.

In February 2020, utilities submitted and made public their [wildfire mitigation plans](#) for review by the CPUC’s Wildfire Safety Division. The CPUC’s [2020 Guidelines](#) for utility wildfire mitigation plans raised standards, requiring utilities to provide clear analysis and data to support their wildfire safety proposals. The Wildfire Safety Division also developed innovative risk measurement tools, including a “[Maturity Model](#),” which evaluates the utilities’ wildfire risk mitigation efforts across 10 categories and 52 specific capabilities, and helps identify utility best practices and current strengths and weaknesses. The goal of the model is to provide a clear review and evaluation of utility capabilities that is focused on elevating and improving wildfire safety performance.

The Wildfire Safety Division’s approach has enhanced the state’s ability to conduct oversight of utility wildfire risk reduction by imposing clear requirements and expecting improvement each year.

The Wildfire Safety Division has determined that utilities are generally demonstrating progress in reducing wildfire risk for communities, in addition to meeting minimum statutory requirements for wildfire mitigation plans. Most utilities demonstrate a need for improvement. The wildfire mitigation plans addressed today are from Horizon West and Trans Bay Cable, Liberty Utilities, PacifiCorp, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The



wildfire mitigation plan of Bear Valley Electric Service was held over to the CPUC's June 25, 2020 Voting Meeting.

“These plans now have a solid framework with tracking and accountability that we can build on,” said Commissioner Martha Guzman Aceves. “In future reviews we need to go deeper into the utilities’ land management practices that can provide greater forest and grassland fire prevention. Indigenous people have been managing fires wisely and effectively for thousands of years through Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and sustainably managed grazing can also reduce fuel loads. We’re going to need every tool we have to combat the fire risk posed by years of mismanagement in a warming world.”

“Today’s actions will increase accountability, reporting, and public safety,” said Commissioner Clifford Rechtschaffen. “Utilities will have to report how they are prioritizing investments to get the most risk reduction per dollar spent, and also how their wildfire mitigation plans will reduce the scope and severity of utility Public Safety Power Shut-off events.”

“Of particular concern for me, as I mentioned last year throughout this utility wildfire mitigation plan process, is whether the utilities are using certified arborists to guide their vegetation management efforts,” said Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma. “Consulting with these experts is key to ensuring that the utilities’ tree trimming practices are both environmentally responsible and effective in mitigating wildfire risk.”

In developing the Action Statements, the Wildfire Safety Division received input from the independent Wildfire Safety Advisory Board, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), public comments, and subject matter experts from across the CPUC.

Documents related to the proceeding are available at

https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5_PROCEEDING_SELECT:R1810007 and www.cpuc.ca.gov/wildfiremitigationplans.



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