



BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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Application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company for Approval of 2013-2014 Statewide Marketing, Education and Outreach Program and Budget (U39M).

Application 12-08-007
(Filed August 3, 2012)

And Related Matters.

Application 12-08-008
Application 12-08-009
Application 12-08-010

**FLEX ALERT MESSAGING COORDINATION AND OPTIMIZATION REPORT FOR
SUMMER 2013**

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Dated: **May 17, 2013**

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**FLEX ALERT MESSAGING COORDINATION AND OPTIMIZATION REPORT FOR
SUMMER 2013**

In compliance with Ordering Paragraph 17 of Decision 13-04-021, Southern California Edison Company hereby submits the Flex Alert Messaging Coordination And Optimization Report For Summer 2013, attached hereto, on behalf of itself, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, and California Independent System Operator.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment

Flex Alert Messaging Coordination And Optimization Report For Summer 2013

Flex Alert Messaging Coordination and Optimization
Report for Summer 2013

**Flex Alert Messaging Coordination and Optimization
Report for Summer 2013**

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A. Background

On May 10, 2012, the Commission adopted Decision (D.) 12-05-015, which provided guidance on the 2013-2014 energy efficiency portfolios and 2012 marketing, education, and outreach activities. In compliance with Ordering Paragraph 117 of D.12-05-015, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Edison Company (SCE), San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E), and Southern California Gas Company (collectively, the Utilities) were required to file applications for statewide marketing, education, and outreach (ME&O) activities for demand-side management programs. On August 3, 2012, the Utilities filed their applications seeking approval of statewide ME&O activities for demand-side management programs in 2013-2014. On November 8, 2012, Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Fitch consolidated the Utilities' applications into a single proceeding (A.12-08-007 et al).

On January 18, 2013, Assigned Commissioner Ferron and ALJ Roscow issued a ruling dividing A.12-08-007 et al into two phases. Phase 1 would address budgets for the Flex Alert program for 2013-2014; and Phase 2 would address all other aspects of the statewide marketing, education, and outreach plans for 2013-2014. On April 26, 2013, the Commission issued D.13-04-021 establishing the Utilities' annual budgets for the Flex Alert program for 2013-2014. Ordering Paragraph 17 of D.13-04-021 requires that the Investor-owned Utilities (SCE, PG&E, and SDG&E) and California Independent System Operator (ISO) file and serve in A.12-08-007 et al., by May 17, 2013, a jointly prepared report which details how the Utilities and ISO coordinate messaging during Flex Alert events today, and how they will optimize these efforts beginning summer 2013. In compliance with Ordering Paragraph 17, this Report discusses current coordination of Flex Alert messages and efforts to optimize coordination in the future.

B. Flex Alert – Notifications and Messaging Coordination

1. What is a Flex Alert?

A Flex Alert is an urgent call to Californians to immediately conserve electricity and shift demand to off-peak hours (after 6 p.m.). The Flex Alert campaign is an educational and emergency alert program that informs consumers about how and when to conserve electricity. The public awareness campaign is critical to achieving conservation during heat waves and other challenging grid conditions such as wildfires or when major power plant or power lines are unavailable. Flex Alerts also inform the public about the potential for service interruptions, giving customers the opportunity to conserve electricity to help prevent blackouts from occurring. The ISO typically issues a Flex Alert when there is potential for an electrical emergency (due to decreased operating reserves) or a transmission emergency (due to power line limitations).

Electrical emergencies are typically triggered by diminishing operating reserves. This can occur during severe heat waves which may increase electricity demand, when there is a high number of power plant outages, or in the event of a sudden decrease in the amount of energy imports.

Transmission emergencies happen as a result of overloads, losses or limitations of the transmission system and can stem from equipment failures, extreme weather events or wildfires threatening power lines.

For more information: <http://www.caiso.com/Documents/EmergencyFactSheet.pdf>

The **non-paid Flex Alert** activities can occur year-round and are managed by the ISO. It includes news bulletins sent to all California trade media newsrooms and automatic notifications to anyone who has signed up to receive them via the ISO website or its smart phone application. The Flex Alert is also sent by way of Twitter, Google+ and Facebook. Flex Alert logos located on state agency website homepages are also switched from green to red, as does the ISO and Flex Alert websites.

The **paid Flex Alert campaign** augments the non-paid activities during the critical summer peak demand season. It is managed by a marketing and outreach firm under contract with the Utilities. Funding levels are approved by the California Public Utilities Commission. The paid campaign includes a series of educational commercials on TV and radio that switch out to urgent broadcast ads for conservation when a Flex Alert is called by the ISO.

2. Process and Messaging Enhancements for Summer 2013

The following enhancements are proposed to improve the paid and non-paid components of the Flex Alert campaign:

- During June through September, the ISO will hold weekly, and “as necessary,” Flex Alert coordination calls with the Utilities and energy and emergency state agency media representatives. The “as-necessary” calls will be scheduled any time dynamic changes in weather patterns or system outages put the ISO in a position of potentially calling a Flex Alert. The coordination calls will include the Utilities’ advertising/marketing teams to ensure that the timing and content of the Flex Alert messages are synchronized with the paid Flex Alert campaign.
- The ISO will continue to try to issue Flex Alerts by 3:00 p.m. the day before conservation is required. This allows time for TV and radio advertisements to be switched out so that consumers will hear about the Flex Alert before leaving for work the next day. However, the ISO could call a “next-day” Flex Alert at any time.
- The ISO will continue to have the ability to call a Flex Alert in real time as grid conditions change. Knowing the unique voltage stability challenges facing southern California this summer, the Flex Alert advertising team will make every effort to arrange for Flex Alerts to go into effect immediately, with the understanding that it will take some media outlets up to 24 hours to “swap out” the educational spots for the notification spots. Flex Alerts for the weekend or

Monday must be determined by Friday afternoon because media outlet staff are unavailable to switch out ads over the weekend.

- Because of the communities at risk for outages in southern California this summer, the paid campaign includes in-language Spanish television and cable commercials as well as Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Chinese-language radio commercials. These complement the English-language television, cable, and radio commercials. Non-paid outreach provided by the ISO is also sent to ethnic media outlets in Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Chinese.
- In the event that the ISO calls a Flex Alert, the ISO issues a news bulletin, conducts social media outreach, and initiates the automatic notification system. The paid Flex Alert campaign team then contacts all TV and radio outlets and orders them to switch out all the educational media spots and replace them with the event media spots (which will have already been provided to the media outlets) notifying the public that “A Flex Alert has been called” and asking them to either (1) conserve electricity and shift electricity use to after 6:00 p.m., or (2) conserve immediately.
- In addition to switching out the broadcast media advertising, the digital component of the campaign is also switched out to notify the public that a Flex Alert has been called. This includes video advertising such as YouTube, Collective, ABC.com, Google search, behavioral/geo/contextual retargeting ad networks like Yahoo, targeted local sites, Facebook, weather.com with high temperature triggers, MapQuest, news channels like local newspapers, NPR, and local radio, as well as mobile text blasts, eBlasts, etc.
- The Flex Alert website, which normally contains Flex Alert educational messaging, is switched out to announce that a Flex Alert has been called and urge immediate conservation and load shifting.
- Hundreds of state websites and other websites that contain the Flex Alert logo are also updated to notify the public that a Flex Alert has been called.
- The Flex Alert Network is activated when a Flex Alert has been called. This triggers email blast notifications of a Flex Alert to thousands of individuals (who have signed up for a Flex Alert) and businesses ranging from commercial office buildings to manufacturing, restaurants, city and county governments, water agencies, and others.
- In a serious electrical emergency, email blasts can come from the Governor’s office to all state employees, and available CalTrans electrical road signs can announce a Flex Alert.

- The ISO will set a firm end date of the Flex Alert. This will reduce confusion so that all TV and radio stations will return to the educational spots when the Flex Alert is no longer in effect. All other mediums will synchronize with the end time.