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**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **CPUC TO EXAMINE UTILITY POLE SAFETY AND COMPETITION; CONSIDERS CREATION OF POLE DATABASE**

SAN FRANCISCO, June 29, 2017 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today said it will examine whether the existing stock of utility poles and underground conduits in the state have sufficient space to support ubiquitous, competitive, and affordable telecommunications services, while keeping the pole and conduit infrastructure safe for residents, workers, and the environment. The CPUC will also consider creating a database that will allow stakeholders to share key information about utility poles with each other and the CPUC.

California has an estimated 4.2 million utility poles and thousands of miles of underground utility conduit. Poorly maintained utility poles and attachments have caused substantial property damage and repeated loss of life in the state. These safety issues have increased at the same time that advanced telecommunications technologies have driven demand for access to utility poles and conduit to unprecedented levels. Further, there is not a shared data repository to track where the utility poles are located and information about the condition of the poles.

“Plain old wooden poles, along with their cousins, the underground conduits, are work horses, carrying most of our power and telecommunications. They sometimes get crowded and fail, causing outages and fires because of all the equipment crammed onto them. New competitors have complained about how this crowding has made it hard for them to add their equipment. Ensuring a level playing field for competition is one of the reasons we are taking this look at access to poles, conduit, and rights of way,” said CPUC President Michael Picker. “Not knowing where all the poles are and who owns them, how loaded they are, how safe they are, and whether they can handle any additional infrastructure, is problematic to both the utilities and to the CPUC. Creating a database of



utility poles could help owners track attachments on their poles and manage necessary maintenance and rearrangements, and can help the CPUC in our oversight role.”

Once the proceeding number is assigned, interested parties can subscribe to proceeding documents at <http://subscribecpuc.cpuc.ca.gov>.

The proposal voted on is available at

<http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M190/K872/190872933.PDF>.

For more information on the CPUC, please visit [www.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov).

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