



California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Terrie Prosper, 415.703.1366, news@cpuc.ca.gov

PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: Res ESRB-8

CPUC STRENGTHENS UTILITY PUBLIC NOTICE REQUIREMENTS FOR DE-ENERGIZING IN EMERGENCIES

SAN FRANCISCO, July 12, 2018 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in its ongoing commitment to public safety, today ordered all investor-owned electric companies to comply with certain rules and customer notification requirements before de-energizing electric facilities in cases of emergencies. De-energization of an electrical circuit shuts off power to all customers served by that circuit.

Utilities are required to operate their systems in a safe and reliable manner. De-energizing electric facilities during dangerous conditions can save lives and property, and can prevent wildfires. The decision by a utility to de-energize facilities for public safety is complex and dependent on many factors including fuel moisture; aerial and ground firefighting capabilities; active fires that indicate dangerous fire conditions; situational awareness provided by fire agencies, the National Weather Service, and the U.S. Forest Service; and local meteorological conditions of humidity and winds.

The CPUC today provided guidelines that the electric utilities must follow and strengthened public safety requirements when a utility decides to de-energize its facilities during dangerous conditions. Prior to today's decision, regulations regarding de-energization applied only to San Diego Gas & Electric. Today's decision extends the existing regulations to all electric investor-owned utilities in California and also strengthens the requirements.

Today's order requires that utilities meet with the local communities that may be impacted by a future de-energization event before putting the practice in effect in a particular area, and requires customer notifications prior to a de-energization event, if feasible. Utilities have 30 days to submit a report to the CPUC outlining their plans regarding public outreach, notification, and mitigation of



customer impacts due to de-energization and the resulting power shut-offs. Further, within 90 days, utilities are required to convene De-Energization Informational Workshops with representatives from state agencies, tribal governments, local agencies, and representatives from the local communities that may be affected by a de-energization event. The purpose of these workshops is to explain, and receive feedback on, the utilities' de-energization policies and procedures.

“De-energization can be very helpful during an emergency situation where having electricity flowing is potentially harmful, but it must be done with great thought and with consideration of customers” said Commissioner Liane M. Randolph. “Our decision today helps ensure that utilities communicate early and consistently with communities that will be potentially affected by de-energization.”

A utility is required to notify the CPUC as soon as practicable after it decides to de-energize facilities, and to notify the CPUC within 12 hours after all electric service is restored. After a de-energization event, a utility is also required to submit a report to the CPUC explaining the decision to shut off power, its impacts on customers, and other relevant matters. The decision to shut off power may be reviewed by the CPUC as part of its broad jurisdiction over public safety and utility operations.

The proposal voted on is available at:

<http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M217/K801/217801749.PDF>.

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians' access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

###

