



**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

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Order Instituting Rulemaking to Examine  
Electric Utility De-Energization of Power  
Lines in Dangerous Condition.

Rulemaking 18-12-005  
(Issued December 13, 2018)

**CITY OF SAN JOSÉ'S COMMENTS ON PG&E'S POST-PSPS EVENT REPORT FOR  
OCTOBER 9-12, 2019**

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January 7, 2020

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OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

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**CITY OF SAN JOSÉ'S COMMENTS ON PG&E'S POST-SPSPS EVENT REPORT FOR  
OCTOBER 9-12, 2019**

Pursuant to the Assigned Commissioner's Amended Phase 2 Scoping Memo and Ruling (“Ruling”) dated December 19, 2019, the City of San José (“San José”) hereby files its Comments on PG&E’s Post-SPSPS Event Report for October 9-12, 2019 (“Comments”), submitted on November 19, 2019 to the Safety and Enforcement Division.<sup>1</sup> Rather than repeat the submission verbatim in its Comments in this Rulemaking, San José respectfully requests the Commission review the sections of its submission outlined below. San José was granted party status in this proceeding via written ruling on September 18, 2019.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

While San José’s PSPS events were not as extensive or as severe as those in other areas, San José played an active role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its residents, and in the process, gained insight on what could be done to minimize PSPS events’ risks to public health and safety.

**II. OVERVIEW OF SAN JOSÉ'S COMMENTS ON PG&E'S POST-SPSPS EVENT  
REPORT FOR OCTOBER 9-12**

While existing PSPS guidelines call for utilities to coordinate with local government agencies, the guidelines should specify that this coordination should not be limited to counties,

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<sup>1</sup> With its Comments on PG&E’s Post-SPSPS Report for October 9-12, San José provided its Comments on Phase 2. Because San José’s Comments on Phase 2 have been filed in this proceeding, San José does not re-submit or file those comments at this time.

but should include cities. The Executive Summary and Key Learnings section, as well as Sections 6, 7, 8, 11, and 14, of the Comments describe the shortfalls in information provided by PG&E and potential improvements to utility practices during PSPS events. Shortfalls experienced by San José include the provision of inaccurate information about locations to be affected by the PSPS event, as well as an insistence by PG&E to directly communicate with counties only. For reasons set forth in the Comments, utilities should share information about PSPS events – including decisions to shut off power, specific locations likely to be affected, and timelines – with cities. Residents often look to their cities first to provide information, as well as emergency and other services. Because PG&E did not share timely and accurate information with San José, but instead relied on Santa Clara County (which was inundated with its own emergency management efforts) to disseminate information to San José and other local agencies within its jurisdiction, San José was unable to assist its residents by providing the information they sought. Further, without timely and accurate information about PSPS events, San José’s preparations for PSPS events were impeded, as set forth in the Comments.

Additionally, in San José’s experience, outreach to Access and Functional Needs (“AFN”) customers was insufficient. The Executive Summary and Section 6 of San José’s Comments describe gaps in PG&E’s outreach efforts and the means by which San José provided more effective communications to these populations. San José suggests that utilities can implement similar communications tactics to provide better outreach to at-risk populations.<sup>2</sup> Sections 6 and 9 also describe ways in which PG&E could render assistance to medical baseline

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<sup>2</sup> The Commission in its Scoping Memo uses the term “vulnerable populations” to describe the Access and Functional Needs population, as well as others who may be particularly affected by PSPS events, such as the elderly or the very young. The City’s understanding is that the Access and Functional Needs population often prefers the term “at-risk” instead of the term “vulnerable” when describing itself, so the City uses the term “at-risk” here.

customers to mitigate the impact of PSPS events, including the provision of more information on its website and backup generation to the at-risk population.

Finally, as described in Section 13 of San José's Comments, Community Resource Centers operated by PG&E could have been set up with more thought and better planning: the venue selected by PG&E was not available for one PSPS event, and its location and hours were not conducive to serving residents affected by the PSPS events. San José recommends that utilities fund equipment for additional CRCs and better prepare for their operation.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

San José appreciates the opportunity to file its Comments to PG&E's Post-PSPS Event Report for October 9-12, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

RICHARD DOYLE  
City Attorney

/s/      *Elisa Tolentino*

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Dated: January 7, 2020



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November 19, 2019

Via U.S. Mail

Elizaveta Malashenko  
Deputy Executive Director, Safety and Enforcement  
California Public Utilities Commission  
505 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: City of San José's Comments on PG&E's October 9-12 Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) Report to the CPUC

Dear Ms. Malashenko:

The City of San José (San José) submits the following comments on Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E)'s Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) Report to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regarding the October 9-12, 2019 De-Energization Event (the Report), pursuant to CPUC Decision (D.) 19-05-042. PG&E's Report was filed on October 25, 2019. As per the letter dated November 8, 2019 to the Center for Accessible Technology, the Executive Director authorized an extension of the deadline for all affected stakeholders to submit comments on any PSPS post-event reports that occurred in October 2019 from 15 days to 25 days. These comments are timely submitted within the extended deadline.

San José's comments correspond to each section of PG&E's Report. To the extent San José does not address a particular section at this time, San José reserves the right to make further comments later.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

RICHARD DOYLE, City Attorney

By: Yue-Han Chow  
YUE-HAN CHOW  
Sr. Deputy City Attorney

cc: Service List for R.18-12-005 (via electronic mail)

## City of San José's Comments on PG&E's October 9-12 PSPS Report to the CPUC

### Executive Summary and Key Learnings

The October 9-12 PSPS event conducted by PG&E caused widespread confusion, threatened public safety, and taxed public agency resources in unnecessary ways. Stakeholders voiced many of the same frustrations in the Rulemaking (R.)18-12-005, at the emergency October 18 CPUC meeting, and in the media. While PG&E has addressed some of these concerns, much still needs to be improved.

San José has been preparing for PSPS events since May 2019, after it became aware that PG&E could de-energize San José's distribution lines (which serve one million residents) during a PSPS event, or de-energize transmission lines causing cascading regional effects,<sup>1</sup> and the Commission adopted Decision (D.) 19-05-042, establishing guidelines for utility de-energization of power lines. San José has previously expressed its concerns to the Commission about authorizing PG&E to deploy such a cavalier and massive PSPS program, particularly when, earlier this year and to avoid the imposition of some conditions on its probation, PG&E itself acknowledged that de-energization of power lines serving large populations carries major safety risks.<sup>2</sup> San José's worries have only grown in the last few weeks after PG&E subjected large areas in Northern California to three massive outages, impacting millions of people and unveiling PG&E's utter incompetency to properly implement a program of such magnitude.

The October 9-12 PSPS event impacted about 20,000 accounts in San José, which included approximately 60,000 residents in several neighborhoods. Upon receiving outage notification from PG&E, San José reacted swiftly and firmly. San José implemented its Power Vulnerability Plan and activated San José's Emergency Operation Center. Some actions that San José undertook included directly contacting medical baseline customers and school districts; deploying Police Department and Department of Transportation staff to evaluate impacts to major corridors and dispatching staff to aid with traffic flow; and launching a special mobile app to crowd-source information from residents to provide more accurate real-time information on de-energized regions of the city. All of these efforts helped mitigate the safety risks associated with the outages for San José's residents.

Relative to our sister cities and local governments in other regions, San José's outage was small and short in duration. Other local governments have described horrifying experiences in which PG&E's poorly-managed PSPS program imposed tremendous hardships, burdened communities, and strained local emergency response resources. During the October 9-12 PSPS event, San José had a taste of the same issues that have been well-documented by other public agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> R.18-10-007, *PG&E Amended Wildfire Mitigation Plan*, Apr. 25, 2019, p. 20 (emphasis added) [hereinafter "PG&E's second amended WMP"].

<sup>2</sup> See R.18-10-007, *Comments on Phase 2 of the City of San José* (Aug. 21, 2019). San José is attaching a copy of those comments for easy reference (citing to PG&E's Resp. Second Order Show Cause at p. 20, U.S. v. Pac. Gas & Elec., No. 14-CR-00175-WHA [Dkt. No. 976] (N.D. Cal. Jan. 23, 2019)).

The impact of PG&E's intentional outages was particularly dangerous to those most reliant on electricity for their health and safety (e.g., medical baseline customers, Access and Functional Needs (AFN) populations, low-income communities, etc.). San José strove to provide special assistance to the most at-risk populations, and fortunately, those efforts paid off. Residents who needed emergency services ultimately timely received it, and San José's regular operations were not majorly impacted. However, those efforts come at a cost. Even though the outages in San José were small relative to its size and population, emergency response expenses included half-million dollars in San José staff overtime and costs for fueling the emergency generators required to maintain San José's drinking water supply and other vital services. This figure may be higher and does not include the direct costs incurred by our residents to prepare for and respond to the outage.

The continuing failure of PG&E to provide accurate, necessary, and timely information to government entities remains the biggest problem. Neither government entities like San José nor the public at large can always determine who will or will not be affected by a PSPS event. Overly-broad polygon maps, inaccuracies in the address lookup app, and denial of circuit maps to City staff contribute to the problem. This impedes San José's ability to plan and provide resources to residents in the correct geographic areas. In addition, during the October 9 PSPS event, PG&E told medical baseline customers to have an emergency plan ready and referred them to the website, which did not work and did not provide information on resources they could access. See Report Appendix E, Table 1-2.

Further, the insistence that PG&E need only share PSPS information at the county level is inefficient and possibly dangerous. Large cities like San José provide multiple resources to both its residents and neighboring jurisdictions. This limited information-sharing presented a public safety threat during the October 9-12 PSPS event. PG&E told San José that PG&E could not contact a number of medical baseline customers, then directed San José to Santa Clara County for their identities. Due to further delays by PG&E, Santa Clara County could not pass on the information until 30 minutes before the de-energization of San José residents.

Lastly, PG&E must continue to work with CalOES and local government agencies, especially counties, cities, and community-based organizations, to understand where its processes fail its customer base, including those with who have special accessibility needs, foreign language needs, and medical needs.

The issues associated with PG&E's deployment of the October 9-12 PSPS event in San José and elsewhere were a somber reminder that a badly and chaotic deployment of this program could have serious and devastating consequences. In the aftermath of the PSPS event, important questions have surfaced. What if San José had another emergency such as a large fire or earthquake, if emergency staff was already occupied on responding to the impacts caused by PG&E's PSPS event? And what if the next PSPS event causes a city-wide PSPS-related outage? Is PG&E prepared to roll out that program that protects the lives and property of San José's one million residents? Who will pay for the massive emergency response deployment efforts that such a large magnitude outage would require? These and other important questions must be resolved before PG&E's program can be rolled out properly—and most importantly, safely. San José looks forward to the opportunity to work with the Commission to address these crucial issues.

## **Section 1 – PG&E’s Decision to De-Energize**

PG&E is an amateur in declaring and managing a public emergency, as demonstrated by how poorly it handled the October 9 PSPS event. This was PG&E’s first time declaring such an event in Santa Clara County. While PG&E indicates they implemented the Incident Command System and Unified Command (Report at pp. 19, 30), they appear not to understand how to engage other agencies in the decision-making process, and in fact ignored outside input. The Incident Command System and Unified Command concepts were created out of the fatal and destructive fires of the 1970s, as a method to increase communication and coordination. The precepts of Unified Command include unified decision making with the authorities responsible for jurisdictional public safety in the communities PG&E affected. The opposite occurred. How PG&E makes a decision to de-energize is still a mystery for local public safety officials. The CPUC has given unilateral decision-making power to PG&E.

PG&E admits that the polygon maps presented to the public are inaccurate.<sup>3</sup> In many cases they are an overestimation of what area could be affected, causing undue panic and misunderstanding of how the outage would impact the public. Based on these inaccurate polygons, emergency response resources were allocated to respond to outages in areas that were ultimately not impacted, thereby wasting scarce and vital time and capabilities. The extended outage impacts created additional work for local agencies to refine the data and provide accurate public information about the outage impact.

PG&E should be required to provide a decision matrix, to increase transparency on how it is making its decisions, what sort of factors they are considering, and what areas they are discussing. In particular, PG&E should be fielding input from local governments on the decision to de-energize. The purpose of a Unified Command Structure is that it allows different agencies to work together to achieve a particular outcome. As PG&E was already giving local government notifications of impending de-energization 48-72 hours in advance, there was plenty of time to solicit feedback from local government and organizations by and for the AFN population.

## **Section 2 – Factors Considered in Decision**

San José cannot validate the claims made in Section 2 by PG&E, due to the denial of PG&E to allow a member of San José’s emergency management liaison into PG&E’s EOC to be involved with the decision-making process. However, the factors used did not always appear to be in concert with the information the agency partners had, particularly with respect to the customer impacts. For example, the weather conditions PG&E reported on calls with local government at times contradicted information that the National Weather Service was providing. There was a disparity between San José’s critical facility list, and PG&E’s critical facility list. PG&E’s information on which customers would be affected did not always coincide with reality. These information discrepancies caused a great deal of concern and added to the uncertainty created by the lack of clear communication. It also made it difficult for San José to provide aid/support/information to its residents.

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<sup>3</sup> Report at p. 33.

## **Section 4 – Customers Impacted**

The issue of how many customers would be impacted by the PSPS event, and the number of residents that equated to, was a topic of great concern for San José prior to and during the event. Planning for the response to the scope of the event as initially outlined by PG&E left a great deal of details on the table due to the limited amount of information flowing from PG&E to San José. The confusion caused by the large polygons on the maps, and the lack of specific customer data early on, made it very difficult for San José leadership to determine the resources needed to deal with the shutoff event. This is more evidence of how a Unified Command environment did not exist.

## **Section 5 – Damage to Overhead Facilities**

Due to the lack of communication from PG&E, San José cannot validate the data presented in the post-event report. For the safety of its citizens, San José would like to have a stronger relationship between the field crews of both parties working to clear debris after a wind event.

## **Section 6 – Customer Notifications**

### Media Engagement

PG&E public information did not meet the San José community need. Efforts to provide information to the public had to be supported by local Public Information Officers. Yet, PG&E did not coordinate with local officers.

San José created a significant public information team that included social and routine media efforts to help broadcast the information, particularly to our Spanish and Vietnamese speaking communities. Regular briefings with the media were established to provide more specific information to our community. News outlets and the community appreciated the increased contact, as San José provided more access and accurate information, and context as to how the PSPS event impacted San José. In contrast, the regional broad brush PG&E approach could not address the local needs.

In addition, despite touting the number of media contacts or briefings it provided, PG&E failed to provide necessary information to the AFN population. California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC), the non-profit organization which PG&E partnered with to support the AFN population, had only two Facebook posts before and during the October 9 PSPS event, which referred viewers to the PG&E website and an ABC7 news story. PG&E should also be communicating with other organizations that can further disseminate relevant information, not just CFILC. For example, in an emergency, Santa Clara County, and in some instances, San José, can activate the agencies involved in Collaborating Agencies Disaster Relief Effort (CADRE). Agencies involved in CADRE include Abilities United and Visiting Angels, two organizations that serve the AFN population and help reaching out to at-risk populations.

## PG&E Website

PG&E admits that the polygons of potential PSPS impact areas “were not dependable and demonstrated a lack of precision.”<sup>4</sup> This is an understatement. Based on its own information sources, San José found the polygons overestimated the affected areas by as much as 20%. San José also heard from residents that the address lookup app was not always accurate, either. Residents reported outages when their address lookup said they would not be affected, and vice versa.

During the October 9 PSPS event, San José called upon its own resources to gain more accurate information about the outages. San José’s Public Works Department created a field app and a GIS map, which its residents could use to obtain information on who was affected by the outages and to report outage locations.

The failure to have accurate maps and direct communication with PG&E meant that San José had to use the address lookup app to determine which of its critical facilities would be affected by the PSPS event. And due to the further inaccuracy of the address lookup app, San José in effect did not know what parts of San José would be shut down until the de-energization happened. The October 9 PSPS event affected three fire stations, four water pump stations, and two radio towers that transmit police and fire communications, requiring fuel not just for facility generators, but in some cases, for the fire trucks themselves via on-site fuel storage tanks. The inaccurate identification of affected facilities caused San José to re-route its refueling trucks to different facilities and deploy electricians to pull the correct generators for the correct facilities. One water pump facility was down to 25% capacity by the time San José refueling truck reached it.

If PG&E is able to pinpoint exact addresses that will be affected by a PSPS event, then there is no reason why their outage maps cannot also have such accuracy. PG&E must strive to share information with local governments to quickly address any error in the identification of impact areas. However, during the October 9 PSPS event, San José offered PG&E use of its maps to provide real-time data sharing. Rather than working with San José to fix the outage maps to provide accurate information in real time, PG&E remained silent on acceptance of San José’s offer.

PG&E’s website further failed to provide helpful information to the AFN population during the October 9 PSPS event. At most, it directed the AFN population to ask their local government for help in dealing with the PSPS, which is inconsistent with PG&E’s “ultimate responsibility for notification and communication throughout a de-energization event.”<sup>5</sup>

PG&E may also wish to translate its information into less formal Vietnamese. San José heard concerns that the language used in the Vietnamese translation was so formally transcribed it was not easy to understand by local Vietnamese residents.

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<sup>4</sup> Report at p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> D. 19-05-037, Decision on Pacific Gas and Electric Company’s 2019 Wildfire Mitigation Plan Pursuant to Senate Bill 901, May 30, 2019, Appendix A, p. A-2 [hereinafter, D. 19-05-037].

### Customer Notifications

The customer notifications were often too broad and imprecise. While PG&E shut down different parts of its service territory in phases, customers need to better understand what this means for them. Often the notifications contained language which amounted to saying “we will turn off the power if we need to.” San José believes in part that the regions that PG&E uses for its operations are not conducive to the precise messaging required to clearly communicate with its residents. The County of Santa Clara falls into PG&E Regions 3 & 4 which extends well north of the Bay Area and down to areas south of San José. Though the “stage” concept was utilized by PG&E to rectify this, the concept is still foreign to City residents where normative descriptions, i.e., City of or County of, would be more easily understood.

In addition, while San José understands that PG&E’s decision to de-energize relies on shifting weather conditions, PG&E should try to be more accurate in estimating when it will de-energize. During the October 9 PSPS event, PG&E pushed back the timing of when San José would be de-energized progressively until there was a difference of 20 hours between the initial time PG&E projected for the shutdown and when PG&E actually initiated the shutdown. During this 20 hour-period, San José had personnel on standby at the City Emergency Response Center when they could have been working on City business.

### Medical Baseline Customers

As stated in San José’s comments in the PSPS Rulemaking 18-12-005, there is an economic program that gives certain qualifying customers discounts on their utility bills. It does not cover a broad group of people whose health and safety will be directly affected by a power shutdown.

Since medical baseline subscribers are self-registered it demands the obvious question, “who hasn’t registered?” That PG&E relies on a list of medical baseline customers to notify the at-risk population puts the burden on people who may be least likely to know about this resource to sign up. For example, those who are tenants of a master meter account may not know they can still apply for the medical baseline program.<sup>6</sup> There may also be reasons why people who qualify for the medical baseline program might not choose to register; for example, if they are in Section 8 housing, they may not have a financial incentive to register.

In San José’s experience, when PG&E’s efforts to notify a number of medical baseline customers of the impending PSPS event failed, it was left up to San José to make contact and the door-knocks. PG&E would not release the identity of these customers to San José; instead, PG&E told San José to get this information from Santa Clara County. PG&E further delayed releasing this information, and San José did not learn who the non-contacted medical baseline customers were until 30 minutes before the event. This is an unacceptable delay. PG&E should release this information to larger cities like San José so that they may supplement notification efforts if PG&E’s resources are too thin.

Once San José received the data sets from Santa Clara County, it was also difficult to decipher. There was no explanation as to how the data is derived, nor sometimes what it meant. Based on

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<sup>6</sup> See Report at p. 14.

the information San José received, it appeared that 365 households who would be affected by the PSPS event were medical baseline customers, but there was no information as to how many of them were not contacted by PG&E. Eventually, San José narrowed the number of households left to be contacted down to 160 and then further down to 68. San José does not understand why there was this discrepancy.

For the October 9 PSPS event, San José deployed employees to call hundreds of people and to knock on doors. While PG&E uses robocalls to contact this population to warn them of an upcoming PSPS event, it is then up to San José or Santa Clara County to check on their well-being and/or provide services. PG&E should spend more time on continuing education for the medical baseline and AFN populations if PSPS events will continue for the next 10 years; the better informed they are, the easier it will be for them to make alternative arrangements during the events.

#### Engagement with Local Partners that Support AFN Populations

As stated earlier, PG&E's partnership with CFILC is not enough to serve the AFN population. PG&E needs to expand its network of organizations who support the AFN population, as well as provide more information than simply telling customers to have an emergency plan.

PG&E's website did not have links to resources for the AFN population during the October 9 PSPS Event. San José notes that PG&E's website now has a link to a Pacific ADA Center fact sheet, providing information for emergency power planning for people who use electricity and battery dependent assistive technology and medical devices – this is exactly the kind of information which should have been available during the October 9 PSPS event. San José also recommends PG&E consider including on their website information similar to that provided by Dr. Karen Nakamura at the UC Berkeley Disability Lab on issues such as small gas generators, heating one's home when the power is out, room air filtration, etc...<sup>7</sup> San José further recommends that PG&E familiarize itself with other resources on how to communicate with and provide services to the AFN population, such as Getting It Wrong: An Indictment with a Blueprint for Getting It Right, by The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies.<sup>8</sup> For each resource PG&E identifies for the AFN population, the following information should be included or considered:<sup>9</sup>

- a. Website (if updated)
- b. Is website accessible to screen readers?
- c. Contact phone number (if answered) (have text option?)
- d. Hours of operation
- e. ACCESS for Locations- check all that apply
  - easy public transit (name transit and line numbers)

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://disability.jp/nakamura/lab/index.html>.

<sup>8</sup> See [http://disasterstrategies.org/application/files/3615/2718/6466/5-23-18\\_After\\_Action\\_Report\\_-\\_May\\_2018.compressed.pdf](http://disasterstrategies.org/application/files/3615/2718/6466/5-23-18_After_Action_Report_-_May_2018.compressed.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> This list was adapted from the Checklist of Questions for Jurisdictions about PSPS by Corbett O'Toole. Corbett Joan O'Toole is the author of Fading Scars: My Queer Disability History and founder of Reclamation Press, <https://www.reclapress.com/books/corbett-joan-otoole/>.

- wheelchair access
- types of seating (soft, hard, armless, weight limits)
- types of lying down options (what kind of cots, floor, etc.)
- scent-free (policy or reality)
- Braille /audio options for printed materials
- Easy Read options for printed materials
- ASL interpreters always on site
- other language interpreters always on site

f. ACCESS for INFORMATION

- Website
  1. readable by screen readers
  2. basic access features (enlarge, read aloud, etc.)
  3. has information for people with disabilities
  4. provides disability-specific resources

Lastly, while PG&E had a contact center to field calls, this would not help much of the deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired population who no longer use TTY but text instead. San José also recommends that PG&E invite a representative from an AFN service organization into its EOC to issue spot and help communicate with the AFN population. In the October 25 PSPS Event, San José invited Christine Fitzgerald from Silicon Valley Independent Living Center (SVILC) into its EOC and found her assistance invaluable. San José is not convinced that the current protocols are adequate to ensure reasonable notification and support coverage for this targeted population within San José.

**Section 7 – Local Community Representatives Contacted**

PG&E did not understand that school districts are separate government entities with their own governing bodies with authority to make decisions. During the October 9 PSPS event, PG&E appeared to rely on San José for information about the schools and to transmit information to the school districts. PG&E should be communicating with the school districts directly and/or ensure that the school districts are receiving necessary information about the PSPS event.

**Section 8 – Local and State Public Safety Partner Engagement**

PG&E states that “[s]ince 2018, PG&E has been meeting with cities, counties, tribes, state agencies and other public safety partners to provide information about PG&E’s PSPS Program.”<sup>10</sup> But while this may be true for the state agencies, PG&E did not meet with San José until May 2019. San José first learned that it could be affected by PSPS events only a month earlier in PG&E’s amended Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

PG&E states that it has been “[c]oordinating with cities and counties to confirm critical facilities in their jurisdictions,” but there is a discrepancy between the list of critical facilities San José had during the October 9 event (10 facilities) and the list PG&E had (3 facilities). For example, San José’s list included a school and medical facility which was not on PG&E’s list. San José does not know what accounts for this discrepancy. It was inappropriate for a city to use the address

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<sup>10</sup> Report at p. 17.

lookup app just to understand which of its critical facilities would be affected. San José is also concerned with how PG&E may be defining what qualifies as a critical facility. San José staff were looking online to confirm whether residential care facilities licensed by CA Dept of Social Services Community Care Licensing were included in addition to skilled nursing facilities.

In addition, government entities should not be negotiating obscurely drafted non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) with PG&E to access secure data transfer portals or customer information needed for public safety and local responses efforts. Emergency response providers are not (and should never be) required to enter into NDAs to provide essential and life-saving services to citizens during an emergency like, for instance, an earthquake or a flood. PSPS events are supposed to be treated as any other emergency.<sup>11</sup> However, while the Commission's October 8 and 23 letters to the Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) authorized release of medical baseline customer information and specific addresses of affected customers to counties and tribal governments, this is of little use to cities like San José. This sort of information should be available to cities as well without having to sign an NDA. To the extent that PG&E shared necessary information during PSPS events without the need for an NDA, San José encourages both the Commission and PG&E to clarify whether one will be needed in the future for PSPS events and, if so, to develop a Commission-approved NDA with input from stakeholders.

The secure data transfer portal also had inaccurate information. Up through the second day of the October 9 PSPS event, San José Office of Emergency Management was still only seeing Bakersfield-related information. (This was corrected for the next event.) Also, in some instances, it appeared PG&E waited long timeframes to get perfect information when sometimes it would have been better to provide timely estimates. Delayed information can become inaccurate if it is withheld for too long. San José notes that on one Operations Briefing call, PG&E made a statement about wind conditions in the valley, which one hour later appeared to contradict the National Weather Service report.

PG&E needs to be more engaged with cities, which are often its biggest customers. While PG&E provided pre-event workshops, the speakers did not provide the detail local governments need on how PG&E makes the decision to de-energize and how local jurisdictions have input on the "unified command" that PG&E identified it uses. PG&E should develop training programs for local government on what elements are considered in making the decision for a PSPS; how wide of a geographical region may be impacted by the PSPS event and for how long; how local government has input (if this is true unified command); who in the company is making the decision; what considerations are made beyond wind, heat and dry conditions; how transmission lines impact distribution lines; how distribution lines will affect the local circuits; as well as what the expectations are for local government on public information support, knocking on doors, and engaging the community, among other issues.

PG&E's thrice-daily Operational Briefing calls with local government have improved, especially now that it has added a WebEx capability. But the personnel running the calls should have more training or experience on how to give situation status reports instead of what sound like press conferences or carefully drafted scripts. PG&E refers to its use of Incident Command System

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<sup>11</sup> D. 19-05-037, p. 103 ("On a going forward basis, the Commission envisions that de-energization will be treated as any other incident/emergency").

(ICS) and Strategic Emergency Management System (SEMS) standards (Report at pp. 19 and 31), but this is not apparent on the Operational Briefing calls. The attitude on these calls at times has at times been condescending and counterproductive to cooperating with local government. Shockingly, on one of these calls, the BART representative was told to get off the line and speak with the relevant county/counties to get necessary information. PG&E also comes across as not understanding its own system; for example, PG&E would mention a transmission line study but did not explain why one was needed.

San José also only later became aware that PG&E provided separate briefing calls for elected officials, but this was not clearly communicated. Had it known this sooner, it would have let its own elected officials know to participate.

It would also be helpful if PG&E could explain why certain geographic areas were de-energized that had no apparent danger of wildfires. Otherwise, it appears PG&E does not understand the effects of shutting down transmission or distribution lines in its own system. For example, PG&E claimed high winds were a primary reason why de-energization was necessary, but in several areas that had a power shutdown, there were no high winds. PG&E should provide an explanation to the public and local government that de-energizing a particular transmission line in a high-wind area would have corollary effects on customers “downstream” in wildfire-safe regions and provide details regarding the areas impacted by this cascading effect.

Local government would also benefit from PG&E sharing which circuits are affected when certain transmission lines are down. This would help enormously for planning and public safety purposes. PG&E has not responded to San José’s numerous requests for this information; instead, San José had to obtain the circuit map from NorCal Reliance Agency.

### **Section 9 – Number and Nature of Complaints Received**

San José supports some of the complaints registered with PG&E. First, San José supports the request for PG&E to purchase generators. As discussed in its October 15 Reply Comments in Rulemaking 18-12-005 (p. 12), San José believes the public safety costs for addressing a PSPS event is more properly borne by PG&E, whose infrastructure and vegetation management practices necessitated the event. The Commission stated in its De-Energization Guidelines that IOUs are “ultimately responsible and accountable for the safe deployment of de-energization.”<sup>12</sup> Such responsibilities include “providing generators to facilities or infrastructure that are not well prepared for a power shut off.”<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, San José requested backup generators from PG&E, which are essential to maintain the functionality of its critical facilities, including its fire stations, cooling centers, and sanitary pump stations that do not have basic emergency power generation capability. More importantly PG&E should provide generators either directly to people who depend on assistive technology and medical devices or to facilities/organizations that serve this population. During the October 9 PSPS event, the SVILC only had one generator supplied by PG&E, which it loaned to a sister organization in Monterey for a specific individual. That generator is still out on loan, and SVILC has no generator to provide to residents in Santa

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<sup>12</sup> D.19-05-042, at Appendix A, p. A2.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* at p. A12.

Clara County for the next PSPS event. Second, San José supports the request for credit for residents affected by the shut off period.

### **Section 11 – Detailed Description of Steps Taken to Restore Power**

PG&E does not mention in its report the communication it had with customers before restoration of power. Phrases like “all clear” can have different meanings – for a customer, there is an assumption that the power will be turned back on immediately, for PG&E, it means the wildfire-inducing conditions no longer exist and its personnel can start inspecting the lines in preparation for re-energization. Furthermore, it would be helpful for PG&E to explain to its customers the differences between particular phrases used by different agencies, such as “elevated fire risk, red flag warning, and elevated PSPS risk.”

PG&E states that its original 5-day benchmark for restoration of energy is not acceptable and “will resource every circuit with a dedicated restoration team.”<sup>14</sup> During the October 9 PSPS event, San José offered its Fire and Public Works personnel experienced in electrical infrastructure to be trained on specific electric line inspection to supplement PG&E’s efforts to inspect the lines, but PG&E declined this help.

When PG&E overestimates the power outage boundary by 20%; says there are high winds when no wind is evident in a specific area; and provides such a long estimate for restoration, it appears PG&E also does not seem to understand its own system and failed to communicate with local governments, like San José, about its re-energization efforts.

### **Section 13 – Community Assistance Locations**

#### Resilience Zones (RZ)

San José notes PG&E mentions the use of mobile generators that it connected to pre-installed interconnection hub at its pilot resilience zone in Angwin.<sup>15</sup> This demonstrates that PG&E is able to provide backup generation during a PSPS event, and San José encourages PG&E to consider providing more units during such events.

#### Community Resources Centers

PG&E states that its Community Resources Centers (CRCs) are designed to be ADA compliant,<sup>16</sup> but this is a narrow set of requirements that only serves as certain subsegment of the AFN population. While the CRCs set up by PG&E might provide accessibility for wheelchairs, PG&E did not tell the public whether individuals needed to bring wheelchair charging equipment. It is not clear that PG&E engaged persons who have limited mobility to assess each site, a standard in addressing AFN concerns. They assumed the sites were ADA compliant.

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<sup>14</sup> Report at p. 33.

<sup>15</sup> Report at p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Report at p. 23

San José is glad to learn that PG&E extended its CRC hours from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Closure of CRCs at 6 p.m. does not take into account members of the AFN population who may still be going to work during a PSPS event but will not be able to arrive at a CRC in time to use its resources, such as charging stations. And with Daylight Savings time now in place, PG&E should consider whether its CRCs should be open even later as many customers experience more electric use at night and the temperature is dropping. PG&E should also consider how long certain devices, like electric wheelchairs, may need to charge when setting the operational hours for CRCs.

#### Location, Type, and Timeline of CRCs

Depending on the size of the outage, PG&E's plan to set up just one CRC in each county is not enough; it is not even enough to set up one CRC within San José. San José covers a large geographic area. To force residents to traverse streets with inoperable traffic lights, particularly those with accessibility and mobility issues, to reach a CRC is unacceptable. Right now, PG&E has contracted with AVAYA Stadium for use as the CRC location for Santa Clara County. AVAYA Stadium is in the center of San José, however, and was nowhere near the eastern or southern ends of San José where the outages happened on October 9.

PG&E also needs to shore up its logistical set-up of CRCs. AVAYA Stadium is operated by an entity independent of San José. During the October 25 PSPS event, PG&E was unable to use the stadium because there was previously contracted event going on at that time.

During the October 9 PSPS event, San José set up its own CRCs to accommodate its affected residents more effectively. This included locating them in areas closest to where the affected residents lived, as well as ensuring that they opened for 12 hours from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and towards the end of the PSPS event, from noon to 7:00pm. At the beginning of the PSPS event, however, PG&E's maps showed that the closest community centers to the shutdown (Almaden and Evergreen) would experience outages, so San José set up CRCs at alternate locations. But when San José learned this information was inaccurate, it activated Almaden and Evergreen Community Centers, which were closer to the outages, and had to move its supplies and resources from other CRCs. (San José further notes that the CRCs listed in PG&E's report at Appendix G-4, Table 1-2 is incomplete. Not only is it missing the Almaden and Evergreen CRCs, but San José also opened its CRCs on October 10, and not just October 9, as stated by PG&E's report.)

If PSPS events will continue for another 10 years, then San José believes PG&E should fund equipment for additional CRCs, so San José will not have to scramble for resources each time.

#### Section 14 – Lessons Learned From Event

##### Operations Briefing

PG&E states that it will "consider a regional call structure for future large-scale events, as suggested by the CPUC, while also keeping in mind that many counties indicated a preference

for a single call with a more streamlined structure.”<sup>17</sup> PG&E divides its service territory into operational regions, and each region covers multiple counties. The communications PG&E gave to its operational regions was often overbroad. For example, San José is covered by PG&E regions 3 and 4, but the information presented for these regions covered an area 200 miles long. This is hardly helpful during a PSPS event. San José is aware that PG&E in subsequent PSPS events has made these calls more specific to the phases of the de-energization, but the calls continue to lack specificity for different geographic areas.

San José believes Operations Briefing calls should be open to local government in addition to counties. San José has learned that PG&E even changes its access code for each call to ensure only certain participants can dial-in. That PG&E deliberately restricts accessibility to these calls is wrong during an emergency such as a PSPS event, where cities like San José provide direct emergency services to affected customers.

#### Agency Portal

San José seeks clarity on whether PG&E should be allowed to require an NDA at all for local governments to access its data transfer portal and, if so, the Commission should approve an NDA form. San José believes in an emergency, as experienced in the Oct 9 event, it should not be negotiating NDAs to get customer information to provide needed help to its residents. And as stated earlier, San José had problems receiving the correct information when it did gain portal access.

#### Agency Coordination and Unified Command Structure

As noted above, PG&E refuses to engage or communicate with cities during PSPS events. This can be inefficient and dangerous. San José provided some key examples above as to why it should be having direct communication with PG&E. Another important example is that San José could not tell whether PG&E coordinated with the telecommunications companies on de-energization. One customer reported that her mother was in an outage area, and the telecommunications company servicing her landline phone only had enough backup power for 4-5 hours. This is a dangerous situation for people who live in remote regions or who have limited mobility.

PG&E must coordinate with telecommunications companies during PSPS events and let local government know the status of telecommunications. AT&T reached out to San José to discuss its energy needs and ability to provide service during the PSPS event because San José has one of the largest AT&T First Net installations in the country. T-Mobile also asked San José for help locating 50 backup-generators so that it could continue to provide service to its customers.

#### Staffing of Local County EOCs

PG&E emphasizes that it has worked with the counties to establish direct communication and information sharing, but this is not enough. While they may not be as affected as other cities by PSPS events, large cities like San José still provide mutual assistance and help to neighboring

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<sup>17</sup> Report at p. 29.

jurisdictions. San José comprises more than half of the population of Santa Clara County, and is the third largest city in California. During the October 25 PG&E PSPS event, Sonoma County requested San José send a mobile Emergency Operations Center, firefighters, and an animal control officer. San Mateo County asked to borrow a backup generator for its radio sites. And Santa Clara County asked San José for help refueling generators powering fire and police radio channel communications facilities, which transmit 911 calls. During the October 9 PSPS event, following contact with AT&T and other mobile services, San José would call Santa Clara County to share information regarding mobile systems status or impacts.

Given the role San José played in past PSPS events for its own residents as well as other governmental entities, it should also have real-time access to information so it can provide services more effectively. San José requested that it be allowed to embed a liaison in PG&E's San José Operations Center and the San Francisco EOC back in July, but to no avail. And as PG&E states that it hosted Operations Briefing calls with as many as 1,000 participants,<sup>18</sup> there is no reason why cities cannot be given real-time information as well as counties.

#### Access and Functional Needs Support

Medical Baseline is a limited percentage of those considered "at risk", or the AFN population. It remains unclear how other AFN needs are addressed by PG&E.

#### **Section 16 – Other Relevant Information to Assess Reasonableness of Decision to De-Energize**

##### FPI Forecast vs Historical Fires

San José requested that PG&E provide its data on historical fires but has not yet received a response. As the Commission knows, certain locations are prone to wildfires, and understanding the nature and conditions of historical fires can help predict and allow local agencies to prepare for them. San José is aware that wildfires have occurred in the Alum Rock and Santa Cruz Mountain regions, both of which are within San José or in close proximity. San José reiterates its requests that PG&E share this information regarding historical fires.

##### **Final Comments from San José**

San José urges the Commission to review the lessons learned and determine if PG&E needs to take any corrective actions. If so, then the Commission should set a deadline by which PG&E must comply, at least as a target. There must also be consequences if PG&E fails to show progress. San José applauds the Commission for taking decisive action by issuing a ruling ordering PG&E to show cause why penalties are not warranted in connection with several PSPS events, including that of October 9. The mistakes of the October 9 PSPS Event demonstrate how dangerous a poorly-executed shutdown can be. California residents should not suffer for the failures of PG&E's self-imposed emergency, particularly if PSPS events are expected to occur for the next 10 years.

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<sup>18</sup> Report at p. 29