BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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Application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company for Approval of its Mobile Application and Supporting Systems Pilot. (U39E).	Application 19-07-019 (Filed July 29, 2019)

REPLY COMMENTS OF THE BROADBAND INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

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Application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company for Approval of its Mobile Application and Supporting Systems Pilot	Application 19-07-019

REPLY COMMENTS OF THE BROADBAND INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

I. PG&E SHOULD SUBMIT A REVISED APPLICATION TO CREATE AN APP CONNECTED TO ITS COMPLAINT PROCESS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLINGENCE PLATFORMS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY

The Broadband Institute of California at Santa Clara University School of Law ("BBIC") respectfully submits these reply comments in response to Pacific Gas and Electric ("PG&E")'s Application 19-07-019 for Approval of its Mobile Application and Supporting Systems Pilot, and the CPUC's Workshop regarding this application held on February 12, 2020. BBIC filed its comments in this matter on February 21, 2020. No other party filed comments in this docket.

BBIC's reply comments draw from the experience in the Chemeketa Park neighborhood, located in a Tier 3 high wildfire danger area in the hills approximately 15 miles from Santa Clara University, to underscore the public safety risks that require PG&E to revise its application to create an App responsive to the CPUC's order in OII.19-06-015. PG&E's revised application should integrate a public-facing App that facilitates public submission of photos of PG&E infrastructure issues into the public complaint, analysis, and response process. PG&E should also integrate the App and photos received from the public into its platforms that use artifical intelligence to examine and analyze photos and facilitate swift and appropriate response.

Michelle Waters, a member of the Firewise Chemeketa Park council and a resident of that high wildfire danger neighborhood, reported that area residents posted comments on Nextdoor.com about PG&E safety issues and their frustration with PG&E's lack of responsiveness. One of her neighbors reported on Nextdoor.com, "I have had that issue on the corner on Comanche and Delaware since 1998. That said, I have called PG&E every time it happens. I tell them to redo the transformer and wires. Then, cut the tree down. But, it goes to their "thank you for calling" pile."

Ms. Waters reported another comment from a neighbor on Next Door.com:

> "Several years ago we had a down wire. I called PGE and they did not come. Neighbor called and PGE said there was no report for our area. When I got home from work about 3pm we still had half power. I went for a walk to see if I could see the problem. Yes, down wire burning in a puddle of water. Called 911 and fire department was right here. They called PGE and then they came. If it would have not been raining we would have had a big problem. It went down about 7am till 3 without they coming to check with about 4 calls asking them to come. Fire department said to always call them first."

On March 5, 2020, Ms. Waters characterized PG&E's lack of responsiveness to the safety issues reported in her neighborhood as "appalling and so scary."

Chemeketa Park residents describe calling PG&E with problems and not receiving a timely or appropriate response to address public safety issues. An App connected to PG&E's complaint process could help residents document and describe dangerous conditions and violations of CPUC rules. A properly designed App could complement the phone-based complaint process and help PG&E quickly assess conditions reported in calls, document and analyze the issue, and improve public safety.

Likewise PG&E should connect the App created in response to the CPUC Order OII.19-06-015 to facilitate its Artificial Intelligence Machine Learning process. PG&E's proposal for an isolated web-based portal, open to the public on invitation-only, and run for one fire season, misses the opportunity to integrate public input, as documented through photos of PG&E infrastructure issues, into safety management and prudent response. As discussed in BBIC's comments, the revised application must propose evaluation metrics that focus on promoting

public engagement and training and PG&E's accountability, transparency, safe and reliable operation.

II. PERMITTING PG&E TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE LIMITED INVITATION ONLY PILOT IT PROPOSED AND REEVALUATING IN SIX MONTHS DOES NOT COMPLY WITH THE CPUC'S ORDER AND IS INSUFFICIENT TO PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY

A. BETTER APP DESIGN AND INTEGRATION INTO ENTERPRISE-WIDE SAFETY ACTIVITIES CAN ENHANCE WORKER EFFICIENCY, IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY, CPUC RULE COMPLIANCE, AND PG&E'S ACCOUNTABILITY

The Public Advocates Office commented in their February 21 comments in this proceeding that it "shares PG&E's concern that implementation of the mobile app may draw skilled resources away from critical wildfire mitigation work."[1] Public Advocates bases this comment on the lack of training from the public to "identify electrical infrastructure safety issues."[2] Public advocates argues that errors in public identification of issues "threaten to divert the time and resources of linemen, troublemen, and vegetation crews that should be employed on other wildfire mitigation programs and thereby hinder PG&E's efforts to efficiently mitigate wildfires."[3]

Public Advocates' comments do not recognize that the lack of public training is also an issue with phone calls to PG&E about complaints that should also trigger PG&E's duty to investigate. BBIC argues that PG&E should connect the App to its complaint process so that members of the public, whether they live in an urban or rural area or in a high wildfire danger area such as Chemeketa Park, can submit photographs of the issue that is the subject of their complaint call to PG&E. Neither Public Advocates nor PG&E explain why PG&E's current phone call process which does not permit photo submission is less likely to "divert resources" and more likely to promote safety and reliability than would an well-designed App process that designs public photo submission as a supplement to the complaint and other enterprise-wide safety processes.

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[1] Public Advocates Office, Comments, Feb. 21, 2020, Application 19-07-019, p. 2 [hereinafter Public Advocates Office comments].
[2] *Id.*
[3] *Id.*

A well-designed App and photo submission process connected to PG&E's enterprise-wide safety activities including its complaint process can enhance workforce efficiency. Doing so would help PG&E better use workers and to mitigate the risk its 2020 Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) identifies regarding the limited availability and accessibility of trained, qualified, and skilled personnel as an execution risk to achieving work targets.[4]

PG&E argues that "[i]n contrast to BBIC, Cal Advocates rightly considers this Mobile App within the broader context of utility efforts to prevent catastrophic wildfire."[5] PG&E misunderstands BBIC's position which is that the App must be considered within the broader context of PG&E's responsibility to offer safe, reliable service with adequate facilities at just and reasonable rates, including its efforts to prevent catastrophic wildfire. PG&E's Application proposes an isolated, limited, invitation-only App disconnected from its other safety and business processes that misses the opportunity to promote safety, accountability, and to realize PG&E's statutory responsibilities.

Neither does PG&E or Public Advocates recognize the role and responsibility of PG&E to offer training to the public about which matters pose public safety issues or violate CPUC rules, and which do not. BBIC does not argue for "transferring" responsibility for asset safety or training to the public as PG&E's reply comments suggest.[6] Training the public about how to identify hazards and lack of compliance with CPUC rules will facilitate public complaints whether by telephone or through a photo App, and increase transparency and accountability that improves public safety.

B. APP PROJECT DESIGN, EVALUATION CRITERIA, AND TIMELINE MUST BE SET UP FOR SUCCESS

The Public Advocates Office recommends in their February 21 comments in this proceeding that "six months after implementation, the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) should evaluate the effectiveness of the Mobile App Pilot in reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire against its impact on other safety programs. Based on this evaluation, the

[4] PGE 2020 WMP, (February 7, 2020) at p. 5-271.
[5] PG&E Reply Comments, Feb. 21, 2020, Application 19-07-019, p. 2 [hereinafter PG&E Reply comments].
[6] *Id.* at 6.

Commission could then decide what steps should be taken regarding the Mobile App Pilot."[7] With respect to The Public Advocates Office, their proposal is insufficient to ensure that PG&E's application to develop a photo submission App complies with the CPUC's order, protects public safety and reliability, fosters detection of CPUC rules violations or PG&E accountability. Reevaluating an ill-designed App and pilot design after six months fortells the conclusion of the evaluation. If the application and App project are not properly designed, neither the CPUC nor PG&E will fulfill their statutory duties under CA PU Code 451 to promote safe and reliable service with adequate facilities.

Running the App project for twelve months as PG&E now proposes and reevaluating it after six months as Public Advocates proposes doesn't address a poorly design App prior to launch. The Public Advocates Office recommends that six months after implementation, the CPUC should assess the Mobile App Pilot "against the diversion of resources from other wildfire mitigation efforts." Public Advocates suggests that "PG&E should specifically identify the programs that are affected by the mobile app, such as vegetation management, system hardening, and installation of sectionalizing devices."[8]

The criteria the Public Advocates Offices suggest seems to view any time spent by PG&E responding to photo-based concerns as "resource diversion," without evaluating the inefficiency of the current phone-only complaint process. Neither does it capture the potential machine learning gains if the App process is connected to PG&E's Artificial Intelligence and machine learning. The App does not propose a one-to-one trade off between responding to public complaints, whether from an App or phone, as compared to vegetation management or other tasks. The methodology by which such asserted "diversion" would be determined has not yet been submitted for evaluation. As posed by PG&E, the utility's assessment of "diversion" leans heavily against public input through an App or any other process.

Neither does this proposal account for the need for PG&E to train the public about what to look for (whether they call by phone or submit an app). Nor do these proposed evaluation criteria account for the need for PG&E to train its employees, officers, and board to better respond in a timely fashion to concerns about CPUC rules compliance and safety issues, whether raised by the public, PG&E employees, contractors, or others.

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[7] Public Advocates Office Comments, *supra* note 1, p. 1.
[8] *Id.* at 3.

PG&E argues that "BBIC mis-states PG&E's plan to pilot the launch of the application to customers and receive submissions from a statistically significant number of customers as not being transparent or setting it up to fail. This couldn't be further from the truth. While many public reporting apps exist, the concept of utilizing an app to allow the public to report issues with utility infrastructure is novel."[9] BBIC argues that the design is set up to fail because of the web portal which makes the App unavailable in places without Internet access, due to the lack of proposed training, and skewed evaluation criteria that seem designed to make the App end rather than succeed.

PG&E argues that:

> "As opposed to building a costly and inflexible application at the outset we believe it is better to build a flexible pilot and gather information from users. PG&E can develop a more effective and efficient safety application, without the constraints of a full-scale launch and native application that BBIC is suggesting. After analysis of the success of the web-based application, and if the Commission so orders its further expanded launch, PG&E has every intention to make the application available to everyone. The BBIC's concerns on the pilot are mis-placed.

BBIC's concerns are that the pilot's poor design, inappropriate evaluation criteria, and lack of a proposal for public training will make the App process ineffective in the short and long-term. The CPUC should order PG&E to redesign a broader pilot that accounts for Internet access gaps and does not rely on web-access. Existing Apps such as the CPUC's CalSpeed App provide this model.

2. CONCLUSION: THE CPUC SHOULD ORDER PG&E TO FILE A REVISED APPLICATION THAT INCLUDES TRAINING AND INTEGRATES THE APP INTO PG&E'S COMPLAINT AND RISK ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE PROCESS

The CPUC should order PG&E to revise its application to respond to the CPUC's order in OII.19-06-015. Any revised PG&E application should propose a plan that integrates a revised App into its complaint, photo analysis (whether by hand or through artificial intelligence), and risk management process. The applications should include a plan for training the public on how to recognize PG&E infrastructure issues and safely report problems. The CPUC should order

[9] PG&E Reply comments, p. 3.

PG&E to train its officers, employees, and Board members to improve PG&E's responsiveness and accountability to the public as a component of the App's integration into PG&E's safety process.

The BBIC would like to thank Michelle Waters and Firewise Chemeketa Park for their contributions to BBIC's comments and reply comments. Thanks to Santa Clara University School of Law students Ben Katzenberg and Robert Murillo for their contributions to the BBIC's comments and assistance to Professors Sandoval and Hammond in preparing the BBIC's comments and reply comments.

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Respectfully submitted,

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