

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



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Order Instituting Rulemaking to
Establish Energization Timelines

Rulemaking 24-01-018

**REPLY COMMENTS OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TRIBAL CHAIRMEN'S
ASSOCIATION ON THE MAY 28, 2026 ADMINISTRATIVE LAWJUDGE'S RULING
ON THE BIENNIAL ENERGIZATION REPORTS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the May 28, 2026 Administrative Law Judge's Ruling Directing the Large Utilities and Authorizing Parties to Comment on the Review of the September 2025 Biannual Energization Reports, as modified by the June 11, 2026 Ruling Extending Comment Deadline (Ruling), and Rule 1.4 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (SCTCA) respectfully submits these Reply Comments, which respond to opening submissions filed by Southern California Edison Company (SCE), Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), San Diego Gas & Electric Company ("SDG&E"), Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC), California Community Choice Association (CalCCA), California Broadband & Video Association (CalBroadband), and Public Advocates Office at the California Public Utilities Commission (Cal Advocates).

In this Reply, SCTCA makes three points:

- (1) Data quality problems documented by Guidehouse confirm that the Commission cannot rely on unverified investor-owned utility (IOU) self-reporting. The biannual reports require independent verification mechanisms, including a means for customers to confirm the accuracy of utility-recorded project milestones.
- (2) Biannual reports should disaggregate energization timeline and delay-cause data for Tribal lands and rural and remote communities, where upstream capacity constraints concentrate.¹
- (3) The Commission should require IOUs to report separately on whether, and how, customer delay reporting processes are communicated effectively and appropriately to Tribal and disadvantaged communities, including identifying what contact information and messaging channels have been used.

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE GUIDEHOUSE REVIEW CONFIRMS THAT SELF-REPORTED DATA REQUIRES INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION

Guidehouse's review of the September 2025 reports identifies challenges related to data sufficiency, consistency across utilities, and the ability to accurately evaluate the IOUs' performance against adopted energization targets.² The utilities' own filings concede the point. SDG&E's reporting narrative recognized that the utility remains unable to fully populate D.24-09-020 reporting requirements absent significant system investments. SCE's September 2025 report likewise acknowledged that incomplete record closure prevented the utility from correctly reporting projects as completed, and identified multiple required data points that its systems could not yet track. A reporting framework in which data completeness is perpetually deferred to the next filing cycle cannot support the compliance determinations the Legislature directed.³

¹ Based on SCTCA's member Tribes experiences in SDG&E's service territory.

² See CalBroadband Comments at page 1; Cal Advocates Comments at pages 3 to 4, which describe data availability and reliability gaps, citing Guidehouse Report at pages 2 and 3.

³ Guidehouse's 2026 review of September 2025 reports; SDG&E March 31, 2026 Biannual Report; SCE September 30, 2025 Report.

Under the current framework, customers have no mechanism to review the step dates the IOU recorded for their projects, verify whether a delay reason attributed to the customer is accurate, or flag discrepancies in real time. Delay-cause attribution has consequences: time attributed to “customer dependencies” pauses the utility's compliance clock. Where the underlying data is demonstrably inconsistent — as Guidehouse found — attribution error systematically favors the reporting party.

SCE's Response illustrates the pattern the Commission should reject. The utility recommends that reporting field definitions “remain at a high level,” warning that more granular, uniform definitions could impose reporting burden without improving the Commission's understanding of energization performance;⁴ argues that because its improved tracking of upstream capacity dependencies was implemented only in late March 2026, it is “premature for the Commission to take further action” and “inappropriate to require modifications now”;⁵ and opposes reporting project costs before final reconciliation as potentially inaccurate.⁶

The Commission should reject the IOUs' requests to accept the reports as filed, treat promised future system fixes as adequate, or defer data quality improvements on the grounds of cost or system limitations. Instead, the CPUC should **require** submission of complete data to deem a report properly submitted. A reporting regime whose accuracy cannot be tested by the customers it exists to protect is not the transparency the Legislature directed in Senate Bill 410.

SCTCA supports IREC's proposals for independent verification and customer-facing accountability.⁷ Likewise, SCTCA endorses Cal Advocates recommendations that the Commission require the IOUs to report quantitatively and narratively on remaining

⁴ SCE Response at page 6.

⁵ id. at pages 9 and 10.

⁶ id. at pages 10 to 11.

⁷ OPENING RESPONSES OF THE INTERSTATE RENEWABLE ENERGY COUNCIL, INC. TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE'S RULING DIRECTING PARTIES TO COMMENT ON THE SEPTEMBER 2025 BIENNIAL ENERGIZATION REPORTS, page 19.

data availability and reliability gaps, with plans to achieve 100 percent data sufficiency;⁸ “adopt and enforce a data sufficiency threshold,” with IOU shareholders — not ratepayers — funding the IT upgrades and staff training needed to comply if a utility fails to meet the threshold within one year;⁹ and implement these reforms within one year of decision adoption.¹⁰

SCTCA also urges the Commission direct the IOUs to (1) provide each energization applicant with access to step dates and delay-cause codes recorded for the applicant's project, and (2) establish a simple process for customers to dispute recorded milestones, with disagreements and resolutions summarized in each biannual report.

B. THE BIANNUAL REPORTS SHOULD DISAGGREGATE DATA FOR TRIBAL, RURAL, AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Upstream capacity constraints — situations in which an energization request cannot be completed because the distribution system requires upgrades before new load can be served — are, in the experience of SCTCA's member Tribes, among the most significant causes of delay for customers in rural, remote, and Tribal areas. D.24-09-020 permits the IOUs to pause target timelines upon notifying a customer of an upstream capacity constraint, which makes the geographic distribution of such constraints a central question to evaluate whether the energization framework is serving all customers consistent with Public Utilities Code Section 453's prohibition on discriminatory service.

Statewide averages obscure this question. A report showing acceptable average timelines can conceal a tail of long-delayed projects concentrated in the communities least equipped to absorb them. SCTCA recommends that the Commission direct the IOUs, beginning with the next biannual report, to disaggregate timeline performance, delay-cause attribution, and upstream-capacity-constraint pauses for (1) projects located

⁸ Cal Advocates Comments at pages 3-4.

⁹ *id.* at 4.

¹⁰ *id.* at 11.

on Tribal lands; and (2) projects in rural and remote areas as defined in the IOUs' existing reporting frameworks.¹¹

CalBroadband makes the same structural point from a different vantage: reported averages can understate actual delays and obscure their sources. CalBroadband wants separate tracking and reporting of broadband deployment projects; category-level disaggregation that parallels the geographic disaggregation SCTCA recommends.¹² Data is available in IOU systems at the project level; Guidehouse's ability to construct project-level datasets demonstrates as much, making the incremental burden of geographic tagging modest.

C. IOUs SHOULD REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS COMMUNICATION OF THE DELAY REPORTING PROCESS TO TRIBAL AND DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

The Commission should require the IOUs to report separately on whether, and how, delays are communicated effectively and appropriately to Tribal and disadvantaged communities, including whether current contact information and appropriate communication channels were used.

Outreach that satisfies a checkbox — bill inserts; webpage — does not reach communities where utility account contact information is outdated, digital access is limited, or trusted communication channels run through Tribal governments rather than mass media. Effective communication to Tribal communities requires coordination with Tribal governments themselves, audience-appropriate materials, and verification that contact information is current. Reporting on these elements is a modest requirement that will reveal whether the delay reporting procedure is a protection in practice or only on paper.

¹¹ See also Cal Advocates Comments at pages 9-10, (recommending improved upstream and MPU reporting.

¹² CalBroadband Comments at page 7.

III. CONCLUSION

SCTCA respectfully requests that the Commission (1) direct the IOUs to provide customers access to recorded project milestones and delay-cause attributions and a process to dispute them; (2) require disaggregated biannual reporting for Tribal lands and rural and remote communities, including upstream-capacity-constraint pauses; and (3) require IOUs to report separately on the effectiveness and appropriateness of its communication of delays to Tribal and disadvantaged communities.

Respectfully Submitted,

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