



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

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PRESS RELEASE

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CPUC HELPS CONSUMERS PLAN FOR THE GREAT SOLAR ECLIPSE
“LET’S CUT OUR ELECTRICITY USE AND
GIVE THE HARD WORKING SUN A TWO HOUR BREAK”

SAN FRANCISCO, May 25, 2017 - The California Public Utilities Commission’s (CPUC) President, Michael Picker, today called on customers to do their part to lower electricity use statewide by 3,500 megawatts (MWs) on August 21, 2017, the day of The Great Solar Eclipse, by reducing electricity use from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m.

A partial solar eclipse will travel across California from about 9:02 a.m. until approximately 11:54 a.m. The sun will be obscured from 76 percent in Northern California to 62 percent in Southern California, and this reduction in solar radiation will directly affect the output of both large scale photovoltaic (PV) electric power plants and rooftop solar. California won’t see another eclipse of this magnitude until 2045.

Said President Picker, “When the sun goes away, so does the energy that powers our renewable solar panels. If millions of Californians turn off appliances and power strips to unplug from the grid during the eclipse, we can let our hard working sun take a break. We don’t have to rely on expensive and inefficient natural gas peaking power plants, we can have cleaner air, we can keep our system reliable, and we can send a message to the rest of the country that we can do all of that without being forced to rely on fossil fuels as the only foundation of our electricity.”

Nearly 10,000 MWs of commercially operational grid-connected solar PV is currently operated by California’s investor-owned utilities, and more will soon be completed. Initial estimates show at the eclipse peak, commercial solar production for the investor-owned utilities will be reduced from an estimated 8,754 MWs to 3,143 MWs at the maximum partial eclipse and then return to 9,046 MWs.



The normal morning solar ramp will be interrupted with a down ramp beginning at 9:02 a.m. followed by a greatly accentuated up ramp beginning at 10:22 a.m. until noon.

Said President Picker, “We will work with businesses, community organizations, local governments, and others to mobilize Californians to do their California thing and help reduce energy use during the eclipse. We can replace solar megawatts with our “negawatts” or “BetterWatts.” Join with us and stand in for the sun while it takes a short break on August 21st.”

California is known for doing its thing when it comes to conservation and energy efficiency. The state has the second lowest per capita electricity consumption rates in the country. But we can do more. Here are some suggestions:

- **Unplug:** 23 percent of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are turned off. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, the average U.S. household spends \$100 per year to power devices while they are off or in standby mode.
- **Lighting:** If all Californians upgraded to LED light bulbs, the state could reduce CO₂ emissions equivalent to those produced by a coal-fired power plant in one year. Upgrading to LED light bulbs will use at least 75 percent less energy and last 25 times longer. By replacing five of the most frequently used light fixtures in your home with ENERGY STAR-qualified models you can save \$70 each year in energy costs.
- **Time of Use:** By using high energy consuming devices, such as dishwashers, air conditioners, and washing machines, after 9 p.m., customers may be able to cut their bills. This also reduces the need to use the most expensive, carbon intensive forms of power generation during peak demand times.

For information on Energy Upgrade California, the CPUC’s statewide consumer engagement initiative to promote energy management concepts, energy efficiency actions, and clean energy opportunities for the state’s residents and businesses, please visit www.energyupgradeca.org.

For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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