



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ADVISORY

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CPUC TAKES ACTION TO HOLD COMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES ACCOUNTABLE AND INCREASE PUBLIC SAFETY

SAN FRANCISCO, November 13, 2019 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in ongoing actions to hold utilities accountable during wildfires and Public Safety Power Shut-offs (PSPS), today said it will hold a hearing on the operations of communications companies during the October PSPS events in California.

WHEN: November 20, 2019, 10 a.m. – noon.

WHERE: CPUC Auditorium, 505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102; also available via webcast at www.adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc

WHO: Directed to appear before the CPUC's Commissioners are executives from AT&T (wireless, wireline/VoIP, and cable), Charter/Time Warner (cable), Comcast/Xfinity (cable), Frontier Communications (wireline/VoIP), T-Mobile, and Verizon Wireless

WHAT: The CPUC's Commissioners will direct a number of questions to communications company executives regarding company performance during wildfires and October PSPS events in California. Topics will include:

- Responses taken to keep communication service on for customers;
- Compliance with the CPUC's Emergency Disaster Relief Decision ([D.19-08-025](#)), i.e., providing supplemental cellular service and device charging stations and Wi-Fi access in refuge centers; and,
- Coordination with the California Office of Emergency Services and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.



The Ruling scheduling the hearing is at

<http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M319/K752/319752877.PDF>.

Further, CPUC President Marybel Batjer in a [letter](#) today directed communications companies to file with the CPUC by Nov. 18, 2019, responses to her questions about their performance during the recent PSPS events. As President Batjer said to communications companies in her letter, “Based on your performances over the past few weeks, it appears that you are not managing your network infrastructure adequately to maintain vital communications services for Californians during emergencies. Now is the time for you and your companies to join with the CPUC and step up to address these issues before we experience another devastating wildfire or the unfortunate need for widespread Public Safety Power Shut-offs in California.”

The Nov. 20 hearing, formally called a Pre-Hearing Conference, follows a number of CPUC actions focused on electric utility performance during wildfires and PSPS events that were announced on October 28, including:

- **Launched a Formal Investigation:** The CPUC opened an [investigation](#) to examine recent PSPS events and ensure utilities are held accountable for their actions during these events.
- **Immediate Re-Examination of How Utilities Use PSPS:** To prevent widespread PSPS events by the next fire season, President Batjer is issuing a new Ruling to reexamine the current PSPS protocol and the use of PSPS by investor-owned utilities. This includes an examination of actions that utilities can take in the next six months to minimize impacts of future PSPS events by increasing grid redundancy, segmentation, and equipment hardening.
- **Ensuring Additional Consumer Protection:** The CPUC will ensure that for PSPS events, the utilities do not collect from their customers the charges that are a part of every customer’s bill so that customers do not have to pay for services they do not receive during PSPS events.
- **Expanding Wildfire Mitigation Plans for Immediate Impact:** President Batjer will direct the utilities to expand their upcoming 2020 Wildfire Mitigation Plans to focus on increasing the safe performance of utilities, reduce the need for PSPS events, create more resilient communities, and provide results before the next wildfire season.
- **Enlist New Technology Partnerships:** The CPUC will pull together a panel of experts to use data modeling and other advanced technologies to identify specific projects that can be implemented in coming months to minimize the use and scope of PSPS events next fire



season. This team of experts will also analyze the effectiveness of utility mitigation plans and evaluate past PSPS events.

To learn about other actions the CPUC has taken regarding wildfires and PSPS, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov/PSPS.

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.

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