



California Public Utilities Commission
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PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: R.19-09-009

CPUC ISSUES PROPOSAL FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF MICROGRIDS AND RESILIENCY STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE THREATENED BY POWER OUTAGES

SAN FRANCISCO, April 29, 2020 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today issued for public comment a proposal that would require large electric investor-owned utilities to accelerate deployment of microgrids and resiliency projects to minimize the impacts of wildfire-caused power outages and Public Safety Power Shut-off (PSPS) events. The proposal will be on the CPUC’s June 11, 2020 Voting Meeting agenda.

The proposal, officially termed a Proposed Decision, orders utilities to prioritize, streamline, and expedite microgrids and resiliency projects that could be put in place by September 1, 2020, and requires collaboration with local and tribal governments. The proposal is intended to rapidly develop and deploy projects that could keep electricity on for critical facilities and other customers during power outages.

“Wildfire season will begin soon and, if like last year, it will surge this fall, bringing Public Safety Power Shut-offs and other outages” said CPUC Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma. “Microgrids using independent energy supply can provide essential backup and resiliency for communities affected. This proposed microgrid decision would appropriately require utilities to expedite deployment, all towards assuring essential services such as clean water, emergency services, and medical support can continue, especially in disadvantaged communities and among the access and functional needs populations.”

The proposal specifically requires utilities to:

- Further standardize application processes for project approvals;
- Expedite utility sign-off on installed projects;



- Accelerate interconnection of projects for key locations, customers, and facilities;
- Adjust tariffs to better value resiliency; and,
- Enhance collaboration and coordination with local and tribal governments.

The proposal intends to give communities with a strong interest in microgrids and resiliency projects better access to the technical resources and support from utilities.

Additionally, the proposal conditionally approves several resiliency proposals from two utilities:

- Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) would implement programs that would:
 - Upgrade substations that can be quickly and safely energized with local sources of power;
 - Procure temporary, portable generators for use at substations and other key locations of public benefit for the 2020 wildfire season; and,
 - Provide utility technical and financial support for community-proposed microgrids to enhance resiliency of critical facilities and vulnerable customers.
- San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) would implement software and hardware technology to enhance microgrid operation, as well as augment and interoperate with SDG&E's existing advanced distribution management system and microgrid projects proposed in other proceedings.

“The CPUC is pursuing every path available to make our communities more resilient to wildfire-caused power outages,” said CPUC President Marybel Batjer. “Part of that approach is driving utilities to improve their wildfire mitigation work, another part is encompassed in today’s proposal, which helps ensure utilities expedite deployment of much-needed backup power for their customers in advance of the 2020 wildfire season.”

This proposal is the latest in a series of actions that the CPUC has taken to improve preparation for the upcoming wildfire season. Other actions are described at www.cpuc.ca.gov/deenergization.

In response to Senate Bill (SB) 1339, the CPUC initiated Rulemaking 19-09-009 to facilitate the commercialization and deployment of microgrids while prioritizing system, public, and worker



safety and avoiding shifting costs between ratepayers. The proceeding is organized into three tracks and this proposal is focused on track one issues.

The proposal is available at

<http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M335/K511/335511328.PDF>.

Documents related to the proceeding are available at

https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5_PROCEEDING_SELECT:R1909009. By clicking the “Public Comments” tab, members of the public can submit comments on the proposal.

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, 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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