



California Public Utilities Commission  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

Docket #: R.18-03-011

## **CPUC ISSUES PROPOSAL THAT WOULD REQUIRE WIRELESS COMPANIES TO BETTER SERVE CUSTOMERS IN EMERGENCIES**

SAN FRANCISCO, June 11, 2020 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in its ongoing efforts to help utilities better protect customers during emergencies, today issued for public comment a proposal that would require California’s wireless companies to develop comprehensive resiliency plans to ensure necessary planning and network investments are made to maintain service to customers during a disaster or power outage, including Public Safety Power Shut-offs (PSPS). The proposal will be on the CPUC’s July 16, 2020 Voting Meeting agenda.

Today’s action builds on [proposals](#) issued in March by CPUC President Marybel Batjer and a series of communications customer protection requirements the CPUC approved in a prior Decision ([D.19-08-025](#)). That Decision determined that the wildfires of 2017, 2018, and 2019, as well as the PSPS events initiated by utilities, revealed failures in California’s communications network that resulted in a loss of service to customers and endangered the lives of customers and first responders.

During the October and November 2019 wildfire and PSPS events, widespread reports of communications outages across all sectors were reported. Significant outages occurred on the networks supporting mobile, cable, Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) communications, and internet traffic. For example, 57 percent of cell sites in Marin County alone were out of service between October 26-27, 2019. Without access to 911 and the ability to reach first responders, Californians cannot access needed services, be safe, or even function in an emergency.

The proposal, officially termed a Proposed Decision, would:



- Require wireless providers, within 60 days of these rules going into effect, to submit **emergency operations plans** that detail their protocols for responding to a disaster, to the CPUC, the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), and local emergency response agencies. Wireless providers would also be required to provide emergency points of contact, verification of annual emergency preparedness exercises, and plans for communicating with the public during disasters and outages impacting their networks. These plans would be updated and filed annually.
- Adopt a 72-hour **backup power requirement** for wireless providers to ensure that a minimum level of service and coverage is maintained during disasters or power outages in Tier 2 and Tier 3 High Fire Threat Districts. Wireless providers must have this infrastructure ready for use within 12 months.
- Require wireless providers to file comprehensive **Communications Resiliency Plans** with the CPUC that detail their ability to maintain a minimum level of service and coverage during a disaster or power outage. The plans would detail their use of an array of strategies, including backup power, redundancy, network hardening, temporary facilities, preparedness planning, and communication and coordination with other utilities, emergency responders, and the public. Minimum level of service and coverage includes 9-1-1 service, 2-1-1 service, ability to receive emergency alerts and warnings, and to access evacuation and de-energization websites. Wireless providers would submit these plans within 6 months.

In a forthcoming proposal the CPUC will consider resiliency requirements for wireline providers.

The proposal is available at

<https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M339/K544/339544853.PDF>. Opening comments from parties are due July 1, 2020, and reply comments are due July 6, 2020.

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:R1803011](https://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/apex/f?p=401:56:0::NO:RP,57,RIR:P5_PROCEEDING_SELECT:R1803011). 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](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov).

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