

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

Order Instituting Rulemaking to Examine
Electric Utility De-Energization of Power
Lines in Dangerous Conditions.

Rulemaking 18-12-005
(Filed December 13, 2018)

**REPLY COMMENTS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
ON THE PROPOSED DECISION ADOPTING DE-ENERGIZATION (PUBLIC SAFETY
POWER SHUT-OFF) GUIDELINES (PHASE 1 GUIDELINES)**

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The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) respectfully submits these Reply Comments on the Proposed Decision Adopting De-Energization (Public Safety Power Shut-Off) Guidelines (Phase 1 Guidelines), issued in this Rulemaking (R.) 18-12-005 (De-Energization) on April 26, 2019 (Proposed Decision). CSAC was granted party status in this proceeding on March 18, 2019. These Reply Comments are timely filed and served pursuant to the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure.

**I.
NOTIFICATION OF A DE-ENERGIZATION EVENT SHOULD REMAIN PRIMARILY
WITH THE UTILITIES**

In its Opening Comments, CSAC stated that while it appreciates the Proposed Decision’s emphasis on the utilities working closely with local governments “in developing and deploying de-energization, the responsibility for its complete and seamless deployment, including notification of the de-energization event, should remain with the utilities.”¹ This position is shared by Mendocino, Napa, and Sonoma Counties and the City of Santa Rosa (the Joint Local Governments) who state that “[i]t is also appropriate that PG&E have primary responsibility for providing notice to, and establishing effective coordination with, its safety partners and its

¹ CSAC Opening Comments on the Proposed Decision, at p. 4.

customers when a de-energization event occurs.”² CSAC believes that this requirement should be applied to all utilities.

In addition, CSAC noted in its Opening Comments that local governments and agencies may have more limited resources than the utilities, in general and when applied to de-energization events.³ The Joint Local Governments provide an example of these limited resources by stating that “the use of many local government warning systems is governed by state and federal regulation. These systems may not be used unless there is an ‘extraordinary’ or ‘significant’ threat to life, safety, or property under the federal regulations, or unless there is an ‘emergency’ under the state regulations.”⁴ CSAC supports the Joint Local Governments’ recommendation that “to use these systems, a determination must be made that de-energization events – regardless of whether the power is actually shut off – constitute a threat or emergency within the meaning of the regulations.”⁵

Again, CSAC agrees with the City of Malibu who supports the Proposed Decision’s “inclusion of government and fire responder input in various aspects of de-energization, including advance notice, identification of critical facilities, response coordination and input on de-energization/re-energization decisions.”⁶ However, CSAC once again requests that the Proposed Decision be modified to clarify that the utilities, and not local governments or public safety partners, bear the primary responsibility of providing notification of de-energization events.

² The Joint Local Governments Opening Comments on the Proposed Decision, at pp. 4-5.

³ CSAC Opening Comments on the Proposed Decision, at p. 4.

⁴ The Joint Local Governments Opening Comments on the Proposed, at p. 5.

⁵ *Id.*, at p. 5.

⁶ City of Malibu Opening Comments, at p. 2

II.
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS REGARDING POPULATIONS WITH ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL
NEEDS (AFN POPULATIONS)**

In its Opening Comments, CSAC noted that it was unclear from the Proposed Decision’s AFN populations guidelines “what information exactly the utilities will be providing local governments and agencies to identify AFN populations.”⁷ As such, CSAC agrees with the Center for Accessible Technology (CforAT) that there should be “coordination with local governments to either share relevant lists or to have the utilities provide support for local governments to effectively convey information to AFN individuals/households on their own lists.”⁸ In addition, CSAC agrees with CforAT that “[t]he requirement to communicate effectively with AFN populations should be modified specifically to include detail on what constitutes accessible communication.”⁹

In the event that this information cannot be included in this Proposed Decision, CSAC believes that this issue should be explored in Phase 2 of this proceeding. As such, CSAC agrees with the Joint Local Governments “that the utility’s responsibility for providing support for individual AFN customers, ... be explored in the second phase of this proceeding.”¹⁰ Likewise, CSAC supports the Joint Local Governments’ contention “that multiple channels be used to provide notice of de-energization to customers, including increased outreach for AFN customers.”¹¹

⁷ CSAC Opening Comments on the Proposed Decision, at p. 5.

⁸ CforAT Opening Comments on the Proposed Decision, at p. 6.

⁹ *Id.*, at p. 10.

¹⁰ Joint Local Governments Opening Comments on the Proposed Decision, at p. 4.

¹¹ *Id.*, at p. 7.

**III.
CONCLUSION**

CSAC reiterates its support for the guidelines adopted and positions taken in the Proposed Decision regarding de-energization. However, CSAC encourages the Commission to modify the Proposed Decision to affirm that the utilities have the primary responsibility for providing notification of de-energization events and that additional information should be provided to local governments from the utilities regarding AFN populations.

Respectfully submitted,

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