Working for California
A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE CPUC
May 2021
Produced by the CPUC News & Outreach Office | outreach@cpuc.ca.gov

CPUC, CEC, CAISO Take Action on Electric Grid Reliability in California

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the California Energy Commission (CEC), and the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) have been working together since last August's rolling outages to take actions toward electric grid reliability.

In this era of climate change and severe weather, no one can predict with 100 percent certainty what is going to happen this summer.

In fact, recent data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on new temperature normals confirms what we already know: California is experiencing a climate model in real time. But since last September, the CPUC, CEC, and CAISO have made reforms and modifications to adapt to these impacts that have made the three organizations more confident that the state's electricity grid will perform reliably this summer. The CPUC, CEC, and CAISO have guarded optimism but will continue making any improvements needed, and prepare consumers to conserve energy when requested to avoid more serious and widespread outages.

The CPUC's efforts to help ensure reliability include ordering investor-owned utilities to seek contracts for additional power capacity for availability by this summer and summer 2022. In addition, the CPUC has:

- Ordered utilities to procure a minimum of an additional 2.5 percent of resources for all customers in their territories, representing an effective increase of the planning reserve margin from the existing 15 percent to 17.5 percent.
- Ordered utilities to pilot an Emergency Load Reduction Program that will give demand response providers and other companies providing new services to manage electricity demand, the ability to demonstrate how their innovative programs can support the grid.

continued on page 3

Inside:

CPUC Places PG&E Into Enhanced Oversight and Enforcement Process for Wildfire Mitigation Performance

The CPUC has placed Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) into the first step of an enhanced oversight and enforcement process based on the company's failure to sufficiently prioritize clearing vegetation on its highest-risk power lines as part of its wildfire mitigation work in 2020. PG&E is ordered to make corrective actions to ensure it improves its safety performance.

This action builds on findings in an audit report issued by the CPUC's Wildfire Safety Division regarding PG&E's enhanced vegetation management activities. The Wildfire Safety Division found that in 2020 PG&E failed to clear hazardous vegetation from power lines that posed the highest wildfire risks, based on the company's own risk rankings. Instead, PG&E logged the majority of its compliance work on lower-risk power lines – the opposite of expectations set out in PG&E's Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

PG&E must submit to the CPUC a corrective action plan and progress reports every 90 days. The corrective action plan and progress reports will be public documents and the CPUC will hold public briefings for transparency about PG&E's progress. The corrective action plan is intended to create a path to help ensure that in 2021 PG&E is prioritizing its enhanced vegetation management based on wildfire risk throughout its electric system.

CPUC safety staff will closely monitor PG&E's corrective actions and ensure that the utility's risk-driven prioritization is carried out by its vegetation management crews on the ground.

If PG&E demonstrates it is prioritizing high-risk lines for enhanced vegetation management in 2021, the utility could be removed from the enhanced oversight process. If PG&E fails to demonstrate it is satisfying the corrective action requirements, the CPUC may pursue advancing the utility in the process.

The CPUC's enhanced oversight and enforcement process for PG&E has six steps that are triggered by specific findings or events. The process was imposed by the CPUC as a condition of approving PG&E's plan for exiting bankruptcy in May 2020, and provides a clear roadmap for how the CPUC closely monitors PG&E's performance in delivering safe, reliable, affordable, clean energy. The process does not supplant existing CPUC regulatory or enforcement jurisdiction and does not limit the CPUC's authority to pursue other enforcement actions. ■

Wildfire Preparedness Week in California

Governor Gavin Newsom declared the week of May 3, 2021, as "Wildfire Preparedness Week" in California. As the Governor stated, "Hotter, drier conditions driven by climate change are contributing to unparalleled risk of catastrophic wildfire across landscapes. With continued dry conditions and ever-present climate change, California is facing another difficult and dangerous wildfire year."

California is taking important actions to prevent and prepare for wildfires. Notably, in April, Governor Newsom signed an early action funding package to accelerate projects that will protect high-risk communities as part of his overall proposed $1 billion investment in forest health and community fire resilience.

At the CPUC, the Wildfire Safety Division is continuing its oversight of the utilities' Wildfire Mitigation Plans to help prevent ignition of wildfires by utility infrastructure.

The CPUC is also continuing its oversight of the utilities' use of Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events to ensure that de-energization is only used as a measure of last resort and to verify that the utilities are taking action to mitigate customer impacts to the greatest extent possible.

The CPUC will issue additional PSPS guidelines that the utilities will be required to adhere to in the 2021 wildfire season to more fully support customers and vulnerable communities when they are without power.

Wildfire Preparedness Week highlights that everyone needs to take action to prepare for wildfires because the question isn't if there will be wildfires, the question is where and when there will be wildfires. On CAL FIRE's website, readyforwildfire.org, there is information on steps to protect homes and prepare for evacuations. ■

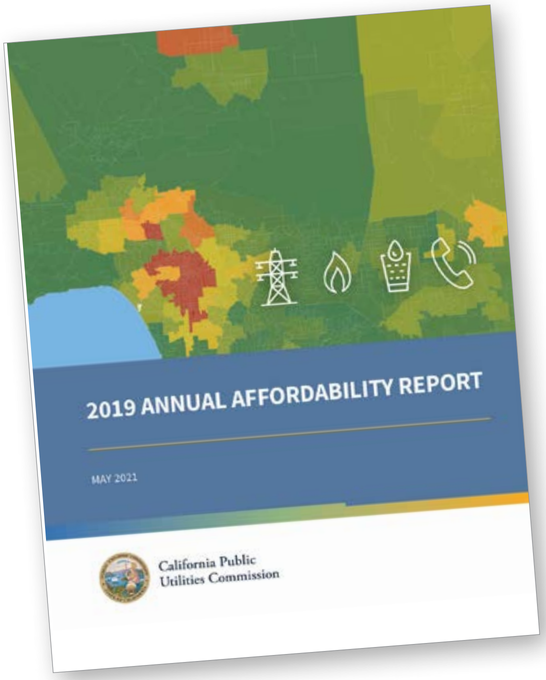
ELECTRIC GRID RELIABILITY continued from page 1

- Ordered utilities to modify their Critical Peak Pricing programs, which charge a higher price for electricity consumption during peak hours on selected days. The CPUC ordered several modifications to the Critical Peak Pricing programs to ensure the program is more effective and responsive to the critical hours of a grid emergency.
- Ordered modifications to existing demand response programs to expand participation, including temporarily allowing year-round enrollment in utility "interruptible programs" for industrial and large commercial customers. The CPUC also increased demand response program enrollment incentives to attract new customers.

The CPUC also approved a new statewide "Flex Alert" program to educate consumers about the positive impacts of conservation, help customers understand grid conditions, and inform customers of the need to conserve when energy demand is high. The program asks Californians to shift, not sacrifice, by pre-cooling their homes during the day when solar energy is plentiful and saving the energy we share in the evening.

The planning and implementation of the state's clean energy future progresses forward and will only accelerate in the months and years to come. The climate change-induced events of last August only further crystallize the need to build a more reliable grid by way of zero-carbon resources. ■

CPUC Issues Report Highlighting Trends In Affordability of Combined Essential Utility Services



The report shows that resources for addressing combined utility affordability can be most effective if targeted to the specific communities identified by the metrics.

The CPUC, in its ongoing efforts to address the affordability of utility services, issued its first annual Affordability Report for California. The report shows trends in the affordability of energy, water, and communications. The report provides a methodology for reviewing the affordability of combined utility service for each region in California. As a result, decision-makers and stakeholders will have a baseline to consider when assessing the impacts of CPUC decisions as well as inform important policy discussions to promote long-term affordability for residential customers thereby reducing financial hardship, non-payments, and disconnections.

The report shows Californians experience varying utility service affordability based on where they live and their income levels. Roughly 11 percent of lower income households in the state spend more than a third of their income on utilities, after housing costs are accounted for. These areas include parts of Oakland, Stockton, Fresno, Modesto, Tulare, Bakersfield, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles.

The analysis focuses on the affordability of essential electricity, natural gas, water, and communications services, primarily for low-income and disadvantaged households. The metrics used include critical considerations such as income, poverty levels, housing costs, and other socioeconomic indicators.

Among the report's findings for 2019 for low-income households in the 20th percentile:

- **ELECTRICITY:** More than 13 percent of Californians spend more than 15 percent of their income on utilities, after housing costs are accounted for. This includes parts of Chico, Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the San Joaquin Valley, where incomes are extremely low.
- **NATURAL GAS:** 6 percent of households pay more than 10 percent.
- **WATER:** Lower income households in rural areas are extra burdened by high essential service charges, and higher-than-average water costs.
- **COMMUNICATIONS:** A stark digital divide from a lack of affordable telephone and broadband services is prevalent across the state, particularly in places with high cost of service areas.

The report shows that resources for addressing combined utility affordability can be most effective if targeted to the specific communities identified by the metrics. These targeted efforts may include marketing, education, and outreach for existing subsidy and other programs, as well as consideration of additional programs to address community affordability concerns.

Over the last year, the CPUC has initiated many of these recommended actions. For instance, a proceeding focused on the San Joaquin Valley established a methodology for identifying disadvantaged communities in the region and approved $56 million in funding for 11 pilots which seek to reduce energy costs for households in these communities by way of appliance retrofit pilots, expanded outreach and enrollment in existing demand-side management programs, and new bill protection measures.

In addition, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated affordability challenges, the CPUC has taken numerous measures to help protect consumers in all areas of the state where regulated entities serve from hardship, including temporary moratoria on disconnections for failure to pay utility bills, expanded access to bill subsidy programs, and requiring utilities to offer payment plans for customer debt.

The CPUC recognizes that consumers need affordable and improved utility services. The Affordability Report is part of the CPUC's continued examination of utility rate increases.

In July 2018, the CPUC opened Rulemaking 18-07-006 to examine the impacts on affordability of combined energy, water, and communications services under CPUC jurisdiction. The proceeding helps the CPUC meet statutory requirements to consider affordability when designing rates for essential utility services. ■

THE DOCKET:

Proceedings Filed at the CPUC April 2021

PROCEEDING NUMBER | FILED DATE | FILER

C2104004 • 18-MAR-2021 • JOHN DUFFY AND LAURA DUFFY
John Duffy and Laura Duffy, Complainants vs. Southern California Edison Company (U338E), Defendant. [Charging allegation is billing error.]
HARD COPY FILED

A2104005 • 01-APRIL-2021 • BUSINESS TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, INC.
Application of Business Telephone eXchange, Inc. - BTX for Registration as an Interexchange Carrier Telephone Corporation pursuant to the Provisions of Public Utilities Code Section 1013.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376501648

K2104002 • 01-APRIL-2021 • MISSION CITY REBAR, INC.
Appeal of Mission City Rebar, Inc. from the Denial of its Status as a Minority-Owned Business issued by The Supplier Clearinghouse on March 12, 2021.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376031821

R1706026 • 5-APRIL-21 • ALJ/WANG/CPUC
Phase 2 Proposed Decision on Power Charge Indifference Adjustment Cap and Portfolio Optimization.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376054718

R1506009 • 5-APRIL-21 • CMMR/RECHTSCHAFFEN/CPUC
Proposed Decision addressing Phase II issues relating to Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plans.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376088476

A2101004 • 5-APRIL-21 • ALJ/HAGA/CPUC
Proposed Financing Order authorizing Pacific Gas and Electric Company the issuance of Recovery Bonds pursuant to Article 5.8 of the California Public Utilities Code.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376088485

continued on page 6

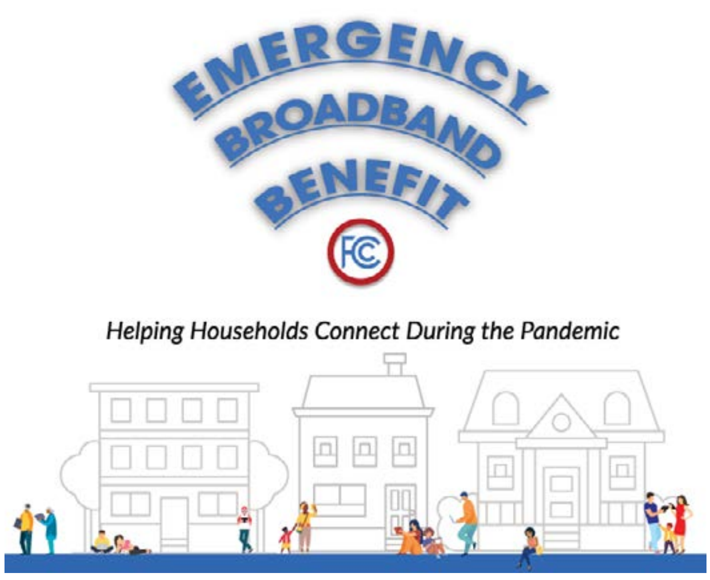
Emergency Broadband Benefit Program Provides Monthly Discount to Eligible Households

Eligible households can now enroll in the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Emergency Broadband Benefit Program to receive a monthly discount off the cost of broadband service from an approved provider.

Eligible households can enroll through an approved provider or by visiting https://getemergencybroadband.org.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program provides eligible households with discounts of up to $50 a month for broadband service, and up to $75 a month if the household is on Tribal lands. It also provides a one-time discount of up to $100 on a computer or tablet for eligible households.

Under the law, the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program is open to households that participate in an existing low-income or pandemic relief program offered by a broadband provider; Lifeline subscribers, including those that are on Medicaid or accept SNAP benefits; households with kids receiving free and reduced-price lunch or school breakfast; Pell grant recipients; and those who have lost jobs and seen their income reduced in the last year. ■



K2104003 • 06-APRIL-2021 • DAWIT BERHANU BEKELE

Appeal of Dawit Bekele, DBA, First Class Limo Services from March 23, 2021 in the amount of $3,000 issued by the California Public Utilities Commission Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376054632

R1109011 • 22-SEPT.-2011 (REOPENED WEEK OF APRIL 5, 2021) • CPUC

ALJ's Ruling Reopening Record • Order Instituting Rulemaking on the Commission's Own Motion to improve distribution level interconnection rules and regulations for certain classes of electric generators and electric storage resources.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376054779

R1707007 • 7-APRIL-21 • CMMR/GUZMAN ACEVES/CPUC

Proposed Decision Addressing Remaining Phase I Issues. This decision is the culmination of a nearly four-year effort to streamline the interconnection application process for distributed energy resources.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=375483827

R1705010 • 7-APRIL-21 • CMMR/BATJER/CPUC

Proposed Phase 1 Decision revising Electric Rule 20 and enhancing program oversight.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376042477

A2104006 • 9-APRIL-2021 • LIBERTY UTILITIES (CALPECO ELECTRIC) LLC

In the Matter of the Application of Liberty Utilities (CalPeco Electric) LLC (U933E) for Commission Approval to Finance, Construct, Own and Operate the Luning Expansion Project, Authorize Ratemaking Associated with the Project's Capital Investment and Operating Expenses, and Issuance of Expedited Decision Granting such Relief.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376743407

A2104007 • 9-APRIL-2021 • SOMOSGOV, INC

• Application of the North American Numbering Plan Administrator, on behalf of the California Telecommunications Industry, for Relief of the 209 Numbering Plan Area.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376589973

A2104008 • 13-APRIL-2021 • TRUCONNECT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Application of Truconnect Communications, Inc. (U4380C) to have the California Public Utilities Commission reimburse Earned and Unpaid Activation Fees and to Reinstitute a Portability Freeze.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=377391046

R1311005 • 16-APRIL-21 • ALJ/FITCH/KAO/CPUC

Assessment of Energy Efficiency Potential and Goals And Modification of Portfolio Approval and Oversight Process.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=378256443

A2003010 • 16-APRIL-21 • ALJ/YACKNIN/CPUC

Proposed Decision Denying Transit Systems Unlimited, Inc. the Authority to Operate as Self-Insured Charter-Party Carrier.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=378229441

A2104009 • 16-APRIL-2021 • SOMOSGOV INC

Application of the North American Numbering Plan Administrator, on Behalf of the California Telecommunications Industry, for Relief of the 707 Numbering Plan Area.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=377729058

A0810004 • 01-OCT.-2008 (REOPENED WEEK OF APRIL 12, 2021) • SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY

"Petition For Modification Of Decision 09-04-021" • Application of San Diego Gas & Electric Company (U902E) for Adoption of its 2009 Energy Resource Recovery Account (ERRA) Revenue Requirement Forecast and Review of its power procurement Balancing Account.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=376770438

A1905003 • 10-MAY-2019 (REOPENED WEEK OF APRIL 12, 2021) • TRES ESTRELLAS DE ORO, INC.

Application to Amend its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity • Application of Tres Estrellas De Oro, Inc. for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for authority to operate as a Scheduled Passenger Stage Corporation between points in Los Angeles and San Ysidro, Los Angeles and El Paso Texas, and Los Angeles and Sacramento.
HARD COPY FILING

A2104010 • 15-APRIL-2021 • SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY

Application of San Diego Gas & Electric Company (U 902E) for approval of its 2022 Electric Procurement Revenue Requirement Forecasts and GHG-related forecasts.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=378737432

A1912011 • 19-APRIL-21 • ALJ/LARSEN/CPUC

Proposed Decision Granting Intervenor Compensation to the Solar Consumer Advisor for Contributions to Resolution E-5030. Opening Comments are due on May 9, 2021. Reply Comments are due 5 days after the last day for filing Opening Comments.
https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=378737765

continued on page 7

THE DOCKET continued from page 6

I1911013 • 20-APRIL-21 • ALJ/DEANGELIS/CPUC

Proposed Decision addressing the Late 2019 Public Safety Power Shutoffs by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, and San Diego Gas & Electric Company to mitigate the risk of wildfire caused by utility infrastructure. Opening comments are due no later than May 10, 2021. Reply comments are due within five days after the last day for filing opening comments.

https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=378738236

R1311005 • 21-APRIL-21 • ALJ/KAO/CPUC

Presiding Officer's Decision ordering remedies for Southern California Gas Company's activities that misaligned with Commission intent for codes and standards advocacy. Any party to this adjudicatory proceeding may file and serve an Appeal of the Presiding Officer's Decision within 30 days of the date of issuance of this decision. Any Commissioner may request review of the Presiding Officer's Decision by filing and serving a Request for Review within 30 days of the date of issuance. Any party may file and serve a Response to an Appeal or Request for Review no later than 15 days after the date the Appeal or Request for Review was filed. Replies to Responses are not permitted.

https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=378738145

C2104011 • 22-APRIL-2021 • VINCENT JOESPH CAUCHI

Vincent J Cauchi Jr., Complainant vs. Pacific Gas and Electric Company (U39E), Defendant. [Charging allegation is overbilling.]

https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=378738278

C2104012 • 22-APRIL-2021 • ANTRANIK JAGLASSIAN

Antranik Jaglassian, Complainant vs. Southern California Gas Company (U904G), Defendant. [Charging allegation is billing error.]

https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=378738729

R1111007 • 29-APR-21 • CMMR/GUZMAN ACEVES/CPUC

Proposed Decision Addressing Select General Rate Case- Related Matters of The Small Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers. Opening Comments are due on May 19, 2021. Reply Comments are due 5 days after the last day for filing Opening Comments.

https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=380579152

R2005012 • 29-APR-21 • CMMR/RECHTSCHAFFEN/CPUC

Proposed Decision Revising Self-Generation Incentive Program Renewable Generation Technology Program Requirements and Other Matters. Opening Comments are due on May 19, 2021. Reply Comments are due 5 days after the last day for filing Opening Comments.

https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=380579155

A1911003, A1911004, A1911005, A1911006, A1911007 • 26-APR-21 • ALJ/TRAN/CPUC

Proposed Decision on Large Investor-Owned Utilities' and Marin Clean Energy's California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE), Energy Savings Rate Assistance (ESA), and Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) Program Applications for Program Years 2021-2026. Opening comments are due no later than May 16, 2021. Reply comments are due within five days after the last day for filing opening comments.

https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?DocFormat=All&DocID=380021288

California Public Utilities Commission

About this publication

This monthly newsletter is to keep you informed of proposals by the CPUC's Commissioners and Administrative Law Judges, as well as utility applications, and other issues and work of note. We also include a list summarizing the filings at the CPUC in the previous month.

We want to hear from you! If you have topics you'd like us to cover or if you'd like to make comment on our proceedings or work, please contact us at outreach@cpuc.ca.gov or call (855) 421-0400. You can find information about events we are having at www.cpuc.ca.gov/Events.

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