

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: NEIL BREGMAN, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
COORDINATOR
FIRE DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: PG&E PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFF PRESENTATION

AGENDA ACTION: STUDY SESSION

RECOMMENDATION

This item is provided for the City Council information only and no action is required.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) occurs when PG&E determines that it is necessary to de-energize power lines in a portion of its service territory because there is a danger that the lines will cause a wildfire. Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) makes this decision based on weather information: high temperatures, low humidity, forecasted high winds and dry vegetation measurements.

BACKGROUND

The risk of wildfire increases when several factors combine—these include high temperatures, high sustained and peak winds, as well as low humidity. During these conditions, electrical transmission and distribution lines may ignite fires if they are downed by winds and/or trees. To reduce the chance of accidental fire ignition in certain areas, PG&E has stated that they may de-energize electrical grids or blocks of an area(s) in advance of or during periods of heightened risk conditions. De-energization of electrical systems in affected areas may pose a life-safety risk to residents and impact other infrastructure systems. A Public Safety Power Shutoff occurs when PG&E determines that it is necessary to de-energize distribution or transmission lines in a portion of its service territory because there is a danger that the lines will cause a wildfire.

Not all PSPS events result in actual de-energization. If weather conditions change, the utility may decide that it is not necessary to shut the power off. PSPS is supposed to be the option of last resort for the utility.

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PSPS events can last hours or multiple days. Once PG&E has turned off the power, it must visually inspect its electrical lines to ensure that no damage occurred due to high winds or trees falling on the lines before the power can be turned on again.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

NOT APPLICABLE

ANALYSIS

Potential impacts:

Loss of commercial and public-sector communications systems including wireless voice/data, land mobile radio, cable television and internet

Loss or degradation of public/private water and wastewater systems including monitoring, pumping, and treatment

Loss of traffic monitoring systems and signals

Impacts on critical facilities including public safety and hospitals

Impacts on commerce including loss or degradation of electronic points of sale, gas station pumps, security systems, and refrigeration

Loss of power could significantly impact individuals dependent on durable medical equipment, wheelchair charging, and specialized communication devices

Loss or degradation of public safety agency voice and data communications systems

Loss or degradation of community alert and warning systems

Loss or degradation of fire suppression water supply systems

Unsafe use of generators as alternate power supply

Potential impact to food safety due to degraded refrigeration or unsafe preparation

Loss of traffic monitoring systems and signals

City staff and its partners have been working to prepare for and mitigate these potential impacts.

FISCAL IMPACT

NOT APPLICABLE

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NOT APPLICABLE

NOTIFICATION

NOT APPLICABLE

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – CWSP Emergency Preparedness Brochure – Do You Have a Plan?
- Attachment 2 – Preparing Your Business for Potential Power Outages
- Attachment 3 – The Power of Being Prepared
- Attachment 4 – Community Wildfire Safety Program

CONTACT

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