

**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)

**COMMENTS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENERGY STORAGE ALLIANCE TO
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE'S RULING REQUESTING COMMENTS ON
PROPOSED ADDITIONAL AND MODIFIED DE-ENERGIZATION GUIDELINES**

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February 19, 2020

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In accordance with Rules of Practice and Procedure of the California Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”), the California Energy Storage Alliance (“CESA”) hereby submits our comments on the Administrative Law Judge’s Ruling Requesting Comments on Proposed Additional and Modified De-Energization Guidelines, issued by Administrative Law Judge (“ALJ”) Brian R. Stevens on January 30, 2020. CESA was granted party status in Rulemaking (“R.”) 18-12-005 on February 19, 2019 at the prehearing conference¹ by virtue of filing comments on *Order Instituting Rulemaking to Examine Electric Utility De-Energization of Power Lines in Dangerous Conditions* (“OIR”) on February 8, 2019.²

I. INTRODUCTION.

CESA generally supports the Commission’s examination of the Phase 1 de-energization guidelines adopted in Decision (“D.”) 19-05-042 in this proceeding. Given the scope and impacts of the 2019 Public Safety Power Shut-off (“PSPS”) events and the lessons learned on challenges and shortfalls in the effective execution of de-energization practices, the Commission

¹ See *Reporter’s Transcript* at p. 17.

<http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M268/K444/268444747.PDF>

² *Comments of the California Energy Storage Alliance to the Order Instituting Rulemaking*, filed on February 8, 2019. <http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M265/K165/265165647.PDF>

appropriately reexamines its adopted guidelines to adopt and implement improvements to prepare customers for potential PSPS events. While PSPS events should be avoided if possible, we recognize that it is a last-resort tool to mitigate against catastrophic wildfire risks.

In these comments, CESA focuses narrowly on the additions and revisions to the de-energization guidelines made to include the transportation sector in the list of “critical facilities” for priority notification of de-energization events,³ as well as on the formation of a transportation resiliency task force with government agencies and industry parties to develop a needs assessment of infrastructure and corridors in need of backup power sources and/or Level 3 electric vehicle (“EV”) chargers.

II. THE INCLUSION OF THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR IN THE LIST OF CRITICAL FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD BE ADOPTED WITH A COLLABORATIVE FOCUS ON SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION.

CESA strongly supports the Ruling’s recognition of the importance of transportation resilience in adding the transportation sector to the list of critical facilities in the modified de-energization guidelines. This aligns with the state’s long-term objectives to support transportation electrification as well as the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) definitions for critical infrastructure.⁴ In addition, this inclusion of the transportation sector better prepares customers to fuel their vehicles and be able to secure the supplies needed, as well as for local government agencies and responders to be able to provide lifeline services during emergency response and recovery operations.

³ Ruling Appendix A at 8.

⁴ See DHS and Department of Transportation plan:

<https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/nipp-ssp-transportation-systems-2015-508.pdf>

Nonetheless, since the 2019 PSPS events revealed that the challenge of PSPS notifications and communications has been in its implementation, CESA recommends that the investor-owned utilities (“IOUs”) work with transit agencies, local government agencies, and transportation infrastructure providers (including electric vehicle supply equipment [“EVSE”] providers and charging network operators) to develop an effective communication and coordination plan that is timely and sufficiently informative with details on de-energization and re-energization timelines. For example, in engaging with EVSE providers, the IOUs may be able to communicate with aggregators regarding imminent or potential PSPS events, through which the aggregators could then communicate with directly with the EVSEs and their customers in their network to manage charging needs. Similar to how local government agencies can support with communication and notification with local customers, the IOUs can potentially streamline communications through these aggregators.

Additionally, CESA asks that the Commission consider designating key charging locations or hubs located in areas that have been or are likely to be impacted by PSPS events as “critical infrastructure” for the purposes of leveraging synergies with other programs. Despite the strong support for ensuring EV drivers have access to charging during PSPS outages articulated in the revised guidelines, there appears to be a fundamental disconnect between this perspective, and the Self-Generation Incentive Program (“SGIP”), through which the Commission is also seeking to drive non-utility investments in resiliency solutions. Through recent decisions such as D.20-01-004, the Commission has allocated over \$600 million and established specific incentives to support resiliency investments via this program. However, EV charging facilities are not currently among the eligible customer types that can access these funds as they are not deemed critical resiliency customers or infrastructure in the context of that program. Notably, the current list of critical

infrastructure customers is largely based off the designations in the instant proceeding. By designating a subset of EV charging sites as critical infrastructure (*e.g.*, Level 3 charging locations with multiple charging ports located in PSPS-impacted areas) this would create a path for broadening the eligibility determinations in SGIP and ensure that the goals of this proceeding are coordinated with and advanced by key programs like SGIP.

III. THE FORMATION OF THE TRANSPORTATION RESILIENCY TASKFORCE SHOULD BE ADOPTED WITH A MODIFIED SCOPE.

CESA strongly supports the formation of the transportation resiliency taskforce, especially as it requires the collaboration and engagement of local government agencies and industry to support a needs assessment of transportation resilience. Such local customer and stakeholder knowledge coupled with industry expertise will best inform the transportation facilities and corridors where there may be backup power and/or EV charging needs to support customer and passenger mobility. However, in developing such a plan, CESA recommends that the taskforce be empowered to identify the best resiliency solution that could be deployed. Whether intended or not, the Ruling prescribes the deployment of Level 3 EV charging, portable battery storage, and/or fossil-based backup generation to support these transportation resilience objectives, but depending on the situation and/or need, other solutions may be optimal and/or more cost-effective. Additionally, the revised guidelines do not appear to consider the fundamental role of charging network operators in managing the adverse impacts of PSPS events and leveraging their assets as part of this initiative. Instead it appears to rely exclusively on a utility-led effort and investment strategy. CESA submits that EV charging solutions providers, like ChargePoint, Tesla, and Electrify America, have an essential role to play and the utilities should be directed to look to opportunities to improve the resiliency of their networks.

IV. CONCLUSION.

CESA appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments on the Ruling and looks forward to collaborating with the Commission and stakeholders in this proceeding.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alex J. Morris".

Alex J. Morris
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CALIFORNIA ENERGY STORAGE ALLIANCE

February 19, 2020