October 2020
Produced by the CPUC News & Outreach Office | outreach@cpuc.ca.gov

State Agencies Issue Preliminary Report on Causes of August Rotating Outages

“Responding to Governor Gavin Newsom’s request to learn what caused rotating electricity outages during a record-breaking August heat wave and to keep them from happening again, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the California Independent System Operator (CAISO), and the California Energy Commission (CEC) this month issued a preliminary root cause analysis report that concluded resource planning targets have not evolved to keep pace with climate change-induced extreme weather events and that energy market practices did not perform as intended during stressed conditions.

“This preliminary analysis has served as an important step in learning from the events of August 14-15, as well as a clear reminder of the importance of effective communication and coordination,” a letter accompanying the report sent to Gov. Newsom on Oct. 6 says. “We will continue our review of the root causes of the August events as more data becomes available and provide a final analysis by the end of the year.”

The letter was signed by leaders of the three entities that produced the 108-page analysis: CPUC President Marybel Batjer, Elliot Mainzer, President and Chief Executive Officer of the CAISO, which manages much of the state’s electric grid, and CEC Chairman David Hochschild.

In addition to addressing what caused the August outages ordered by CAISO when the state’s demand for energy outpaced supplies, the report also outlines short-term and longer-term actions to ensure delivery of clean, reliable, and affordable energy.

“The extreme heat storm in August was an extraordinary one-in-35-year event that, with climate change, is unfortunately becoming more common,” President Batjer said. “We will absolutely adjust our planning, procurement, and market policies to meet these changing circumstances and ensure our energy future is clean, reliable, and affordable for all Californians.”

The analysis sent to Gov. Newsom identifies immediate measures to ensure reliable supplies for 2021 and beyond, including:

• Ensuring that authorized projects currently under construction are completed by their target online dates;
• Expediting the regulatory and procurement processes to develop additional resources that can be online by 2021;
• Updating resource and reliability planning targets to better account for heat storms and other extreme events and better incorporate the transitioning electricity resource mix into reliability.

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At its October 8 Voting Meeting, the CPUC acted to make communications services more affordable for all Californians by increasing broadband services for low-income individuals and setting the stage to look into the affordability of prison calling for incarcerated persons and their families.

Improving Broadband Access in the California LifeLine Program

The CPUC voted 5-0 to increase access to broadband services to meet the needs of the California Universal Telephone Service Program (California LifeLine), which provides discounts on home phone and cell phone services to qualified households.

Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and in response to Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N-33-20 directing all California residents to shelter in place to slow the spread of the virus, the CPUC recognized that California LifeLine participants need affordable and improved broadband offerings to meet their distance learning, telehealth, and other needs. The new subsidy amounts and service standards adopted will increase access to no-cost and low-cost mobile broadband plans that meet Californians’ needs during the pandemic and beyond.

The Decision means California LifeLine participants will have new options for higher mobile data allowance, as well as access to subsidies for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services bundled with fixed broadband services.

Investigating Equity in Prison Calling Services

The second communications measure advanced by the CPUC this month is aimed at the possible regulation of telecommunications services used by people incarcerated in jails and prisons and their families in the state of California.

Most incarcerated people cannot choose their own calling provider which, combined with unrestricted rates, often results in exorbitant phone bills. Most incarcerated people cannot choose their own calling provider which, combined with unrestricted rates, often results in exorbitant phone bills.
New Rules and Procedures For Greater Transparency and Accessibility

The CPUC has adopted a series of rules and procedural changes to streamline certain proceedings and make them more transparent and easier for people to navigate.

The CPUC’s Commissioners said the changes will allow the agency to act more quickly on many of the big challenges California faces related to energy, wildfire mitigation, climate change, and other key issues.

A Resolution approved unanimously by Commissioners reflects more than two years of work by the CPUC’s Policy and Governance Committee co-chaired by Commissioners Clifford Rechtschaffen and Liane M. Randolph. The work included two public workshops, extensive staff work and outreach to a diverse range of stakeholders, and close consultation with the CPUC’s Legal and Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Divisions.

“We wanted our rules to be more transparent, provide greater accessibility to the public, and to make the proceedings more effective,” Commissioner Rechtschaffen said. “These rules govern how all our parties, utilities, advocacy groups, and others participate in our processes. It’s the guidebook for our procedures.”

Commissioner Randolph, who has led procedural reform efforts since joining the CPUC in 2015, spoke about some of the more intricate rule changes on presenting evidence and encouraging amicable settlements between parties. She also explained that the proposed changes will now be reviewed by California’s Office of Administrative Law, which oversees administrative regulations proposed by state agencies. The changes are on track to take effect on Jan. 1, 2021, she said.

Citing “an extraordinary collaboration” between the two Commissioners, their staffs, and the ALJ Division, CPUC President Marybel Batjer gave the Resolution a ringing endorsement, and said the “great, tremendous work underway” was consistent with the type of administrative reforms she envisioned for the agency when she joined the CPUC in August 2019.

“When Governor Newsom appointed me, I clearly understood that part of my charge was to implement the organizational changes that would facilitate converting our best ideas into actions at a pace fast enough to solve a problem when it counts most,” she said. “This is how we maintain the confidence of those we serve.”

The effort took on greater urgency as wildfire safety and the COVID-19 pandemic required the CPUC to move quickly on multiple fronts, including, among other things, the need to establish protocols for remote meetings and provide assistance to utility customers affected by the public health crisis and Gov. Newsom’s stay-at-home order issued in March.

In explaining some of the most impactful rule changes, Commissioner Rechtschaffen focused on new timelines for actions related to public safety or those with major financial implications. He also expressed his strong interest in continuing remote participation after the pandemic as a means of increasing public participation.

Under current CPUC rules, rate-setting cases and quasi-legislative proceedings must be resolved within 18 months from their start. Under one of the new rules, proceedings affecting public safety or with major financial implications can be resolved within 12 months if Commissioners approved a request for an expedited schedule.

Commissioner Rechtschaffen then touched on two rule changes aimed at enhancing remote participation, which has become the norm since the March stay-at-home order.

“We’ve been working for some time to make our processes more broadly accessible to the public, easier to navigate,” he said. “Of course, these efforts, like so many other things, have been accelerated by our shel continued on page 5
Leslie “Lee” Palmer excels in two simultaneous careers, each informing and reinforcing the other.

On the one hand, he is Director of the CPUC’s Safety Enforcement Division (SED), which has safety oversight of electric and communications facilities, natural gas, and propane gas systems. On the other he is Battalion Commander in the California National Guard, providing logistical, medical, and security support for numerous national units throughout the state in large-scale emergencies such as COVID-19, wildfire, and community support. Previously, he served as the Branch Chief for the State Partnership Program with Ukraine and Nigeria, organizing training for their military emergency response programs and staff.

“Coffee plays a big role in my life,” he admits.

Lee began training for both missions early on in the Eagle Scout Program. While he was matriculating at UC Davis for his degree in history, he ran the university student print shop and also earned his commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps, considered one of the most demanding and successful leadership programs in the country.

“A life of service makes sense to me,” Lee says. “The government paid for my school, and service is my way of giving back to my community and setting an example for my young son.”

While many state employees work up through the various analyst classes, Lee climbed the ladder while deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, where he served in various roles that helped him develop his leadership and management style. In 2013, Lee served as the Chief of Sustainment and Logistics for the province of Uruzgan, Afghanistan. In that role he developed standards, plans, and conducted operations that led to increased readiness and operating efficiency. He earned the rank of Lt. Colonel and the Bronze Star for meritorious service in a combat zone. He was also awarded the Air Force Commendation medal for his work across branches of the military.

In 2016, while investigating the Butte fire, which he had battled as a national guardsman, Lee got his first glimpse of another type of public service through the CPUC. Lee discerned that the CPUC had plenty of excellent subject matter experts who could benefit from his unique background. In August 2016, Lee joined the CPUC as Deputy Director of SED, overseeing the planning and implementation of the Division and programmatic success before advancing to the role of Director – at the same time he earned his MBA from St. Mary’s College.

“It was eye-opening and fascinating,” he recalls. “You can’t throw a stone without hitting something the CPUC regulates. And SED is unique – it touches almost everything the CPUC does in almost every classification.”

Through it all, Lee has maintained his role with the California National Guard.

“I am wonderfully supported,” he reports. “The leadership is in place that allows me to accomplish both missions with complete confidence.” Lee adds that he is honored by the opportunity, in return, to provide the support his SED team has earned and deserves.

He admits he has little opportunity beyond family and work to carve out time for his Oakland A’s or traveling to any beach where he can swim, but he is satisfied with the balance.

“I found my forever job,” he concludes. “I’m very happy here. We are the change.”
ter-in-place requirements. Those made it necessary for us to move our work online and to allow for remote participation in all of our activities, and that’s been a positive thing in many respects.”

The new rules, Commissioner Rechtschaffen said, codify some of the changes that have been made in how business is conducted remotely.

“This is a significant undertaking. “We hope it will enhance participation. We hope it will save people travel costs. California is a very big state. People have to come a long way to some of our proceedings and this will reduce greenhouse gas and other transportation-related emissions.”

The last rule change mentioned by Commissioner Rechtschaffen is designed to ensure that all interested parties are notified about late revisions to proceedings “to ensure that everyone knows exactly what we’re voting on even if changes are made right before the week of a decision.”

Commissioner Randolph highlighted rule changes concerned with quasi-legislative proceedings, which typically are less formal than rate-setting proceedings and are used when the CPUC establishes policies or rules affecting a class of regulated entities.

“Quasi-legislative proceedings are a great way of utilizing information-sharing tools and public engagement to develop the record. The purpose of the new language is to provide transparency and to better inform the public about how quasi-legislative proceedings work,” she said.

She also called attention to new rules designed to clarify the standard for admission and use of relevant evidence in CPUC hearings. Another rule change is aimed at encouraging parties to narrow contested facts and issues and explore settlement in hopes of making proceedings less contentious and more effective.

“I appreciate how changing rules of practice and procedure is a big deal,” Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma said, “especially when folks have been used to doing things the same way for decades.”

Commissioner Martha Guzman Aceves recalled how, when she worked for the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation before joining the CPUC, it took the Foundation’s lawyer two years to get the CPUC to consider complaints from residents of a mobile home park who were being overcharged for water.

“Coming full circle, I am very happy to see we have a clear rule here for our practices and procedures so these tenants have a right to file these complaints in what was a very hard process back over 10 years ago now,” she said. “It takes awhile to get some of these changes in place.”

Once the new rules and greater transparency are in place, President Batjer said, she is confident the CPUC can work more efficiently and effectively on a variety of crucial issues.

“Over the last year,” she said, “we have worked collectively to realize this intent as we have fast-tracked establishing new wildfire related rules...as well as through our responses and actions to protect customers from financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The speed and focus of these actions were propelled by the urgency of the moment. As we all well know, there are additional priorities, including those of reliability and climate change, which require similar responses in the months and years ahead. If we are going to meet these challenges, the changes we’ve felt to our speed and focus this past year must become the norm and these changes will help us realize that.”

REPORT ON ROTATING OUTAGES continued from front page

planning during highest periods of demand;
• Coordinating additional procurement by non-CPUC jurisdictional load-serving entities, which purchase electricity from whole markets and supply retail service to customers; and,
• Enhancing CAISO market practices so they reflect actual supply and demand during stressed operating conditions.

At the CPUC’s October 8 Voting Meeting, President Batjer made a strong point that nothing about the outages should lead anyone to think California intends to move away from its commitment to clean energy.

“As we move forward, I want to be very clear about our direction,” she said. “Our agencies remain unwavering in our commitment to clean energy and to our climate goals and nothing in our root cause analysis leads us to second guess a clean, reliable, and affordable energy future. For years, our state has invested in research that has charted a path grounded in science and technological feasibility. We have solutions. We must now accelerate the pace of their implementation to better match our changing environment.”

To help make that happen, she said, the CPUC “will initiate expedited regulatory initiatives in the coming weeks that will strengthen energy reliability in the state and avoid recurrence of the August events next year and in future years.”
# THE DOCKET:
Proceedings Filed at the CPUC September 2020

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authority at Kansas Avenue (MP 231.18) and Kent Avenue (MP 232.21), located in the County of Kings.

A2009003 | 11-SEPT.-2020 | GOW CORPORATION
Application of GOW Corporation for authority to transfer ownership of Great Oaks Water Company (U-162-W)

C2009008 | 14-SEPT.-2020 | JAMES CALVANIO
James Calvanio, complainant vs. San Diego Gas & Electric Company (U902G), defendant. [Charging allegation: billing error].
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C2009009 | 14-SEPT.-2020 | ISSA T. DEMES
Issa T. Demes, complainant vs. Southern California Edison Company (U338E), defendant [Charging allegation: billing error].
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R1211005 | 16-SEPT.-2020 | CMMR/RECHTSCHAFFEN/CPUC
Proposed decision addressing petition for modification of Decision (D.) 20-01-021 and D.16-06-055. It approves with modifications CESA’s request that the Commission immediately authorize Self-Generation Incentive Program administrators to transfer funds between technology incentive budgets.

I1909016 | 17-SEPT.-20 | ALJ/YACKNIN/CPUC
Proposed decision closing proceeding which was opened to consider the reorganization plan of Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and its holding company PG&E Corporation (PG&E Corp.) pursuant to the requirements of Assembly Bill (AB) 1054 (Ch.79, Stats. 2019).

A2009010 | 18-SEPT.-2020 | PORT PICKUP LLC
Application of Port Pickup LLC for authority to operate as an on-call passenger stage corporation within the meaning of California Public Utilities Code Section 1031 et seq., between points in the counties of Los Angeles and Orange, and the Long Beach Airport, Los Angeles International Airport and the Orange County Airport; and establish a zone of rate freedom.
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A2002003 | 18-SEPT.-2020 | ALJ/HAGA/CPUC
Proposed decision approving interim rate recovery.

K2009011 | 18-SEPT.-2020 | ESKINDER GHEBREHIWET GHEBREMEDHIN
Appeal of Eskinder Ghebrehiwet Ghebremedhin, dba Egg Ride Services (Case #PSG-5180) from Citation #F-5707 issued on 8/28/2020 issued by Transportation Enforcement Branch, Consumer Protection and Enforcement Division.

I0011001 | 22-SEPT.-2020 | ALJ/YACKNIN/CPUC
Proposed decision granting Pacific Gas and Electric Company exemption from Decision 06-09-003.

A2009012 | 22-SEPT.-2020 | DESERTXPRESS ENTERPRISES LLC
Application of DesertXpress Enterprises, LLC dba XpressWest to construct proposed high-speed tracks under the following public road
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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.

Prior editions of this newsletter are available on the CPUC’s website at www.cpuc.ca.gov/newsletter.
crossings: Lenwood Rd. (MP 151.15), 247/15 Sep. (MP 146.40), Muriel Dr. (MP 145.79) and W40/S15 (MP 145.48), and over the following public road crossings: Rte. 15/58 Sep. (MP 149.83), L St. (MP 148.30) and H St. (MP 147.80).


A2009015 | 23-SEPT.-2020 | DESERTXPRESS ENTERPRISES, LLC
Application of DesertXpress Enterprises, LLC dba XpressWest to construct proposed high-speed tracks under the following public road crossings: Rte. 58/15 Sep. (MP 143.07), Fort Irwin Rd. (MP 140.35), East Baker Rd. (MP 81.48), Bailey Rd. (MP 48.63) and Nipton Rd. (MP 43.65).


C1708003, C1801005 | 25-SEPT.-2020 | ALJ/HAGA/CPUC
Presiding officer’s decision.


A1709010 | 15-SEP-2017 (REOPENED WEEK OF SEPT. 21, 2020) | PACIFICORP
Petition to modify Decision 18-11-033. | Application of PacifiCorp (U901E), an Oregon Company, to continue its energy efficiency programs and the surcharge to fund public purpose programs.


I1704019, A1804002 | 27-APRIL-2017 (REOPENED WEEK OF SEPT. 21, 2020) | CPUC
Petition to modify Decision 20-02-025 | Order instituting investigation to determine whether PacifiCorp (U901-E) engages in least-cost planning on a control area basis and whether PacifiCorp’s Inter-Jurisdictional Cost Allocation Protocol results in just and reasonable rates in California.


A2009014 | 28-SEPT.-2020 | PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
Expedited application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company under the Power Charge Indifference Adjustment Trigger. (U39E)


A2009017 | 28-SEPT.-2020 | SIERRA VIEW DAIRY
Application for rehearing of Resolution E-5064.


C2009016 | 29-SEPT.-2020 | PETER W TUCKER
Peter W. Tucker, complainant vs. Liberty Utilities d/b/a CalPeco Electric LLC (U933E), defendant. [Charging allegations are overcharging and violations of Rule 21 and NEM Tariff]


A2009018 | 30-SEPT.-2020 | PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
Application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company (U39M) for approval Under Public Utilities Code Section 851 to sell the San Francisco General Office Complex, to distribute the gain to customers, and for recovery of associated costs related to the relocation of its corporate headquarters to the Lakeside Building in Oakland.


A2009019 | 30-SEPT.-2020 | PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
Application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company (U39M) for recovery of recorded expenditures related to wildfire mitigation and catastrophic events, as well as other recorded costs.


A2009013 | 28-SEPT.-2020 | TAG MOBILE, LLC
In the Matter of the Joint Application of TAG Mobile, LLC (U-4411-C), TAG Mobile Bankruptcy Sale Entity, LLC, and Vector Holdings Group LLC for review of the reorganization of TAG Mobile, LLC’s regulated assets into TAG Mobile Bankruptcy Sale Entity, LLC’s regulated assets into TAG Mobile Bankruptcy Sale Entity, LLC, and the transfer of control of TAG Mobile Bankruptcy Sale Entity, LLC, to Vector Holdings Group, LLC.
