

Date of Hearing: August 20, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 292 (Cervantes) – As Amended July 17, 2025

Policy Committee: Utilities and Energy

Vote: 17 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill makes several changes to law regarding electricity deenergization events, including that each investor-owned utility (IOU) work with representatives of state agencies and community-based organizations that serve or advocate on behalf of an access and functional needs population regarding deenergization events.

Specifically, this bill, among other things:

- 1) Directs each IOU to work with representatives of state agencies and community-based organizations that serve or advocate on behalf of an access and functional needs population to develop and make publicly available a plan to support the population during a deenergization event and to submit the plan to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).
- 2) Requires an IOU, after each deenergization event, to prepare a post-deenergization event report that contains specified information, including the number of affected customers who receive specified energy utility bill financial assistance or who receive a medical baseline allowance, and directs the IOU to submit the report to the CPUC and to the locally elected body and the city manager or the chief administrative officer of the cities and counties affected by the deenergization event.
- 3) Requires the CPUC, by January 1, 2027, determine whether an IOU's post-deenergization event report should include (a) specified geospatial data on the locations of any circuit or circuit segments involved in the deenergization event and statistics describing the census tract-level impacts of the event and (b) information regarding the deenergization event disaggregated by census tract and whether the census tract is a disadvantaged community, as identified in current law.
- 4) Directs the CPUC, by January 1, 2027, to determine whether the annual reliability reports current law requires of IOUs should include any of specified information regarding reliability, including (a) statistics at census tracts or smaller resolutions and (b) reliability statistics for customers who receive energy utility bill financial assistance or who receive a medical baseline allowance.
- 5) Requires a local publicly owned electric utility (POU) prepare and post conspicuously on its website an annual reliability report that identifies, but is not limited to, the frequency and duration of interruptions in services.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Onetime costs to the CPUC, likely in the hundreds of thousands of dollars (Public Utilities Commission Utilities Reimbursement Account), to consider IOUs post-deenergization event report requirements and annual IOU reliability report requirements.

According to the CPUC, most of the work required by this bill is already underway, though not yet complete, and the bill's requirements might be premature. Even so, the CPUC indicates it would assign an administrative law judge to complete the tasks the bill requires of it, at an annual cost of \$257,000.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** The author intends this bill to provide data to allow for better planning for deenergization events, especially in regards to how such events affect vulnerable populations.
- 2) **Background.** Generally, a deenergization event is when an electrical utility shuts off power to a line or equipment. The CPUC authorized the IOUs to use deenergization as a tactic to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfire. In such circumstances, the deenergization event is known as a public safety power shutoff (PSPS). The CPUC requires an IOU that is planning to implement a PSPS to communicate repeatedly, and within specified timeframes, with customers whose electrical service will be subject to the PSPS. In addition, CPUC rules require an IOU that implements a PSPS to report specified information on the PSPS to the CPUC within 10 business days.

In January of this year, extreme winds and dry weather led Southern California Edison (SoCal Edison) to implement widespread PSPSs for extended periods. In reviewing the utility's actions, the Public Advocate's Office (an independent office within the CPUC that advocates on behalf of residential and small business IOU customers, primarily) found SoCal Edison failed to send tens of thousands of required notifications, and that these failures "continued a pattern of failure" of SoCal Edison to provide its customers with advance notification prior to de-energization.

Writing collectively in opposition this bill, the state's three large electric IOUs contend SB 292 includes provisions "that have been considered and settled through prior proceedings at the California Public Utilities Commission" or that are "already included in the scope of the Commission's active rulemaking proceeding" and that the bill requires the IOUs include in their post deenergization event reporting "information that is already provided in the IOU's annual reports on PSPS programs" and events and "would likely result in additional costs and delayed post-event report submissions."

Analysis Prepared by: Jay Dickenson / APPR. / (916) 319-2081