

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 292 (Cervantes)
As Amended September 5, 2025
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to consider additions to the annual reliability reports submitted by investor-owned utilities (IOUs). The bill requires IOUs to prepare a post-deenergization event report, generate a plan to support the functional needs population during deenergization, and requires publicly owned utilities to submit an annual reliability report.

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires the CPUC to determine whether shall determine, *as part of the proceeding in Rulemaking 24-05-023 (June 6, 2024) or a successor proceeding, whether its existing policies, procedures, and rules should be revised to augment the safety and reliability of the electrical distribution system. This determination shall consider, but not be limited to,*
 - a) *Enhancements or updates to annual reliability reports including reliability statistics at census tracts.*
 - b) *Data or statistics to aid the commission's understanding of whether there are patterns of electrical outages that disproportionately affect tribal governments or rural, disadvantaged, or low-income communities.*
 - c) *Updates to General Order 166 for purposes of reliability thresholds and reporting requirements.*
- 2) Requires a publicly owned electric utility to prepare and make publicly available on its internet website and submit to the Energy Commission an annual reliability report that identifies, but is not limited to, the frequency and duration of interruptions in services.
- 3) Requires IOUs to work with persons from the access and functional needs population to develop and make publicly available a plan to support this population during a deenergization event and submit the plan to the CPUC.
- 4) Requires an IOU to prepare a post-deenergization event report after each event *that complies with the commission's reporting requirements established in a proceeding pursuant to Rulemaking 18-12-005 (December 19, 2018), or a successor proceeding, and any additional requirements determined by the Safety and Enforcement Division of the CPUC.*
- 5) Requires the CPUC to determine whether the post-deenergization event report should include either of geospatial data of the deenergization event and statistics describing the census tract-level impacts of the deenergization event. *This report shall be filed, served and distributed in accordance with requirements established through a proceeding pursuant to Rulemaking 18-12-005 and made publically available on the electrical corporation's website.*

COMMENTS

A deenergization event is when an electrical utility shuts off power to a line or equipment. The CPUC has 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). IOUs are required to send notifications to customers on a specified schedule prior to the expected de-energization and until re-energization, often associated with PSPS. These notifications are intended to give customers adequate warning to prepare in advance for a proactive de-energization, which the IOUs perform as a last resort when weather conditions could result in a devastating wildfire. Timely notification allows customers to prepare for potential outages and make necessary arrangements based on the information provided. There has been a history of problems with PSPS notification systems across the IOUs since the initiation of these protocols. This includes in the PSPS initiated by Southern California Edison on January 2, 2025. According to the Public Advocates Office, during the Southern California fires in 2025, SCE failed to send 307,211 required notifications to Public Safety Partners, Critical Facilities and Infrastructure, and customers.

The inadequacies of communication and community outreach surrounding the deenergization events in Southern California this last January have led to significant scrutiny. The goal of this bill is to address PSPS protocols and reliability by first collecting more data, at higher resolution, after deenergization events occur. Some of the reporting included in the bill is already mandated by the CPUC for IOUs.

Prior to 2016, the CPUC mandated IOUs to report the reliability of the electrical grid at the system-level. This means information was aggregated for the entire electric service territory or system for each electric utility. Thus, municipalities, businesses or homeowners who wanted reliability information that is specific to their location had trouble getting information at the level of the electrical circuit(s) that serve them. Utilities were able to remove days that the energy delivery system experienced stress beyond that normally expected from the threshold from their reliability indices calculations.

After 2016, CPUC Decision D.16-01-008 directs IOUs to annually prepare electric system reliability reports detailing the previous year's electric reliability on the system and division levels. These metrics are required to be reported with and without the inclusion of Major Event Days (MEDs). The threshold defining MEDs excludes all but the worst 0.63% of outage events, making MEDs low frequency, high consequence events. The cause of an outage has no bearing on whether it will be classified as an MED. Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events are considered MEDs only insofar as they exceed this statistically defined threshold.

The CPUC has mandated that IOUs submit a report to the Director of Safety and Enforcement Division at the CPUC within 10 business days after each de-energization or high threat level event. These reports include at a minimum the following information:

- 1) The IOU shall identify the community representatives contacted prior to de-energization, the date on which they were contacted, and how the deenergized area is classified.
- 2) If an IOU is not able to provide customers with notice at least 2 hours prior to the de-energization event, the IOU shall provide an explanation in its report.

- 3) The IOU shall summarize the number and nature of complaints received as the result of the de-energization event and include claims that are filed against the IOU because of de-energization.
- 4) The IOU shall provide detailed description of the steps it took to restore power.
- 5) The IOU shall identify the address of each community assistance location during a de-energization event, describe the location (in a building, a trailer, etc.), describe the assistance available at each location, and give the days and hours that it was open.

According to the Author

"SB 292 plays a crucial role by providing detailed historical and natural disaster-related data on power outages, which is essential for developing robust resilience planning strategies. As a state, it is imperative that we gain a deep understanding of the complexities surrounding demographic and socioeconomic factors to effectively enhance our planning efforts. This comprehensive data will serve as a guiding light, allowing us to identify and prioritize investments in the most vulnerable areas and implement tailored local solutions that can offer critical support during disasters, outages, and crises. SB 292 aims to bridge the critical divide between utility reporting and community resilience planning. By doing so, it enables us to utilize outage data not merely as numbers, but as a meaningful lens through which we can better understand and address the far-reaching impacts of outage durations on our most vulnerable populations."

Arguments in Support

The bill has changed significantly with the most recent amendments. Prior to these amendments, the Easterseals Northern California wrote in support of the bill stating that PSPS poses a severe threat to the health and safety of people with physical disabilities or intellectual and developmental disabilities. "SB 292 would require electrical corporations to develop and make publicly available a plan to support the access and functional needs population, including individuals with disabilities, during deenergization events." They argue that the bill would ensure that "vulnerable populations receive the assistance they need to prepare for and endure power shut offs."

Arguments in Opposition

The bill has changed significantly with the most recent amendments.

Prior to these amendments, the three large electric IOUs (PG&E, Southern California Edison, and San Diego Gas and Electric) are opposed to the bill and argue that the bill is redundant and would expand Public Safety Power Shutoff post-event reporting in ways that have already been litigated at the CPUC, ultimately increasing costs to ratepayers.

FISCAL COMMENTS

The Assembly Committee on appropriations estimates a 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.

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Jones, Reyes

ASM UTILITIES AND ENERGY: 17-0-1

YES: Petrie-Norris, Boerner, Calderon, Chen, Davies, Mark González, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Kalra, Papan, Rogers, Schiavo, Schultz, Ta, Wallis, Zbur

ABS, ABST OR NV: Patterson

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Sanchez, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Ahrens, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta

ABS, ABST OR NV: Tangipa

UPDATED

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