
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 292
Author: Cervantes (D)
Amended: 9/5/25
Vote: 21

SENATE ENERGY, U. & C. COMMITTEE: 16-0, 4/29/25

AYES: Becker, Ochoa Bogh, Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Caballero,
Dahle, Gonzalez, Hurtado, Limón, McNerney, Rubio, Stern, Strickland, Wahab
NO VOTE RECORDED: Grove

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 6-0, 5/23/25

AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab
NO VOTE RECORDED: Dahle

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0, 6/3/25

AYES: 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
NO VOTE RECORDED: Jones, Reyes

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 64-0, 9/10/25 – Roll call not available.

SUBJECT: Electricity: wildfire mitigation: deenergization events and reliability

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to consider specified data reporting by electrical corporations regarding post-deenergization event reports and annual electric reliability reports. This bill also requires electric publicly owned utilities (POUs) to post on their website annual reliability reports.

Assembly Amendments of 9/5/25 make explicit the CPUC proceeding where determinations regarding changes to reporting requirements must be considered; requires local electric POUs to submit their reports to the California Energy Commission (CEC); adds the limitations on public disclosure of confidential data; and provides additional substantive and clarifying changes.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the CPUC with regulatory authority over public utilities, including electrical corporations. (Article XII of the California Constitution)
- 2) Requires every public utility to furnish and maintain adequate, efficient, just, and reasonable service, instrumentalities, equipment, and facilities, as are necessary to promote the safety, health, comfort, and convenience of its patrons, employees, and the public. (Public Utilities Code §451)
- 3) Requires the CPUC to adopt inspection, maintenance, repair, and replacement standards, for the distribution systems of electrical corporations and requires the standards or rules to provide for high-quality, safe, and reliable service. Requires the CPUC to adopt standards for operation, reliability, and safety during periods of emergency and disaster. (Public Utilities Code §364)
- 4) Establishes the policy of the state that each electrical corporation is required to continue to operate its electric distribution grid in its service territory and to do so in a safe, reliable, efficient, and cost-effective manner. (Public Utilities Code §399.2(a))
- 5) Authorizes the CPUC to supervise and regulate every public utility in the state and to do all things necessary and convenient in the exercise of such power and jurisdiction. (Public Utilities Code §701)
- 6) Requires the CPUC to require an electrical corporation to include in its annual reliability report information on the reliability of service to end-use customers that identifies the frequency and duration of interruptions of service. (Public Utilities Code §2774.1)
- 7) Requires an electrical corporation to construct, maintain, and operate its electrical lines and equipment in a manner that will minimize the risk of

catastrophic wildfire posed by those electrical lines and equipment. (Public Utilities Code §8386 (a))

- 8) Requires electrical corporations, local electric POU's, and electrical cooperatives to annually prepare wildfire mitigation plans (WMPs) that include, among other things, descriptions of protocols for disabling reclosers and deenergizing portions of the electrical distribution system that consider the associated impacts on public safety and protocols related to mitigating public safety impacts of disabling reclosers and deenergizing portions of the electrical distribution system. (Public Utilities Code §8386 (b))
- 9) Requires the WMPs of electrical corporations to identify circuits that have frequently been deenergized pursuant to a deenergization event to mitigate the risk of wildfire and the measures taken, or planned to be taken, by the electrical corporation to reduce the need for, and impact of, future deenergization of those circuits. (Public Utilities Code §8386 (c)(8))
- 10) Defines "access and functional needs population" consists of individuals who have developmental or intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, chronic conditions, injuries, limited English proficiency or who are non-English speaking, older adults, children, people living in institutionalized settings, or those who are low income, homeless, or transportation disadvantaged, including, but not limited to, those who are dependent on public transit or those who are pregnant relative to a local jurisdiction's emergency plan. (Government Code §8593.3(f))
- 11) Defines "disadvantaged community" to be areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and areas with concentrations of people who are low-income, among other factors. (Health and Safety Code §39711)

This bill:

Relevant to the annual electric reliability report

- 1) Requires the CPUC, on or before January 1, 2027, to determine whether its existing policies and procedures should be revised or enhanced to augment the safety and reliability of the electrical distribution system, including whether to consider reliability statistics of census tracts and whether the data reported aids the CPUC's understanding of patterns of electrical outages that affect tribal governments, rural, disadvantaged or low-income communities.

- 2) Requires a local electric POU to prepare an annual electric reliability report that identifies the frequency and duration of interruptions of service and may include specified reliability metrics and statistics. Requires that information in the annual reliability report prepared by the local electric POU and made publicly available be provided with sufficient confidentiality to protect electrical system security.
- 3) Imposes a state-mandated local program by imposing additional duties on a local electric POU.
- 4) Makes legislative findings to limit the rights to information in the require reports to ensure they are sufficiently confidential for purposes of protecting electrical system security.

Relevant to deenergization events to reduce the risks of wildfires

- 5) Requires electrical corporations to work with persons representatives of agencies and community-based organizations that serve, advocate on behalf of, or serve and advocate on behalf of, persons from the access and functional needs population to develop and make publicly available a plan to support that population during deenergization events.
- 6) Requires electrical corporations, after each deenergization event, to prepare a post-deenergization event report that complies with the CPUC's reporting requirements.
- 7) Requires the CPUC, on or before January 1, 2027, to determine whether that report should also include other specified information, including census-tract level information and whether the census-tract is identified as a disadvantaged community.
- 8) Requires the report to be provided to the locally elected body and specified individuals of the cities and counties affected by the deenergization event.

Background

Electric reliability annual reporting. Pursuant to CPUC decisions (D. 16-01-008 and D. 96-09-045) and statute, electrical corporations are required to annually prepare electric system reliability reports detailing the previous year's electric reliability on their respective system and division levels based on recorded average outage duration and frequency. Electric system reliability metrics are defined by

the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) in standard *IEEE 1366 – Guide for Electric Power Distribution Reliability Indices*. The reports are required to be submitted to the CPUC on July 15th. Additionally, the CPUC requires electrical corporations to make reliability data available to the public upon request.

The CPUC requires electrical corporations to report on the following four metrics annually:

- System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) – measures the average total minutes of outage that a customer on the system experienced in the reporting year.
- System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI) – measures the average number of sustained outages (i.e., outages greater than five minutes in duration) that a customer on the system experienced in the reporting year.
- Customer Average Interruption Duration Index (CAIDI) – measures the average duration of a single sustained outage (i.e., an outage that lasted longer than five minutes) that a customer experienced in the reporting year.
- Momentary Average Interruption Duration Index (MAIFI) – measures the average number of momentary outages (i.e., outages that lasts less than five minutes) that a customer experienced in the reporting year.

The CPUC requires the above metrics to be reported with, and without, the inclusion of Major Event Days (MEDs). MEDs are defined by IEEE 1366 as days in which the daily SAIDI of an event exceeds a statistically defined threshold based on the previous five years of daily SAIDI data. According to the CPUC website, this threshold 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. Deenergization events understood as proactive power shutoffs by electrical corporations to reduce the risks of fires (coined as Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events) are considered MEDs only insofar as they exceed the statistically defined threshold for MEDs.

Deenergization events. In recent years, California has experienced a number of catastrophic wildfires, including several ignited by electrical utility infrastructure. Electrical equipment, including downed power lines, arcing, and conductor contact with trees and grass, can act as an ignition source. Risks for wildfires also increased with extended drought and bark beetle infestation that has increased tree mortalities and, as a result, increased the fuel, and risk for wildfires. As a result, electrical corporations have increasingly utilized proactive power shutoffs, deenergization of electric distribution (and sometimes transmission) lines, as a tool

to prevent igniting wildfires, particularly during high wind event days with dry ground conditions. Although the use of proactive power shutoffs were met with opposition and concerns about its use by affected communities, ultimately the CPUC acknowledged electrical corporations' authority to deenergize lines in order to protect public safety, noting this authority in Public Utilities Code §451 and §399.2.

Oversight and post-event reporting of deenergization events. The CPUC adopted protocols for deenergizing electric lines with a focus on who should receive notice and when, who should be responsible for notification, how different customer groups should be identified, the information that should be included in notifications in advance of and directly preceding a deenergizing event, the methods of communication, and how the electrical corporations should communicate and coordinate with public safety partners before, during, and after an event. The protocols require electrical corporations to develop work groups that include representative of the access and functional needs population. As the protocols have evolved over the years, there has been expanded requirements to develop needs assessments and plans to coordinate with identified access and functional needs population. Electrical corporations are also required to incorporate their protocols and procedures for proactive power shutoffs, as required by CPUC rules, within their WMPs. Additionally, the CPUC requires electrical corporations to provide post-event reports after each deenergization event with specified information, including: a list of circuits deenergized, its corresponding county, number of customers affected, and whether those customers are identified as requiring additional energy for medical reasons (medical baseline) or access and functional needs and maps of the affected areas. Electrical corporations must file these reports within 10 business days of restoration of service following a deenergization event (with some opportunity to extend the deadline).

Comments

Need for this bill. According to the author's office,

The bill is designed to furnish valuable insights into affected communities through a process of community-engaged vulnerability analysis and mitigation initiatives. By assessing energization events and collecting relevant data proactively, we can take pre-emptive measures to address potential crises. Our state must grasp the risks that its diverse communities face regarding power outages to pursue innovative and effective resilience solutions.

It is particularly important to highlight that individuals across different income levels and privilege spectrums—especially those who have been historically marginalized and low-income—are disproportionately affected by outages. These communities often deal with overlapping vulnerabilities such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to resources, and social isolation, which can severely impede their ability to recover from disasters.

January 2025 Santa Ana wind events. This January, with expected severe Santa Ana winds, low-humidity, high vegetation growth from previous wet winters, and dry conditions due to delayed precipitation, Southern California was at high risk for wildfires. Additionally, aerial fire suppression was limited by the extreme winds, which included gusts approaching 100 mph in some areas. In the case of Southern California Edison (SCE), the proactive power shutoffs resulted in extended outages throughout their service territory impacting upwards of over 500,000 customer accounts (affecting many times more individuals) between January 2 through January 27, including two separate (and, in some cases, overlapping) events. These deenergization events coincided with several wildfires in the broader region, including two large catastrophic fires, the Palisades Fire and the Eaton Fire (fire investigations as to the cause of these fires are still in process, ignition cause has not been determined). Based on SCE's post-event reports, the proactive power shutoffs were the largest number of affected customers since the tool had been deployed by the utility and likely the largest in duration for the utility. These events resulted in many frustrations for customers and local governments as the utility's execution of the proactive power shutoffs seems to have been greatly challenged by the scale and duration of the events with reports that their website crashed, inadequate notifications to customers, inability of some local governments to reach a utility point person, and inaccurate maps displayed at times on their websites. SCE also adjusted their operational thresholds in the midst of the events due to the evolving conditions which resulted in many customers unexpectedly experiencing proactive power shutoff without any advance notification. SCE's post-event reports also indicated nearly 100 incidents of damage on deenergized facilities that, if they had been energized, could have been a significant risk to igniting wildfires.

Desire for more granular data. The proactive power shutoffs executed by SCE in January of this year left customers across their service territory without power and, in some cases, without any advanced notification. The author's office notes their district was among the very hard-hit from the power outages, as power was shutoff for nearly a week in areas that had never experienced proactive power shutoffs.

This bill requires the CPUC to consider additional data as part of existing reporting requirements to better understand the impacts of these power shutoffs and other power outage events at a more granular level, specifically at the census-tract level and with identification for disadvantaged communities with the premise of better understanding any disproportionate effect on these communities. This bill also requires electrical corporations to work with organizations that support the access and functional needs population to plan for deenergization events, consistent with existing CPUC rules. The author's office has shared this is intended to reflect the existing requirements and practice of the CPUC deenergization protocols. This bill also requires electric POUs to post annual reliability reports on their respective websites and submit these reports to the CEC.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

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.

SUPPORT: (Verified 9/8/25)

None received

OPPOSITION: (Verified 9/8/25)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: 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.

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9/10/25 14:59:55

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