Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Buffy Wicks, Chair
SB 742 (Pérez) – As Amended June 15, 2026

Policy Committee: Utilities and Energy Vote: 18 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill makes several safety-related requirements regarding, among other things, electricity transmission facilities, such as wires and transformers.

Specifically, this bill:

1) (a) Requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), by January 1, 2028, to update its rules to require each electrical corporation (also known as an "investor-owned utility" or "IOU") to remove all permanently abandoned electricity transmission facilities to prevent public nuisances or hazards to life or property and (b) directs the CPUC to ensure all applicable safety requirements, including wildfire mitigation measures, apply to permanently abandoned and out-of-service electricity transmission facilities until they are removed.

2) Amends existing law that requires each IOU to annually prepare a wildfire mitigation plan (WMP) so that each IOU must include in its WMP an accounting of all electricity transmission facilities and, for permanently abandoned electricity transmission facilities, a plan for how and when each facility will be removed and the wildfire mitigation measures being implemented to prevent hazards.

3) Requires any IOU or publicly owned utility (POU) that has a service area that overlaps with the boundaries of a state regional emergency operations center, in cooperation with the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (OEIS) and other emergency service agencies, to establish procedures for the coordination of efforts between IOUs and POUs and emergency response agencies, and further requires any such IOU or POU to assign a representative, trained as specified, to work within each state regional operations center that has boundaries that overlap with the IOU's or POU's service area.

FISCAL EFFECT:

1) This bill creates one-time work of the CPUC to update its applicable rules by January 1, 2028, and significant ongoing work to ensure all applicable safety requirements apply to permanently abandoned electricity transmission facilities until they are removed.

   The CPUC asserts it will need resources equivalent to approximately $2.1 million (Public Utilities Commission Utilities Reimbursement Account) annually to fund nine positions. The CPUC concludes it will need no new resources to update its rules and attributes the workload created by this bill entirely to the requirement the CPUC ensure all applicable safety requirements, including wildfire mitigation measures, apply to permanently abandoned and out-of-service electricity transmission facilities until they are removed.

2) This bill also creates significant new work of the OEIS to modify WMP guidelines and review WMPs. The OEIS says this work will require $378,000 (special fund) ongoing to fund a regulatory analyst and data specialist. It is reasonable to expect the OEIS to need resources to update WMP guidelines. However, the OEIS must regularly review WMPs as part of its existing duties. Therefore, it is not clear why this bill would result in ongoing OEIS workload.

COMMENTS:

Following several years of particularly harmful wildfires, many of them sparked by equipment owned and operated by the state's electric IOUs, state law required each of the state's electrical utilities to regularly produce a WMP that describes how the utility will reduce the risk of wildfire associated with its equipment. In the case of the IOUs, the law requires each IOU to submit its WMP to OEIS, which determines whether the WMP will achieve the maximum feasible wildfire risk reduction. Subsequently, the CPUC reviews each IOU's WMP to determine whether its costs are just and reasonable.

The law similarly requires each POU annually adopt a WMP, which the POU submits to the California Wildfire Safety Advisory Board.

In addition, state law requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Calfire) to map fire hazards within certain areas of the state based on fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors, including areas where Calfire has identified winds as a major cause of wildfire spread. These areas are known as fire hazard severity zones, which Calfire classifies as moderate, high or very high, based on the average hazard across the area included in the zone.

In January of 2025, several devastating wildfires tore through Southern California, taking dozens of lives and causing hundreds of billions of dollars in property damage. Whipped by unusually forceful winds and fueled by exceptionally dry conditions, the fires burnt through broad sections of Southern California, including residential neighborhoods not classified by Calfire as at high risk for wildfire.

While investigations into the initial causes of the fires are ongoing, an abandoned electrical power line owned by electrical IOU Southern California Edison is the subject of suspicion and speculation. CPUC rules (General Order 95, Rule 31.6) requires the owner of a permanently abandoned electricity in to remove the line, as follows:

> Lines or portions of lines permanently abandoned shall be removed by their owners so that such lines shall not become a public nuisance or a hazard to life or property. For the purposes of this rule, lines that are permanently abandoned shall be defined as those lines that are determined by their owner to have no foreseeable future use.

However, despite the CPUC rule, Southern California Edison never removed the abandoned power line in question.

The wildfires have led some, including the author, to conclude that the state's current wildfire mitigation efforts are wanting. For example, The Utility Reform Network (TURN), writing in support of this bill, describes the existing WMP process as "relatively comprehensive in its consideration of active energy transmission and distribution facilities," but critiques the process as giving "no consideration of, or planning for, abandoned facilities." Similarly, the California Professional Firefighters describes the bill as requiring "common-sense safeguards and requirements."

There is no opposition registered against this bill. Its provisions are very similar to some of those contained in SB 256 (Perez) of this legislative session, which was held on suspense by this committee.

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