

SENATE THIRD READING

SB 742 (Pérez)

As Amended June 15, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Makes several changes to existing law governing electrical infrastructure safety, wildfire mitigation, and emergency response coordination, with a particular focus on requiring the removal of permanently abandoned transmission facilities and ensuring such facilities are subject to safety and wildfire mitigation requirements until removed.

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), by January 1, 2028, to update General Order No. 95 to mandate that electrical corporations remove all permanently abandoned transmission facilities to prevent public nuisances or hazards to life or property, while ensuring all applicable safety and wildfire mitigation requirements apply to such facilities until removed.
- 2) Defines "permanently abandoned transmission facility" as a transmission facility that is out of service, as determined by the CPUC, and for which the owner cannot demonstrate, with appropriate documentation, an intent to return the facility to service within a timeframe determined by the CPUC.
- 3) Requires wildfire mitigation plans to include an accounting of all transmission facilities – those in service, out of service, and permanently abandoned – along with a removal plan and interim wildfire mitigation measures for permanently abandoned facilities.
- 4) Requires electrical corporations and local publicly owned electric utilities whose service areas overlap with a local emergency operations center to establish coordination procedures with emergency response agencies and assign a trained liaison representative to each such center.

COMMENTS

This bill seeks to address the public safety and wildfire risks posed by permanently abandoned and idle transmission facilities that remain in place across electrical corporation service territories without adequate oversight or removal requirements.

The risks associated with idle transmission lines – including induction hazards – are documented, most notably in connection with the 2019 Kincade Fire and more recently in speculation surrounding the cause of the 2025 Eaton Fire. Currently, the determination of whether a transmission line will be used in the foreseeable future is left largely to the discretion of the utility. This bill seeks to shift that burden by requiring electrical corporations to demonstrate to the CPUC, with appropriate documentation, whether a facility will be returned to service, rather than leaving that determination solely to the utility.

Additionally, the bill intends to strengthen wildfire mitigation for idle and out-of-service lines by requiring the CPUC to ensure applicable safety measures are in place until such facilities are

removed, and by mandating their explicit inclusion in wildfire mitigation plans reviewed by the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety).

Based on data requests by Energy Safety of the state's electrical corporations, the utilities identify the following number of miles of idle transmission lines in their service territory within the high fire risk areas:

- 1) Liberty Utilities – 0 miles
- 2) PacificCorp – 0 miles
- 3) PG&E – 2.25 miles
- 4) SDG&E – 14.69 miles
- 5) SCE – 355 miles

However, Energy Safety is still undergoing a review of these facilities, approaches, and how best to identify them, including how each utility defines idle and abandoned facilities.

According to the Author

"Over the past decade, California's wildfires have destroyed a total of 53,970 structures and claimed 207 lives, with numerous incidents traced back to electrical infrastructure failures. The Eaton and Palisades fires in Los Angeles County alone destroyed 16,246 structures and caused 30 deaths, ranking it amongst the most destructive. UCLA estimates the broader economic impact for Los Angeles County could reach \$131 billion, with up to \$45 billion in insured losses and \$297 million in lost wages. To address this crisis, the Legislature has strengthened oversight of electrical utilities through Wildfire Mitigation Plans, system hardening, and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS). However, there is still a gap we need to address in prevention and communication when these catastrophic events occur. It has been reported that an idle transmission line that had not carried electricity for over 50 years may have sparked the Eaton Fire. In response to the wildfire risks posed by abandoned infrastructure, SB 742 requires the removal of permanently decommissioned power lines and requires utilities to collaborate with regional emergency centers to better navigate wildfire and emergency response situations."

Arguments in Support

According to the Utility Reform Network (TURN), "The [wildfire mitigation planning] WMP process is relatively comprehensive in its consideration of active energy transmission and distribution facilities, however there is no consideration of, or planning for, abandoned facilities. Given that transmission facilities, even when abandoned and no longer in use, still pose a fire risk, it is a gross oversight not to include them in the WMP for each utility. SB 742 corrects this fatal flaw and provides a plan for how to remove them and eliminate their fire threat."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, the bill will result in approximately \$2.1 million in annual funding needed to the CPUC and \$378,000 annually to Energy Safety.

The Appropriations Committee notes, however, that while one-time funding to Energy Safety is reasonable, it "is not clear why this bill would result in ongoing Energy Safety workload" given the existing duties of Energy Safety to review WMPs overlap with the ongoing work of this bill.

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1

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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Gonzalez

ASM UTILITIES AND ENERGY: 18-0-0

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

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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