



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 8/6/2019

To: Board of Supervisors, County of Sonoma
Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Emergency Management
Staff Name and Phone Number: Chris Godley / 565-1152
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): All Districts

Title:

Sonoma County Preparedness and Policy Actions Related to Potential Electrical Systems De-Energization

Recommended Action:

1. Receive staff reports on recent preparedness actions and policy efforts related to the potential for electrical system de-energization
2. Receive a staff briefing and adopt a resolution approving the Sonoma County Operational Area Electrical Systems De-Energization Annex
3. Provide direction to staff on additional preparedness actions related to the De-Energization hazard

Executive Summary:

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) has stated that they may de-energize electrical systems servicing large areas in Sonoma County in advance of or during periods of heightened wildfire danger conditions. They call this their "Public Safety Power Shutoff" (PSPS) program.

Staff will provide summary briefings on recent related actions including coordination with other jurisdictions, filings with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), development of a Sonoma County Operational Area Electrical Systems De-Energization Annex, and potential challenges to County facilities and operations, as well as a review of related County government continuity procedures.

County staff and allied stakeholder agencies have prepared the De-Energization annex which outlines procedures that guide a collaborative response by local governments, special districts, and allied agencies in the Sonoma County Operational Area to the threat of or actual de-energization of electrical systems due to extreme fire danger conditions. This is a supporting annex to the Sonoma County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

Discussion:

The risk of wildfire increases when several factors combine-these include high temperatures, high sustained and peak winds, critically low humidity, and low vegetation fuel moisture. During these conditions, electrical transmission and distribution lines may ignite fires if they are downed by winds and/or trees. To reduce the chance of accidental fire ignition in certain areas, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) has stated that they may de-energize electrical grids or block off an area(s) in advance of or during periods of heightened risk conditions.

They call this their “Public Safety Power Shutoff” (PSPS) program.

De-energization of electrical systems in affected areas may pose a life-safety risk to residents and impact other infrastructure systems. De-energization may also affect the capabilities of local agencies to respond to actual wildfire incidents due to loss of alert and warning and public information communications systems including internet and cellular towers, inability to monitor or maintain water supplies, and a loss of traffic control systems that could support evacuation.

The County is one of four local governments party to a filing with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regarding its oversight of the use of de-energization as a wildfire mitigation activity. Recent actions have addressed improving information coordination with PG&E and public safety agencies. Ongoing efforts will address clarifying the responsibility of utilities to their customers during these events and potential financial cost reimbursement.

In order to address this potential hazard, County staff and allied stakeholder agencies have prepared the Sonoma County Operational Area Electrical Systems De-Energization Annex. This annex outlines procedures that guide a collaborative response by local governments, special districts, and allied agencies in the Sonoma County Operational Area to the threat of or actual de-energization of electrical systems due to extreme fire danger conditions. This is a supporting plan to the Sonoma County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

This annex provides direction for Operational Area stakeholder organizations including County departments, cities, special districts, community groups, and others, ensuring interagency coordination in accordance with the County’s EOP, California Emergency Services Act, Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), and National Incident Management System (NIMS). This annex supersedes the 2018 Sonoma County Electrical System De-Energization Plan, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 4, 2018.

This annex accomplishes the following:

- Serve as a planning document to support further development of associated response plans by County departments and agencies.
- Provide an overview of the threat that electrical system de-energization poses to the Operational Area and describe the potential scope of impacts.
- Provide the response management team with contextual information to guide initial response planning.

In addition to the preparation of this Annex, County staff have worked to ensure that the procedures and resources identified in the County’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) are aligned to address the challenges posed by a major de-energization event. County departments and agencies will be significantly challenged to maintain critical operations in the event of a widespread or sustained power outage.

Staff may suggest and seek guidance regarding potential mitigating actions, which would require additional investment in the current fiscal year

Prior Board Actions:

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7/9/19 - The Board reviewed and adopted the County's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

12/11/18 - The Board approved the Sonoma County Electrical System De-Energization Plan.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

None.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None.

Attachments:

1. Staff summary of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Rulemaking 1-12-55 (De-Energization)
2. Sonoma County Operational Area Electrical Systems De-Energization Annex
3. Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

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None.