



## Legislation Text

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Department of Emergency Management, General Services Department, County Counsel

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Chris Godley / 565-1152; Caroline Judy / 565- 2550; Petra Bruggisser / 565-2421

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Public Safety Power Shutoff Annex to the Sonoma County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan and Related 2021 Preparedness Activities

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Receive reports from staff and PG&E regarding the outlook and preparedness actions for the 2021 PSPS season.
- B) Adopt a Resolution Adopting the Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) Annex to the Sonoma County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan.
- C) Provide direction to staff on additional preparedness actions related to PSPS.

**Executive Summary:**

As authorized by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) has stated that they will continue to de-energize electrical systems servicing large areas in advance of or during periods of heightened wildfire danger conditions in order to reduce the potential for fire ignitions. This is known as the "Public Safety Power Shutoff" (PSPS) program.

County staff, outside counsel, and a PG&E representative will provide an overview of current PSPS-related actions; regulatory and advocacy efforts at the CPUC, the proposed Sonoma County Operational Area PSPS Annex, and related actions to support County government continuity of operations.

The proposed PSPS 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 annex to the Sonoma County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which the Board approved on 12/09/14. The Board subsequently approved various annexes to the EOP including: De-Energization - 8/6/19; Pandemic Annex - 03/10/20 and Emergency Alert and Warning - 4/13/21. This PSPS Annex supersedes and replaces the 2019 De-energization Annex.

This item also provides a summary of the General Services Department's efforts to date to improve resiliency for County operations during a power shut down by way of investments in and management of generator projects at various locations.

**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, PG&E has stated that they may de-energize electrical grids or blocks 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 negatively 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 & 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 proposed PSPS Annex to the EOP seeks to prepare the County for these events in order to mitigate these risks associated with PSPS incidents.

### 2021 Tree Overstrike Criteria

In early 2021, the Federal court overseeing PG&E’s probation from the San Bruno Gas Pipeline Explosion considered - but did not order - a modification of probation terms. The modification would have required PG&E to incorporate criteria into its PSPS protocols for distribution lines subject to large amounts of trees tall enough to fall into electric lines during severe weather. Per an internal analysis, there approximately 5.3 million trees in PG&E’s service area that are tall enough to strike distribution lines during severe weather - these are known as “overstrike trees”.

In June 2021, PG&E notified local governments that it intended to implement the overstrike tree criteria as part of its PSPS decision model - now called the “2021 PSPS Protocols”. These protocols should be available by August 2021.

Based on an internal analysis of potential PSPS over the last 10 years, PG&E has indicated that the addition of overstrike trees criteria would increase the average potential number of annual PSPS events for Sonoma County from 2.1 to 3.8 and the average PSPS event size would increase from 5,804 customers to 6,266. Areas in Sonoma County subject to tree overstrike criteria generally overlap with existing areas subject to PSPS with the exception of new areas in West County.

Incorporating the Tree Overstrike criteria, PG&E forecasts that the maximum size of a PSPS event for Sonoma County is 23,924 customers or approximately 48,000 residents. However, PG&E does not expect a return to the large-scale PSPS events of 2019, the largest of which affected 180,000 County residents.

### Regulatory Efforts

The County is one of eleven local governments now 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. The County and its partners have achieved broad success in advocating for the CPUC to adopt necessary regulations and changes on de-energization issues, including improvements to information coordination with PG&E and public safety agencies as well as refinement of the CPUC’s PSPS Guidelines. Ongoing advocacy efforts will address clarifying the responsibility of utilities to their customers during these events, further improvements in information sharing and communication with local governments, and potential financial cost reimbursement to ensure that the County and our community receive the partnership, information, and resources they need now and in the future.

### PSPS Annex

In order to address this potential hazard, County staff and stakeholder agencies have prepared the Sonoma County Operational Area PSPS 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 and the 2019 Sonoma County Electrical System De-Energization Annex.

This Annex accomplishes the following goals:

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

Key components of the Annex include an overview of the PSPS program, recent PSPS incidents in Sonoma County, planning assumptions, response procedures, stakeholder agency roles and responsibilities, an assessment of potential impacts, and public information tools.

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) address the challenges posed by a major PSPS incident. County departments and agencies will continue to be significantly challenged to maintain critical operations in the event of a widespread or sustained power outage.

### County Emergency Power Projects

The General Services Department is actively working to implement emergency generator projects in critical County facilities in support of County continuity of operations and emergency response functions.

Work includes scoping and design, permitting, furnishing and installing new standby emergency generators, automatic transfer switches, replacing obsolete main switchboards, and project management. Facilities which have completed work or where work is underway include:

- Veterans Memorial Buildings: Sonoma, Petaluma, Santa Rosa
- Information Services: Data Center
- Transportation and Public Works: New Airport Terminal, Santa Rosa Road Yard
- Registrar of Voters (mobile)
- Health Services: Animal Services

Two additional projects are pending awards of grant funding:

- Transportation and Public Works: Annapolis Road Yard
- Transportation and Public Works: Forestville Road Yard

Incomplete Funding/Unfunded generator needs:

- General Services: Heavy Fleet
- Sheriff's Office (replacement)

- Sonoma County Fairgrounds
- Cloverdale Veterans Building
- Sebastopol Veterans Building

All of the capital projects described above as funded have been previously approved by the Board of Supervisors in the annual Capital Budget process and are described in the County’s Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan. Note: the Guerneville Veterans building is currently served by an existing generator. The five projects identified with incomplete funding will come to the Board for consideration at a later date.

In FY19-20 and FY20-21, the County received \$718,738 in State of California Community Power Resilience Allocations which have been applied towards several of the generator projects detailed above. It is unclear if this program will continue to be funded in FY21-22.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Climate Action and Resiliency Pillar

- Goal 3: Make all County facilities carbon free, zero waste and resilient.
- Objective 3: Invest in County owned facilities, establishing carbon eliminating microgrid technology and improving energy grid resilience to reduce the impact of power loss during power shutdowns and natural disasters (floods, fires, earthquakes), prioritizing critical infrastructure such as command and communications facilities.

Resilient Infrastructure Pillar

- Goal 2: Invest in capital systems to ensure continuity of operations and disaster response.
- Objective 2: Invest in electric power resiliency projects at County facilities, including Veteran’s Buildings, used for evacuation sites, warming/cooling centers, or as alternate work facilities for delivery of critical services.

Recovery and Resiliency Framework Alignment:

- Strategy Area 1: Community Preparedness and Infrastructure
- Goal 4: Make County government more adaptable to provide continued services in disasters through comprehensive planning, a more empowered workforce, and improved facilities and technology.

**Prior Board Actions:**

4/13/21 - The Board approved the Sonoma County Operational Area Alert and Warning Annex.

2/2/21 - The Board authorized the Director of Emergency Management to accept State of California Community Resiliency Power Resilience (PSPS) Allocations and adopted supporting budget language.

10/15/19 - The Board received a report on PSPS incident of October 8-12, 2019.

8/6/19 - The Board adopted the Sonoma County Operational Area De-Energization Annex.

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

12/09/14 - The Board adopted the Sonoma County Emergency Operations Plan.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY21-22 Adopted</b>	<b>FY22-23 Projected</b>	<b>FY23-24 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			

<b>Total Expenditures</b>			
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>			

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

None

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

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

None

**Attachments:**

1. Sonoma County Operational Area Public Safety Power Shutoff Annex
2. Resolution of Adoption
3. PowerPoint

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

None