

Agenda Report

August 25, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Legislative Policy Committee (August 20, 2025)

FROM: Water and Power Department

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT FOR SB 256 (PÉREZ): ELECTRICITY: ELECTRICAL INFRASTRUCTURE: WILDFIRE MITIGATION**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the action proposed in the agenda report is covered by the "Common Sense" exemption set forth in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) as CEQA only applies to projects that may have a significant effect on the environment.
2. Support Senate Bill 256 (Pérez) – Electricity: electrical infrastructure: wildfire mitigation, and any subsequent related legislation; and
3. Authorize the Mayor to send letters to the appropriate authorities stating Pasadena's position.

BACKGROUND:

Utilities, including the City's community-owned utility, Pasadena Water and Power (PWP), are required to develop a wildfire mitigation plan (WMP), which is approved and enforced by the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (for investor-owned utilities) and the Wildfire Safety Oversight Advisory Board (for local publicly owned utilities). The plans employ a variety of strategies and programs to minimize the risk of catastrophic wildfires caused by electrical lines and equipment, including vegetation management, undergrounding, system hardening, and public safety power shutoffs. During the development of its WMP, PWP collaborates with external stakeholders, including but not limited to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the Pasadena Fire Department, and neighboring utilities.

On January 7, 2025, Pasadena was struck by an extraordinarily severe windstorm and destructive fire causing widespread damage to infrastructure, structures, and roads, and caused power outages, downed trees, road closures, and significant debris. Government

from the local, county, state, and federal levels continue to aid community members in their recovery efforts today.

In the wake of the Eaton Fire, Senator Sasha Renée Pérez (D-Alhambra) representing the 45th District, which includes Pasadena and Altadena, has authored SB 256 to add to the WMP sensible provisions that are consistent with practices PWP has already undertaken. This bill would require utilities to add to their WMPs:

- (1) Consideration of the risks of the wildland-urban interface in their wildfire mitigation strategies; and
- (2) A description of the processes and procedures that the utility uses to coordinate its communications with local governments, including fire officials and emergency response officials, as part of the preparation of the WMP and during wildfire-related emergencies.

These provisions are consistent with practices PWP has undertaken in its WMPs.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Support of this bill is consistent with the City Council's goal to ensure public safety.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The proposed action has been determined to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3), the Common Sense Exemption that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed action has no fiscal impact to the City of Pasadena.

Respectfully submitted,





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Attachment A – SB 256 text