



Agenda Report

June 9, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Municipal Services Committee (May 23, 2025)

FROM: Water and Power Department

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF THE WATER AND POWER DEPARTMENT'S 2025 WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to Section 21080(b)(4) of CEQA and Section 15269 (Emergency Projects) of the State CEQA Guidelines and, as such, no environmental document pursuant to CEQA is required for the project; and
2. Approve the annual update of the Wildfire Mitigation plan for 2025 for the Water and Power Department ("PWP") as required by the California Public Utilities Code ("PUC") Section 8387.

BACKGROUND:

The PWP Wildfire Mitigation Plan ("WMP") comprises various programs, objectives, policies, and a range of activities to mitigate the threat and minimize the risk of catastrophic wildfire posed by electrical lines and equipment. The WMP was initially adopted by the City Council in 2019, with annual updates thereafter, and is implemented by PWP.

The primary goal of the WMP is to minimize the possibility that PWP's electric system may be the origin or contributing source for the ignition of a wildfire. The secondary goal of the WMP is to improve the resiliency of the electric grid; PWP assesses new industry practices and technologies that will reduce the likelihood of an interruption in service and improve the restoration of service. The final goal for the WMP is to measure the effectiveness of specific wildfire mitigation strategies. Where a particular action, program component, or protocol is determined to be unnecessary or ineffective, PWP will assess whether a modification or replacement is needed.

Since the adoption of the WMP in 2019, PWP has completed multiple key projects to harden the electrical distribution system including the following infrastructure improvements:

- Installation of 34,000 feet of covered conductors in Tier 2 Elevated Fire Risk Areas.
- Replacement of 100 poles in the Tier 2 Elevated Fire Risk Area, including sectional composite poles for extra durability.
- De-energized 2,000 feet of high-voltage overhead electric system in Millard Canyon, located in Tier 3 Extreme Fire Risk Area, by converting to a low-voltage system.
- Focused inspection and repair of 548 poles, ahead of their California Public Utilities Commission General Order 165 schedule, in Tier 2 Elevated Fire Risk Areas.

The following projects are ongoing and/or scheduled for future completion:

- Ongoing targeted pole and transformer replacement in the Tier 2 fire threat area, based on recent inspection and modeling data.
- Conversion of the overhead high voltage lines to underground, within the Tier 3 Extreme Fire Risk Area, along Canyon Close Rd. and Fox Ridge Dr. Targeting December 2025 completion.
- Conversion of overhead high voltage lines to underground, within the Tier 3 Extreme Fire Area, along Florecita Dr. and Crestford Dr. Targeting June 2026 completion.
- Underground expansion projects in the Upper Hastings Ranch area to provide underground feeds to Thomas and Don Bonito Reservoirs. Targeting FY 2027 completion.
- Investigation into the logistics and considerations of a Public Safety Power Shutoff (“PSPS”) program, including the solicitation of a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for third-party evaluation and drafting.

PWP Wildfire Mitigation Plan – 2025 Update

California PUC Section 8387 requires all utilities, including PWP, to submit annual approved revisions of the WMP to the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board (“WSAB”) for review to ensure utilities follow current fire mitigation strategies on a calendar year basis. The content of the 2025 Wildfire Mitigation Plan is largely consistent with the 2024 Wildfire Mitigation Plan and maintains the structure of the WSAB recommended template.

The key objectives of the 2025 Wildfire Mitigation Plan are as follows:

1. Minimize the Source of Fire Ignition

PWP will continue to implement programs that reduce the possibility of wildfires caused by the City’s electric system. The wildfire mitigation strategies will be achieved by implementing cost-effective improvements to PWP’s physical assets

and operations and will be driven by changes in design and construction standards. In addition to the current practices of installing covered overhead wires and enhanced fault current protection equipment, system hardening, and aggressive tree trimming within the fire threat areas defined by the California Public Utilities Commission fire threat map, PWP is also planning to underground the high voltage electric distribution systems in areas of extreme risks (Tier 3) to provide further wildfire mitigation.

Additionally, PWP will continue to perform regular system analysis to help identify internal risks of design and construction standards to identify threats and improve mitigation measures.

PWP's electric system has not been the cause of any wildfires.

2. Resiliency Improvement

To improve the resiliency of the City's electrical distribution system, PWP continues to conduct annual assessments of new industry practices and technologies that reduce the likelihood of service interruptions and improve the restoration of service.

In the event a wildfire causes an outage, PWP customers can receive updates by calling the power outage hotline (626) 744-4673 or visiting the outage map available on PWP's website.

3. Continuous Assessment of Wildfire Mitigation Strategies

To identify unnecessary and ineffective actions, PWP continues to conduct annual assessments to determine whether a particular action, program component, or protocol is ineffective or unnecessary. PWP also determines whether modifications or new strategies would produce improved results. An annual assessment of the 2024 WMP was conducted, and PWP will be exploring the potential development and implementation of a PSPS program.

As with the prior years' WMPs, the proposed 2025 WMP does not recommend to preemptively de-energize portions of the city during periods of elevated fire risk. The primary reasons behind the existing strategy include 1) PWP's service territory is mainly urban and only 23 square miles; 2) PWP has been using covered conductors for decades which provide increased protection against incidental contact, reducing outage frequency and decreasing ignition risk; and 3) PWP prevents automatic re-energization of circuits during red flag warnings. However, PWP reserves the right and authority to preemptively de-energize portions of the city and shut off power due to fire threat conditions or when power lines are compromised. This option will only be in extraordinary circumstances, and PWP will attempt to provide notification to impacted customers if feasible. However, as stated above, PWP will consider a PSPS Program and in FY 2026 will begin exploring the logistics, including the solicitation of an RFP for third-party evaluation and drafting.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The 2025 PWP Wildfire Mitigation Plan is consistent with the City Council's strategic goals to maintain fiscal responsibility and stability and to ensure public safety.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The action proposed herein is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 21080(b)(4) of CEQA and Section 15269 (Emergency Projects) of the State CEQA Guidelines. Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(4) states that CEQA does not apply to "Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency." Accordingly, Section 15269 of the State CEQA Guidelines provides a statutory exemption for "Emergency Projects" including part (c), which includes "Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency." The adoption of the proposed Wildfire Mitigation Plan is an action to prevent and/or mitigate wildfire emergencies and is, therefore, exempt from CEQA.

FISCAL IMPACT:

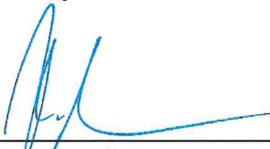
There is no fiscal impact from this action. There will be no anticipated impact to other operational programs or capital projects as a result of this action. There is no impact to the General Fund.

Respectfully submitted,



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MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ
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ATTACHMENT A – 2025 PWP Wildfire Mitigation Plan