

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN THE  
CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
AND THE  
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE  
PROTECTION**

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) (collectively the Parties) enter into this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to cooperatively develop consistent approaches to forest management, safety and energy programs.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

CAL FIRE is charged with the fire prevention, protection, and stewardship of over 31 million acres of California's privately-owned wildlands. CAL FIRE answers the call to more than 350,000 emergencies each year such as fires, medical aids, hazardous material spills, search and rescue missions, train derailments, and earthquakes. CAL FIRE is responsible for fire and life safety code review of all State-owned and leased buildings, the training certification of firefighters, and the inspection of 6,500 miles of intrastate hazardous liquid pipelines. In addition, CAL FIRE provides varied emergency services to approximately 150 local cities, counties, and fire districts via cooperative contracts.

The CPUC ensures that regulated services are delivered in a safe, reliable manner. CPUC regulations are designed to protect the public from potential hazards, including fires, which may be caused from electric utility transmission or distribution lines, or communications infrastructure providers' facilities in proximity to the electric overhead transmission or distribution lines. The Commission's current General Orders 95, 128, and 165 are designed to promote the safe installation and operation of electric utility and communications infrastructure facilities, and provide the minimum safety requirements which the utilities are supposed to supplement with additional safety precautions when operations and local conditions warrant.

**SHARED PRIORITIES**

The following priorities are shared by the CPUC and CAL FIRE for effective communication and coordination:

1. Work together to develop consistent approaches to forest management, wildfire prevention, public safety, and energy programs.
2. Develop management alignment on key policy issues.

3. Develop a statewide biomass/bioenergy/biofuel strategy to ensure cost effective methods exists to deliver fuel to biomass/biofuel facilities.
4. Assist one another in preparing for, responding to, and mitigating the effects of wildfires.
5. Deepen awareness of the requirements and goals of each other's programs.
6. Create an Interagency Fire Safety Working Group to vet ideas and develop programmatic solutions to shared goals in the interest of fire safety and resource protection.

**Immediate-Term Goals:**

In order to achieve optimal results for the shared priorities, the Parties' immediate term goals are as follows:

1. Develop a shared understanding of the use of fire mapping, including enhanced enforcement of the CPUC's General Order 95.
2. Develop a shared understanding of utility deployment timelines, procedures, and operations during a wildfire event, including enhanced enforcement of CPUC General Order 166. Ensure utilities establish significant base camps and are a major presence at incident sites of major fires.
3. Enhance the Parties' communication during and following a wildfire event. The CPUC can serve as a link between CAL FIRE and utilities during an event.
4. Coordinate on a range of resource management issues, fuels treatments, tree mortality, and bark beetle infestation. Jointly identify any mitigation measures that the utilities need to take in response to the tree mortality crisis.
5. Initiate the process for utilities to develop and submit fire hazard prevention plans required by SB 1028. Work together on identifying the requirements for fire hazard prevention plans and communicating these requirements to the utilities. Develop a process for review of fire hazard prevention plans.
6. Provide complementary resources in the areas of risk mitigation, risk management, and investigative relationships between CAL FIRE and the CPUC relating to suspected utility involved fire events.
7. Share best practices related to regulation, inspection, and overall safety of hazardous liquid and gas pipeline systems.

**CAL FIRE RESPONSIBILITIES**

In order to achieve optimal results for the shared priorities, CAL FIRE will perform the activities and functions summarized below.

1. Upon request, review utility wildfire mitigation plans in accordance with Public Utilities Code Sections 8385 to 8387. Assist CPUC in developing criteria and standards to be used in wildfire mitigation plans.
2. Identify and develop contracting requirements necessary for the completion of Fire Map 2 and the establishment of the CPUC Wildfire Mitigation Section in accordance with SB 1028.
  - a. Participate in the Technical Review Team (as defined in the CPUC's Fire Map 2 Work Plan Decision 17-01-009).
  - b. Assess, evaluate, and provide formal feedback via public comments or reports on future Party-submitted mapping proposals regarding physical mapping changes and challenges and/or adjustments to existing mapping methodologies.
  - c. Assess, evaluate, and provide formal feedback via public comments on utility SB 1028 wildfire mitigation plans and utility vegetation management plans.
3. Provide subject matter expertise in mechanical engineering, utility design and testing, and wildland fire risk analysis to the CPUC to advise on wildfire mitigation program management, audit schedule, mitigation plan details, and enforcement. In addition, this liaison(s) will interface with CPUC staff to assist with technical fire science/behavior assessment and allocation of resources.
4. Participate in identifying best practices of design and operation of utility systems for the purposes of fire mitigation.
5. Provide CPUC staff with CAL FIRE operations documentation, including current CAL FIRE structure, operations model, field operations, investigation procedures, and utility/local community outreach efforts/relationships and also be available for follow-up regarding briefing documentation.
6. Provide safety training to select CPUC personnel in order to enhance the CPUC's ability to coordinate with CAL FIRE and/or utilities in the vicinity of a wildfire event.

### **CPUC RESPONSIBILITIES**

In order to achieve optimal results for the shared priorities, the CPUC will perform the activities and functions summarized below.

1. Oversee utility implementation of wildfire mitigation plans and ensure adherence to best practices identified by CAL FIRE.
2. Adopt risk-based regulations that are in alignment with Fire Map 2 through the CPUC formal process.
3. Perform compliance and enforcement activities pertaining to adopted rules related to fire mitigation and emergency response.

4. Use CPUC regulatory authority to assist CAL FIRE to resolve issues with utilities.
5. Dedicate staff to work with CAL FIRE and ensure staff participation in training.
6. Provide funding as necessary to support CAL FIRE's efforts to meet CPUC assistance requests.
7. Assist CAL FIRE in areas of CPUC expertise.
8. Track and report vegetation management clearance activities on an annual basis to CAL FIRE and the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.
9. Fund applied research to examine the effectiveness of vegetation clearance and other activities in wildlife mitigation plans designed to reduce wildfire risk. Fund research to refine fire models and data layers that are used to develop Fire Map 2.

### **PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

"Confidential Information" includes information obtained pursuant to California Public Utilities Code section 583, records exempt from public disclosure under the California Public Records Act (Government Code sections 6250, et seq.), or written or verbal information that is designated by the Parties to be exempt, prohibited, or privileged from disclosure by State or federal law.

The Parties shall take all necessary measures to protect Confidential Information and, consistent with the Public Records Act and any other laws requiring disclosure, treat the shared Confidential Information as confidential. The Parties shall impose all the requirements of this MOU on all of their respective officers, members, employees and agents with access to Confidential Information. Any Confidential Information obtained by the Parties shall only be used for purposes which are consistent with existing law.

All Confidential Information provided to the Parties pursuant to this MOU shall be subject to Government Code Section 6254.5, subdivision (e), which exempts from public disclosure under the California Public Records Act, confidential records that one State or local agency has provided to another State or local agency pursuant to an agreement that the latter will treat the disclosed records as confidential.

### **SCOPE**

This MOU is made for the sole benefit of CAL FIRE and CPUC, and no other person or entity shall have any rights or remedies under or by reason of this MOU. Nothing in this MOU may be the basis of any third-party challenges or appeals. Nothing in this MOU creates any rights, remedies, or causes of action in any person or entity not party to this MOU.

CAL FIRE and CPUC each retain all rights, responsibilities, and authorities provided for by law. Nothing in this MOU delegates any rights, responsibilities, or authorities

provided by law to either Party. Nothing in this MOU delegates or otherwise prevents, compromises, or precludes each Party from exercising all rights, responsibilities, or authorities provided by law.

Both parties will meet and coordinate progress regarding the MOU on an annual basis, or as mutually agreed upon by the parties.

### APPROVAL

This MOU is effective upon completion of the signatures listed below. This MOU shall not be modified except by a written agreement signed by authorized representatives of the Parties.

This MOU shall continue unless or until either Party to the MOU determines that the MOU should be terminated. Unless otherwise provided for by the written agreement of both of the Parties, unilateral termination of the MOU shall be effected no sooner than 60 days from the date either party provides written notice of its intent to terminate the MOU. Termination of this MOU shall not affect the obligation of the parties to maintain the confidentiality of information pursuant to this MOU.

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION:



TIMOTHY J. SULLIVAN  
Executive Director



August 18, 2017

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION:



KEN PIMLOTT  
Director

August 23, 2017