

CARMEL J. ANGELO
Chief Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board



**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

CONTACT INFORMATION
501 Low Gap Road • Room 1010
Ukiah, California 95482
TELEPHONE: (707) 463-4221
FAX: (707) 463-7237
Email: bos@mendocinocounty.org
Web: www.mendocinocounty.org

November 5, 2019

William D. Johnson
Chief Executive Officer and President
PG&E Corporation
77 Beale Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff October Events in Mendocino County

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Mendocino County spent months and considerable amounts of monetary and staffing resources planning for and responding to PSPS events totaling \$250,000 to date. We anticipate that after thorough analysis of the most recent event, we will spend in excess of \$1,500,000 in facilities modifications and upgrades.

The County participated in planning calls with PG&E, the State, and local partners in hopes communication, notification and community resource center responsibilities were clear and the County would be able to get accurate and timely information to support our community during these events. The County continues to struggle with PG&E's inconsistent and inaccurate communication in each event. The most challenging communication impacts were experienced during the county-wide outages from October 26 – 31 impacting all 90,000 residents. We were left in the dark regarding restoration timelines and how we would be affected by two back to back events. The community was incredibly frustrated and panicked, having no real information when power would be restored. The PSPS event has drastically damaged PG&E's credibility with the County and community.

I would like to recap some of the events of the four Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events that occurred in October of 2019, and that severely undermined the County's efforts to coordinate with our first responders and local government partners to protect the public health and safety of our community:

- Unacceptable scope and duration
 - Areas in scope well out of the wind event
 - Lack of redundancy in PG&E's power distribution system unnecessarily expanded the scope
 - Entire County, including every major city, was out of power for 5 days, over 120 hours
- Poor Communication
 - Inconsistent
 - Terminology was not universal throughout the events
 - Areas of impact were often convoluted and unclear
 - Incomplete
 - County was listed in multiple time periods in several events, but no clear delineation of geographic locations (Mendocino South vs. Mendocino North vs Supplemental A), negated any usefulness of reported data
 - No consistent messaging pre-prepared by PG&E to provide to the public
 - Not timely
 - Website not up to date

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

CARRE BROWN
First District

JOHN MCCOWEN
Second District

JOHN HASCHAK
Third District

DAN GJERDE
Fourth District

TED WILLIAMS
Fifth District

- Outage information was communicated in less than 24 hours, leaving little time for communities to prepare
 - Portal for single point of contact was never updated and the interface was archaic
- Inaccurate
 - County was informed that power would be restored between the October 26 and 29 events, but this never occurred and no explanation was provided
 - De-energization timelines provided by PG&E contradicted the website, the portal and verbal discussions
- Uninformed liaisons and PG&E line staff, were not empowered to release meaningful information to the County
- Social media beat PG&E and local governments in releasing information quickly and consistently
- Undue burden on vulnerable populations, particularly our oxygen dependent and senior populations
 - Difficulty obtaining life-sustaining oxygen supplies, particularly in our assisted senior facilities and in-home care patients
 - Rural patients had difficulty accessing charging stations to charge medical equipment, flooding hospital emergency rooms
 - Extreme cold, putting the elderly and homeless at risk for hypothermia, necessitating the County to open a cold weather shelter for our residents
 - Loss of food and income for low income/fixed income populations, wide-spread food spoilage, emergency re-issuance of State provided benefits, gaps in essential services
 - Air quality from fires was poor, but without electricity, residents were unable to run air purifiers
- Challenges for local hospitals and EMS providers
 - Increased call volumes
 - Patient surge of the medically fragile community
 - Inability to get oxygen, fuel, and other medical supplies
 - Delays in service and transfers
 - Elective surgeries cancelled
 - Complex emergency surgeries difficult to transfer, risking patients lives due to unnecessary delays
 - Dialysis patients forced to go to the single open dialysis clinic, or stay in the hospital for extended periods to power life-sustaining dialysis equipment
- County Services and Community Impacts
 - Schools closed, causing a dramatic need for emergency childcare options
 - Local businesses lost much needed revenue
 - Local restaurants without backup generators were forced to close, give away food and completely restock their food supplies
 - Fuel supplies completely depleted, long lines and traffic jams at gas stations, necessitating Sheriff's escort for EMS, medical suppliers, communication and fuel providers
 - Wide-spread outages crippled communication providers, leaving residents without internet, land lines and emergency communications, particularly rural/remote residents
 - Water and sewer services were compromised
 - Numerous water districts did not have generator power to pump water
 - Many residents ran out of water for consumption and sanitation
 - Sewage backup in multiple locations
 - Lack of light, increasing risk to pedestrians
 - Increase in crime, particularly theft and vandalism, the County had four vehicles vandalized and many businesses had generators stolen or destroyed
 - PG&E Community Resource Centers lacked the appropriate level of security for the volume of traffic
 - The County received numerous reports from the public that they felt unsafe while visiting
 - Safety of employees, both public and private, operating long hours in dark buildings, often on generators employees may be unequipped or uninformed on how to use properly

- Air Quality monitoring equipment was unable to operate resulting in vulnerable populations not having access to air quality ratings/warnings during a large fire event
- Interruption in both public and private services, delaying access to government services, construction and maintenance projects, legal services and financial institutions
- County wide animal populations, particularly in shelters, were put at risk
- House fires from use of generators, candles and outdoor camping equipment
- Economic impacts on our rural small business community
 - Initial estimates indicate small businesses lost between \$500 - \$2,000 a day during the outages
 - Employees of small businesses that closed were unable to work and experienced a significant loss of income

The County has acted to the best of its ability in the public's interest to mitigate harm, particularly to vulnerable populations, reduce the economic impact of the PSPS and ensure that the public is informed and aware of the impacts and consequences of your PSPS decision. Unfortunately, the County is dependent on PG&E to provide accurate, updated information that can be shared with the public and PG&E failed to fulfill their responsibility.

Moving forward, it is critical that PG&E adhere to their promises to provide transparent, accurate and consistent notifications/information to local government officials, increase PG&E staff capacity to allow faster response times to counties, provide adequately equipped Community Resource Centers, and to plan for and meet the needs of your vulnerable and medically fragile customers. Mr. Johnson, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors and Ukiah City Council invite you to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss PSPS impacts to our community. Please contact Mendocino County Chief Executive Officer Carmel J. Angelo at angeloc@mendocinocounty.org or (707) 463-4441 with your response.

Sincerely,



Carre Brown, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors



Maureen Mulheren, Mayor
Ukiah City Council

CC: Honorable Gavin Newsom, California Governor
 California Public Utilities Commission
 Honorable Jared Huffman, United States Congress
 Honorable Mike McGuire, California State Senate
 Honorable Jim Wood, California State Assembly
 California State Association of Counties
 Rural County Representatives of California
 Paul Yodar and Karen Lange, Shaw/Yoder/Antwih, Inc.