



Maintaining Reliability and Strengthening the Resilience of California's Electricity System

Last August, the western states experienced a historic heatwave, resulting in power supply shortages in many areas. Just four NCPA members were directly impacted by the events, supporting the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) by voluntarily shedding load in their communities. Other California utilities, including NCPA members outside of the CAISO balancing authority area, provided support by offering excess generating capacity to help reduce the CAISO's shortfall. Undoubtedly, the event raises important questions about how the electricity sector ensures that it is equipped to meet consumer demand.

Ensuring Reliable Operations

Publicly owned utilities, like NCPA and its members, have established standards and rules to ensure that they have procured sufficient resources to meet the demand of their customers. Maintaining a safe and reliable electricity supply is the cornerstone of our service, and POUs plan their resource procurement based on these objectives.

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Mutual Aid

While serving the energy needs in our local communities is the top priority, POUs can also provide valuable support to neighboring jurisdictions when needed to maintain the reliability of the broader electric system. As an example, last August, several NCPA members worked within their respective cities to voluntarily reduce energy consumption and free-up generating capacity to reduce the risk of

systemwide outages in the CAISO balancing authority area. NCPA itself ramped-up generation at our facilities and joined our members and other public power providers in making additional capacity available to serve the needs of the CAISO.

Public Safety Power Shut-offs

NCPA's facilities and some NCPA member distribution systems are interconnected with Pacific Gas & Electric's (PG&E) transmission grid. As a result, when transmission-level Public Safety Power Shut-off events are implemented, they can impact the ability of NCPA's facilities to export power as well as restrict the ability of NCPA member communities to import power. This interdependency underscores the need for strong and consistent communication between PG&E, NCPA, and NCPA members. In the absence of such communication, critical infrastructure within NCPA member communities could be at risk and, in turn, present public safety challenges. This issue has been a high priority for NCPA in recent years, as wildfires have affected the agency's facilities and several of our members' communities.

On the operational side, NCPA and its members are coordinating closely with PG&E to mitigate the impacts of transmission level PSPS events by identifying feasible alternatives to provide continuous power supply without putting the public and utility infrastructure in harm's way.

Maintaining a Resilient System

The resiliency of the electric system is paramount to maintaining reliable operations. POU's implement several practices to strengthen the resilience of our power grid. Utilities adopt and execute wildfire mitigation plans and physical security plans, as well as comply with standards for electric utility line clearances and other measures to ensure the uninterrupted flow of power. Through continued evaluation of best practices and active engagement in ongoing discussions with industry stakeholders, NCPA and its members remain committed to exploring opportunities for establishing a more resilient system.

Protecting Reliability and Resilience While Affordably Achieving Emissions Goals

California utilities are integrating an increasing amount of intermittent renewable resources to achieve local and state policy goals. Simultaneously, electric utilities are also supporting the electrification of the building and transportation sectors, which increases electricity demand. With these investments in new technologies comes the need for additional infrastructure to support the ongoing reliability and resiliency of the electric system. NCPA supports policies that allow for the flexible implementation of cost-effective improvements that facilitate grid reliability and resilience.

Protecting the safety of our communities and the reliability and resiliency of our systems is an absolute necessity. There are numerous ways to achieve these important objectives. NCPA and its members support policy approaches that allow locally-governed utilities to meet policy goals in a way that best meets the needs of their communities.

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