

PRESS RELEASE



NCPA Statement Regarding Events Surrounding September 6, 2022 CAISO Energy Emergency Alert

ROSEVILLE, California—September 7, 2022

On Tuesday, September 6, 2022, some customers served by our member systems lost power during an unprecedented heat event. The Northern California Power Agency (NCPA) understands and recognizes the serious impacts these outages had on residential and business customers and our member utilities who stepped up to help the state based on what they believed to be a request from the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) to reduce their community's demand and stress on the overall power grid.

Yesterday at 5:17 pm, the CAISO issued an Energy Emergency Alert 3 (EEA3) order due to unprecedented heat conditions across the state. At 5:53 pm, NCPA's dispatch center was contacted by the CAISO with an order our dispatcher understood as a request to shed 46.02 MW of load to help prevent widespread outages. In turn, our dispatcher immediately undertook the process of meeting our commitment to the state by working with our member systems at the Cities of Alameda, Lodi, Santa Clara (Silicon Valley Power), Palo Alto, Healdsburg, and Ukiah to temporarily turn off power to some customers in those communities. Once the outages had been initiated, our dispatcher contacted the CAISO to inform them that the curtailment action had been undertaken, and was then notified there had been a misunderstanding of the initial order. At that time, we immediately began the process of returning the load back onto the system. The information we currently have indicates that the longest member outage lasted approximately one hour.

We are now closely coordinating with the CAISO to review the conversation that occurred between the dispatchers involved to avoid a miscommunication in the future.

During this heat event, the professionals working to ensure the reliability of the system are faced with many challenges. It is important to note that yesterday's issuance of an EEA3 order by the CAISO represents the first time this type of order has been declared in California. CAISO describes an EEA3 as a situation in which the CAISO is unable to meet minimum contingency reserve requirements and controlled power curtailments are imminent or in progress. The order includes a number of phases, and differs from emergency orders issued in the past under the prior Alerts, Warnings, and Emergencies program that was in place prior to May 1, 2022, when it was changed to be consistent with the requirements of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation.

NCPA General Manager Randy Howard explained that the measures undertaken yesterday, while very impactful to those directly affected, may have ultimately helped prevent heat-related implications for the state's overly stressed grid. "The action taken yesterday by the NCPA member systems mentioned above, while inadvertent, helped to ultimately benefit and keep the overall grid stable through the most extreme heat of the day and a record CAISO load" he said.

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NCPA’s dispatchers are committed to ensuring that we are partnering with the state and doing our part to help head-off the potential for more serious and widespread outages in such situations—this was the sole goal of the dispatcher who received yesterday’s order. NCPA Chair and City of Healdsburg Councilmember David Hagele explained, “In a crisis environment, there are always opportunities for lessons to be learned. We look forward to sharing what we’ve learned through this challenging event with other utilities to help create an even more reliable power system for California.”

An internal inquiry of the disconnect that occurred with regard to the CAISO order continues, and immediate measures have been taken to assure the protocols are clear to all involved, and are carefully adhered to during today’s serious ongoing heat event and into the future.

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About NCPA: Headquartered in Roseville, California, NCPA is a California joint powers agency established in 1968 to construct and operate electric generation facilities and assist in meeting the wholesale energy needs of its 16 members: the Cities of Alameda, Biggs, Gridley, Healdsburg, Lodi, Lompoc, Palo Alto, Redding, Roseville, Santa Clara, Shasta Lake, and Ukiah, Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative, the Port of Oakland, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), and Truckee Donner Public Utility District—collectively serving nearly 700,000 electric consumers in Central and Northern California. NCPA was founded on the principle of environmental stewardship and is a recognized national leader in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable generation, and carbon reduction.

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