

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



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Order Instituting Rulemaking to Update
Communications Emergency Preparedness and
Network Resiliency Program.

Rulemaking 25-07-014
(Filed July 24, 2025)

OPENING COMMENTS OF

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Pursuant to the May 29, 2026 *ALJ Ruling Ordering Comments on Questions Specific to Scoped Issues* and the June 16, 2026 *Email Ruling Granting In-Part, Joint Motion of the Telecommunication Providers for an Extension of Time and Page Limits in Response to Questions Specific to Scoped Issues* in Rulemaking 25-07-014, AT&T submits these opening comments.

INTRODUCTION

The Commission's Resiliency Program is grounded in flexibility. As the Commission has recognized, resilient telecommunications networks depend on an array of strategies including, but not limited to, backup power, redundancy, temporary facilities, communication and coordination with other utilities, emergency responders, the public and finally, preparedness planning. Consistent with that approach, the Commission has acknowledged that communications networks are complex and diverse, and that there is no "one size fits all" approach to resiliency.¹

That flexible structure is central to the Program's effectiveness. The Commission has avoided imposing specific requirements on how providers maintain service, emphasized that the Program is "not an effort by the Commission to micromanage wireless providers operations,"² and cautioned against "a rigid definition of resiliency that could result in hand-cuffing providers in how [providers] achieve and maintain their network's resiliency."³

Several questions in the May 29 Ruling appear to depart from this established approach by suggesting new reporting, enforcement, audit, documentation, generator, undergrounding, wildfire-

¹ *Reply Comments of Pacific Bell Telephone Company d/b/a AT&T California (U 1001 C); AT&T Enterprises, LLC (U 5002 C); Teleport Communications America, LLC (U 5454 C); AT&T Mobility LLC (New Cingular Wireless Pcs, LLC (U 3060 C); AT&T Mobility Wireless Operations Holdings, Inc. (U 3021 C); and Santa Barbara Cellular Systems, Ltd. (U 3015 C)) (collectively "AT&T") on the Order Instituting Rulemaking to Update Communications Emergency Preparedness and Network Resiliency Program ("AT&T Reply Comments")*, Rulemaking (R.) 25-07-014, at 21 (Oct. 30, 2025); *see also* D.20-07-011, *Decision Adopting Wireless Provider Resiliency Strategies*, Rulemaking (R.) 18-03-011 at 99 (July 20, 2020); *see also* D.21-02-029, *Decision Adopting Wireline Provider Resiliency Strategies*, Rulemaking (R.) 18-03-011 at 70-71 (Feb. 18, 2021).

² *See* D.20-07-011, *Decision Adopting Wireless Provider Resiliency Strategies*, Rulemaking (R.) 18-03-011 (July 16, 2020) at 98-99; D.21-02-029, *Decision Adopting Wireline Provider Resiliency Strategies*, Rulemaking (R.) 18-03-011 at 70-71 (Feb. 18, 2021).

³ *See* D.20-07-011 at 63; D.21-02-029 at 34.

mitigation, and other operational requirements. The mere fact that these issues are posed for comment, however, does not establish that the current Resiliency Program is deficient or that additional mandates are warranted.

Reducing providers' flexibility would expose consumers to more service disruptions, not fewer. Not every telecommunications outage affects wireless service, and permanent on-site backup power is not always feasible, prudent, or the most effective way to prevent coverage-affecting outages. Prescriptive requirements that dictate technologies, deployment strategies, reporting formats, or infrastructure designs could divert resources from practical restoration, broadband deployment, and emergency response, and may make it harder for providers to adapt to real-time disaster conditions.

The current framework already provides substantial Commission oversight. Providers submit annual Resiliency Plans and Emergency Operations Plans, report extensive facility-level information, respond to Commission data requests, and participate in Staff review processes, including site visits. AT&T has timely submitted its required resiliency filings, cooperated with Staff requests, and received approval of its resiliency plans. AT&T's networks also have performed well during PSPS events and other disaster conditions throughout California.

For these reasons, the Commission should preserve the existing flexible, risk-based structure of the Resiliency Program. The Commission should not impose new resiliency obligations unless the record demonstrates that existing requirements are inadequate and that any proposed change is necessary, narrowly tailored, cost-justified, and likely to improve outcomes for customers and emergency responders.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

A. Resiliency Data Reporting

Question 1: How should the Commission ensure that stakeholders, the public, government agencies, and interested parties have access to Resiliency Program data while protecting confidential information? Please provide examples of strategies to improve accessibility balanced against confidentiality, including but not limited to, potential methods for aggregating data, and specify what levels of aggregation are appropriate.

AT&T's believes the existing resiliency reporting framework already provides adequate access to resiliency data for stakeholders and the public, and no new broad data-sharing mandates are required.

Public-facing tools. AT&T maintains an interactive outage map (att.com/outages) that displays the impacts of service outages, the affected areas, and expected restoration times, which is updated regularly and viewable in eight languages.⁴ AT&T also proactively directs local media, elected officials, and public safety stakeholders to this resource via its Newsroom, social media, and direct outreach.⁵

Engagement with government. AT&T embeds personnel at the California State Operations Center during significant emergency events and maintains ongoing communication with local and state officials and public safety partners via phone, text, and email before, during, and after such events. This coordination falls under California Emergency Support Function #2 (Communications) and ensures that Cal OES and its partners can restore critical communications infrastructure during disasters and emergencies.⁶ AT&T also responds to any daily data requests from the Commission during emergency events.

⁴ See AT&T Service outage info, <https://www.att.com/outages>.

⁵ See AT&T, AT&T News, <https://att.com/newsroom>.

⁶ See *California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, California Emergency Support Function 2 Communications Annex, Executive Summary* (Oct. 2013).

Regulatory reporting. AT&T already submits extensive outage, resiliency, and emergency-preparedness information for its wireless and wireline operations, pursuant to numerous state and federal requirements, including:

- **Cal OES Community Isolation reports** are provided within 60 minutes of a qualifying outage, with updates every six hours and a final report upon restoration, pursuant to Govt. Code § 53122 and Cal. Code Regs. tit. 19, § 2480.3.
- **Cal OES public outage maps** are maintained on the AT&T website as required by Cal. Code Regs. tit. 19, § 2480.3(e).
- **FCC NORS reports** are submitted by AT&T to both the FCC and CPUC pursuant to GO 133-D, with copies provided directly to the Commission.
- **FCC DIRS reports** are filed during declared disasters under 47 C.F.R. § 4.18(b) and provide daily infrastructure status updates during such events.
- **PSAP notices** are provided to Public Safety Answering Points during service outages affecting 911, as required by FCC Order FCC 22-88 (2022).
- **15-day and 60-day post-disaster advice letters** and community meetings are issued and scheduled, as required under D.21-10-020, ¶¶ 4, 5, and 6.

Annual resiliency filings. AT&T submits its annual Resiliency Plans via Tier 2 advice letters, pursuant to D.20-07-011 (¶ 1) and D.21-02-029 (¶ 1). These Plans include 15-item narrative checklists and templates collecting 30+ data points per facility. Collectively, AT&T's annual wireline and wireless resiliency filings cover thousands of facilities and include tens of thousands of individual data points for Commission review. These plans are subject to public protest under GO 96-B, General Rule 7.4.1, and are effective only upon Commission Staff approval, pursuant to GO 96-B and Telecommunications Industry Rule 7.2. With the exception of the 2026 wireless resiliency filing (which remains under active Staff review following suspension), AT&T's resiliency advice letters have consistently been approved by Communications Division Staff.

The above-described information sharing – which is focused on actionable information for emergency response – is preferable to any mandate requiring broad public dissemination of sensitive infrastructure data. Broad dissemination of this information would reveal proprietary network designs and deployment strategies and could place AT&T at a competitive disadvantage.

More critically, public disclosure of this information could serve as a blueprint for vandalism, theft, or cyber-enabled physical attacks on AT&T facilities.⁷ The Commission and other governmental entities have long recognized the need to protect sensitive outage and critical infrastructure information from public disclosure, since such information may reveal network architecture, operational vulnerabilities, restoration priorities, and other data that could result in security risks and/or competitive harm if publicly disseminated.⁸

Before additional public disclosure or reporting is contemplated, the Commission should first identify a demonstrated need for the information, determine whether existing public-facing tools and regulatory reporting already satisfy that need, and ensure that any disclosure framework protects confidential, proprietary, and sensitive infrastructure information from public dissemination.

Question 2: What refinements and clarifications should be made to data and reporting requirements for providers to ensure compliance with and improve the effectiveness of the resiliency requirements?

As set out above, the Commission has ample data to carry out its resiliency oversight and additional reporting requirements are unnecessary. That said, although the data collected is sufficient, the process for developing and revising the reporting templates can be improved. Since the initial templates were implemented, the Communications Division has on multiple occasions made revisions to those templates without service provider input or Commission approval. Some of these revisions are substantive and impose significant new obligations. For example, columns related to portable generator storage locations and travel times were added, even though they were not contemplated by the original Resiliency Decisions. Such revisions go beyond the ministerial acts that can be properly delegated by the Commission.⁹ AT&T respectfully

⁷ See, e.g., Re New Part 4 of the Commission's Rules Concerning Disruptions to Communications, ET Docket No. 04-35, Report and Order (FCC 04-188), 19 FCC Rcd 16830, ¶ 40 (2004); Critical Infrastructure Information Act of 2002, 6 U.S.C. § 673(a)(1)(E).

⁸ See, e.g., Gov. Code § 53122; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 19, § 2480.3

⁹ See, e.g., *S. Cal. Edison Co. v. Pub. Util. Comm'n*, 227 Cal. App. 4th 172, 195 (2014) (public agencies may delegate ministerial tasks but must retain general policymaking power); California Public Utilities Commission, Rules of Practice and Procedure, Rule 14.5.

recommends that the Commission require the Communications Division to pursue future revisions to the resiliency templates through the resolution process, which will provide transparency, allow meaningful input from service providers, and ensure proper Commission approval.

The existing templates are also sometimes unnecessarily restrictive, by forcing providers to select from pre-fixed answers – such as dropdown menus that limit responses to a bare “yes” or “no” without allowing for explanation. Certain templates have adopted definitions that were implemented without service provider input. This can make meaningful reporting unnecessarily challenging and potentially less accurate, by forcing providers to characterize complex circumstances in overly simplistic terms, which can lead to omission of important context and produce misleading responses.

Future revisions to resiliency reporting templates should only be developed through a Commission-approved process, not through informal or unilateral template changes. If template revisions will impose new reporting obligations, require new categories of information, or materially change the form or substance of provider submissions, those revisions should be considered through workshops and adopted through the Commission’s resolution process. This approach allows for meaningful service-provider input, promotes consistent interpretation of reporting terms, and ensures that any revisions remain consistent with the Resiliency Decisions and the Commission’s flexible, risk-based framework.

To improve reporting, AT&T recommends the following:

1. Workshops to collaboratively evaluate the current resiliency templates and identify any needed clarifications.
2. Commission approval of any material template revisions through the resolution process, with opportunity for public comment and service-provider input.
3. Greater flexibility in templates so providers may describe their unique networks and resiliency efforts, reach consensus on definitions, and provide necessary context rather than being limited to overly rigid response options.

Question 3: How often should the Commission require service providers to submit notifications of changes to their facilities or sites within Tier 2 and Tier 3 High Fire Districts? This includes the establishment of new sites, the decommissioning of existing sites, and any changes in ownership. Please provide justification for your recommendations.

Service providers should only need to update their facility and site information annually, and that information should be limited to locations where changes have occurred since the previous report. The existing framework already requires annual Communications Resiliency Plans and Emergency Operations Plans that collect 30+ data points per facility. These Plans represent tens of thousands of data points that adequately capture network resiliency conditions within HFTDs.

Requiring additional or real-time notification of facility changes would impose substantial administrative burdens without any demonstrated resiliency benefit. Wireline and wireless networks are dynamic systems that are continuously maintained, repaired, upgraded, optimized, and modified in response to customer demand, technological change, permitting conditions, outage restoration needs, and routine network management. Requiring providers to notify the Commission each time a covered facility is established, decommissioned, modified, transferred, or otherwise changed would divert engineering, operations, regulatory, and compliance resources away from network repairs, emergency preparedness, broadband deployment, and other activities that support service reliability and continuity.

There is no clear benefit to such interim notifications. AT&T already maintains internal standards for deployment and operation of backup batteries and portable and fixed generators, and has established processes to protect, restore, and maintain its network before, during, and after disasters. These standards and processes will continue to be deployed regardless of any new, separate notice or reporting requirement. The existing annual Resiliency Plan process already provides a structured mechanism to review facility information and resiliency measures, while allowing carriers to incorporate changes in an orderly and accurate manner. Requiring additional interim notices

would add administrative complexity, increase the risk of duplicative or inconsistent reporting, and consume resources without improving resiliency or emergency preparedness.

AT&T thus recommends that facility-change reporting remain annual and limited to locations where new material changes have occurred. Indeed, given the volume of information already submitted through annual Resiliency Plans and related reporting requirements, the Commission should consider whether reporting frequency can be reduced rather than expanded. Any new reporting obligation should be supported by a demonstrated need, should be narrowly tailored to address that need, and should be adopted only after the Commission assesses whether the incremental benefits justify the added costs and burdens, consistent with Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 321.1.

Question 4: Should providers include shapefiles (Geographic Information System data) of their facilities or sites in their Resiliency Plans? Why or why not? If the reason is associated with costs, provide the estimated incremental costs related to compliance with this requirement.

AT&T does not believe shapefiles should not be included in the Resiliency Plans. The Commission already receives facility-location information through existing templates, including the information necessary to identify and map reported facilities. If Staff wishes to create GIS-based maps or shapefiles, it can do so using the location information already provided. Requiring providers to submit shapefiles will not provide additional information, expand the Commission's visibility into provider networks, or materially improve the Commission's ability to assess resiliency – but would only require providers to submit the same underlying information in a different format, a duplicative reporting obligation without any demonstrated benefit. Such an additional requirement would also create compliance burdens without any demonstrated resiliency benefit. Preparing shapefiles would require providers to extract facility data from internal systems, validate the data, convert it into a GIS-compatible format, conduct legal and confidentiality review, and apply appropriate security controls before submission. These steps would consume engineering, regulatory, legal, and

compliance resources without improving emergency preparedness, restoration, or customer outcomes. Before imposing any new reporting requirement, the Commission should identify the specific gap in the current Resiliency Plan process that shapefiles are necessary to address and assess whether the incremental benefit justifies the added burden, consistent with Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 321.1.

Production of shapefiles will also raise heightened confidentiality and security concerns. Facility-specific GIS data would make sensitive network information more precise, portable, and easier to aggregate or misuse. Even if submitted confidentially, the production of shapefiles could increase the risk associated with inadvertent disclosure or unauthorized access, since they present critical infrastructure information in a readily usable geographic format. The Commission should avoid requiring providers to create and submit a more sensitive version of information the Commission already receives in another form.

If Staff determines that map-based review would be useful, it should use the location information already provided in the existing templates rather than impose a new shapefile submission requirement.

B. Ensuring Compliance

Question 5: How should the Commission design and implement a mechanism to ensure compliance with the Resiliency Program's reporting and network resiliency requirements? How should compliance be defined and tracked? Should the Commission establish citations, penalties or fines for noncompliance?

The Commission already has an enforcement policy in the event of a service provider's purported non-compliance with Resiliency Program reporting requirements. There is thus no need for the Commission to design and implement a new enforcement mechanism for the Resiliency Program.

Service providers already submit annual Resiliency Plans via Tier 2 advice letters as required by D.20-07-011 (OP 1) and D.21-02-029 (OP 1). These filings are subject to protest by any person

under GO 96-B, General Rule 7.4.1, and are effective only upon Commission Staff approval under GO 96-B, Telecommunications Industry Rule 7.2. If Staff has not suspended an advice letter by the end of an initial 30-day review period, it is deemed approved. This process ensures that each provider's Resiliency Plan is reviewed and subject to challenge, and that it receives affirmative Staff approval before taking effect.

The Communications Division may also issue data requests to obtain additional information from providers, which it routinely does, under Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 314 (which also provides the Commission with authority to audit service providers' books and records).

Commission Staff may also conduct inspections of service provider facilities to assess the implementation of Resiliency Plans and check the accuracy of the data contained therein.¹⁰ The Commission further retains authority to institute investigations under Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 1701 and its Rules of Practice and Procedure, Article 5.

The Commission specifically declined to adopt additional compliance mechanisms in the prior rulemaking. Nothing has changed since the closing of R.18-03-011 to warrant revisiting this determination, and the OIR identifies no industry-wide compliance issues that require additional enforcement rules.

If any penalty mechanism is adopted, it should be limited to failure to submit a resiliency plan after a reasonable opportunity to cure. Prescriptive penalties would be counter to the collaborative process currently employed for consideration of possible resiliency improvements.

¹⁰ See California Public Utilities Commission Communications Division, Site Visits Report, Emergency Disaster Relief Program, Years 2021, 2022 and 2023 ("Site Visits Report") at 4, 9, 12, 37 (Oct. 1, 2024), available at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/communications-division/reports/site-visit-reports/2021-2022-and-2023-site-visits-report-final.pdf>.

Question 6: Alternatively, should the Commission authorize staff to put forward an enforcement framework that sets forth terms, conditions, and processes for hiring an independent 3rd-party audit of utility practices, and/or a compliance monitor to address Resiliency Plan and compliance reporting deficiencies? Should the audit and compliance monitor be hired at the utility's expense?

There have been no noted discrepancies or deficiencies in resiliency reporting. Carriers have submitted their resiliency reports, which were approved by the Commission, with one known exception. Communications Division Staff has approved all of AT&T's previously submitted wireline and wireless Resiliency Plans. AT&T's 2026 wireless resiliency filing remains under active Staff review following suspension through the existing advice letter process. The record contains no evidence that AT&T or the industry generally has failed to comply with the existing resiliency reporting obligations. To the contrary, AT&T has submitted its resiliency filings, responded to Staff inquiries, participated in site-review activities, and obtained approval of its resiliency plans over multiple reporting cycles. The existing process, which includes data requests and advice letter suspension authority, already provides a sufficient framework for resolving any perceived reporting discrepancies.

The Commission also conducts direct, on-the-ground verifications of information in Resiliency Plans. The Communications Division's Site Visit Report confirms that Staff conducted site visits in 2021, 2022, and 2023 and assessed plan implementation, verified reported information, and identified potential findings for follow-up and resolution.¹¹ Staff should continue this process, which is more effective than introducing a third-party auditor lacking institutional knowledge or any existing relationship with providers.

The record of this proceeding does not suggest any compliance failure that would justify appointing an independent monitor for resiliency compliance. The existing system of annual

¹¹ Site Visits Report at 4, 12, 37.

reporting, Staff review, and site visits is working effectively and adequately ensures compliance with the Commission's resiliency requirements.

Question 7: What is the appropriate timeframe for providers to resolve different types of discrepancies or deficiencies in complying with the network resiliency or reporting requirements?

The Commission has already endorsed a *collaborative* process for resolving perceived problems with a carriers' perceived failure to meet resiliency reporting requirements.¹²

Any timeframe for resolving discrepancies should be flexible, account for the complexity of resiliency compliance, and allow providers due process and a reasonable opportunity to correct issues. Carriers already provide extensive, detailed information whose evaluation inherently involves interpretive issues. A collaborative process focused on resiliency improvements is preferable to rigid timelines backed by penalties.¹³

C. Infeasibility Claims

Question 8: How should the Commission evaluate, verify, and address service provider claims of technical or administrative infeasibility of the resiliency requirements?

The Commission should continue the current process for infeasibility claims – annual Resiliency Plan reporting, Commission Staff review, data requests, engineer site visits, and audits where appropriate – rather than adopting new criteria.

Prior Resiliency Decisions preserved flexibility regarding infeasibility claims, by (a) recognizing that providers may face circumstances beyond their control, and (b) establishing a three-part framework that balances the 72-hour backup power requirement with real-world deployment constraints.¹⁴ Under this framework, providers may identify: (1) facilities that do not require 72 hours of backup power, with an explanation of how service will be maintained; (2) facilities that cannot comply because of safety risks or legal constraints; and (3) facilities where 72 hours of

¹² See, e.g., D.20-07-011 at 97; D.21-02-029 at 69.

¹³ See D.20-07-011 at 97; D.21-02-029 at 69.

¹⁴ See D.20-07-011 at 105-07, OP 1; D.21-02-029 at 81-82, OP 1.

backup power is objectively impossible or infeasible. Relevant bases may include site-specific engineering, safety, legal, permitting, structural, property-access, and operational constraints that make compliance infeasible under the circumstances presented.

Infeasibility determinations require case-by-case evaluation involving engineering, geographic, legal, structural, environmental, and safety considerations. The Commission has recognized that it “should not adopt a rigid definition of resiliency that could result in hand-cuffing providers in how they achieve and maintain their network’s resiliency.”¹⁵ A flexible approach – and not the imposition of rigid compliance standards or new prescriptive resiliency requirements for circumstances outside providers’ control – better serves resiliency goals. Staff’s role should remain limited to verifying factual information and administering the approved reporting process, not making discretionary and substantive “feasibility” determinations.¹⁶

A less flexible infeasibility standard would also discourage wireless deployment at constrained sites and undermine resiliency rather than improve it. If providers face an unyielding compliance standard at certain sites – due to space limitations, restrictive topography, zoning prohibitions, or landlord restrictions – they may forgo deployment at those locations altogether, or decommission existing facilities, rather than risk noncompliance and potential penalties. The resulting reduction in wireless coverage would directly diminish the network density and redundancy required for effective resiliency. As a result, customers could be left without service during the very emergencies the Resiliency Program is designed to mitigate.

¹⁵ See D.20-07-011 at 63; D.21-02-029 at 34.

¹⁶ See GO 96-B, General Rule 7.6.1 – Industry Division of Advice Letters (providing advice letters are subject to disposition by the reviewing Industry Division whenever such disposition would be a “ministerial” act).

Question 9: What types of documentation should providers submit to demonstrate infeasibility of resiliency requirements at a particular facility or site? Examples may include independent verification, documentation of rejected permit applications, engineering reports, and other relevant materials.

Existing Commission requirements already require wireline and wireless providers to identify and support infeasibility determinations through in annual resiliency filings.

Wireline providers provide information supporting claims of preclusion from compliance under D.21-02-029, and wireless providers identify sites for which 72-hour backup power is determined to be infeasible and provide narrative explanations through the Wireless Resiliency Plan Template.¹⁷

In many cases, infeasibility is determined through engineering and operational review based on the physical characteristics of a site, not through third-party documentation. For example, a provider's engineering personnel may determine a site lacks sufficient space or structural capacity for additional batteries; or that rooftop lease restrictions, landlord refusals, third-party property restrictions, or the absence of legal rights can prevent deployment of backup-power equipment. Engineering personnel may also find that fire-code separation requirements, air-quality permitting constraints, noise ordinances, zoning restrictions, pole-attachment limitations, or public-rights-of-way restrictions limit available options; or that terrain, narrow access roads, site-access limitations, fuel-delivery constraints, or other operational considerations make deployment, refueling, or maintenance impracticable. These determinations are often based on site design, equipment requirements, load characteristics, field conditions, safety considerations, property rights, and applicable permitting requirements, all of which are within the expertise of the provider's engineers and operations personnel. These determinations are often based on site design, equipment requirements, load characteristics, field conditions, and safety considerations, all of which are within the expertise of the provider's engineers and operations personnel.

¹⁷ See D.21-02-029 at 81-82, OP 1; Resolution T-17706 (adopting the Wireless Resiliency Plan Template).

The Commission should allow providers to explain the basis for infeasibility through the existing narrative fields in the Resiliency Plan and should request additional supporting materials only when reasonably necessary to resolve a specific factual question. A categorical documentation checklist would be poorly suited to these circumstances, since it would elevate form over substance and require providers to create after-the-fact documentation solely to satisfy a reporting requirement, without improving the Commission’s ability to assess resiliency.

The Commission should continue relying on the existing Resiliency Plan templates and Staff review process. Providers should explain the factual basis for infeasibility in the narrative fields already required, and Staff may request additional information when a specific factual issue requires clarification. Independent verification, engineering reports, rejected permit applications, or similar materials should be reserved for circumstances in which they are relevant, reasonably available, and necessary to resolve a specific disputed issue – not required categorically for every site.

D. Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) and Collocated Sites

Question 10: How should the resiliency requirements apply to shared facilities such as collocated sites and facilities / sites with Customer Premises Equipment (CPE), and how should that differ if the ‘customer’ is an end-user versus another communications service provider?

Under the existing Resiliency Program, shared facilities and customer premises equipment (“CPE”) raise distinct issues, but neither warrants any change to the current framework. For shared or collocated facilities, providers are required to report only on facilities they own or control.

The Resiliency Decisions do not require one provider to report on another provider’s facilities or capabilities. Each provider reports on its own network, and any missing report for a collocated facility should be addressed with the provider that owns or controls that facility. Some facilities may also fall outside reporting under the “infrastructure providers” exception in D.20-07-011 at 55.

CPE presents a separate issue. CPE is located on the customer’s side of the demarcation point, where

ownership and responsibility shift from a wireline provider to the customer.¹⁸ The Wireline Resiliency Decision recognizes that CPE requires separate backup power during an outage while preserving the providers' obligation to maintain service on their side of the network.¹⁹ AT&T California's tariffs and guidebook reflect the same distinction.²⁰

Consistent with this framework, backup power for customer-owned CPE remains the customer's responsibility, including when the customer is another communications service provider. Providers should remain responsible for resiliency measures applicable to facilities they own or control, and customers should remain responsible for equipment located on their side of the demarcation point.²¹ In the wireless context, customer-owned handsets and mobile devices similarly remain under the customer's ownership, maintenance, and control, and providers have no ability to install, monitor, maintain, or supervise backup power for such devices. Requiring providers to supply, monitor, or maintain CPE backup power would create access, siting, permitting, electrical, space, and maintenance issues that the Commission has recognized are "real barriers" to effective resiliency.²²

¹⁸ See generally 47 U.S.C. § 153(16). Unlike traditional wireline CPE, wireless handsets and mobile devices are customer-owned equipment that are purchased, charged, maintained, and controlled exclusively by the customer. Providers generally have no ability to install, monitor, maintain, test, repair, or supervise backup power for such devices. For this reason, wireless devices do not present the same CPE backup-power issues addressed by the Commission in the wireline context.

¹⁹ See D.21-02-029 at 62.

²⁰ See Schedule Cal. P.U.C. No. A2, Rule 2.1.16C; Schedule Cal. P.U.C. No. 175-T, Rule 2.3.3; Guidebook Part 2, Section 2, Rule No. 14.

²¹ See D.21-02-029 at 62; D.08-09-014, *Decision Addressing Standards for Telecommunications Backup Power Systems and Emergency Notification Systems Pursuant to Assembly Bill 2393*, Rulemaking (R.) 07-04- 015 at 23–24 (Sept. 8, 2008); D.10-01-026, *Decision Adopting Guidelines for Customer Education Programs Regarding Backup Power Systems Pursuant to Assembly Bill 2393*, Rulemaking (R.) 07-04-015 at 1, 5 (Jan. 22, 2010).

²² D.20-07-011 at 88; D.21-02-029 at 53.

Figure 1: Demarcation Point



The same demarcation point rule applies when the customer is another service provider. For example, when AT&T California provides fiber-based backhaul to a wireless provider's cell site, AT&T California reports only on the facilities on its side of the demarcation point; the wireless provider remains responsible for any separate resiliency obligations for its own facilities under D.20-07-011 or D.21-02-029. Maintaining the current ownership-, control-, and demarcation-based framework keeps providers' resources focused on the required network-level resiliency measures.

Question 11: How should the Commission establish responsibility between service providers for shared site resiliency requirements including service provider roles in overseeing facility/site compliance with the Commission decisions, submitting annual Resiliency Plans and Emergency Operations Plans, and sharing any associated incremental cost for meeting resiliency requirements?

As set out in response to Question 10, each provider should only report on its own network facilities. If the Commission is not receiving resiliency reports for a collocated facility, that matter should be addressed with the facility owner.

When providers rely on backup power from a landlord or third party, they include that information in their own Resiliency Plan. However, providers do not control collocated facilities, and lease terms govern collocation arrangements including cost-sharing, space restrictions, and access rights.

The Commission should not attempt to establish shared responsibility frameworks that could create confusion regarding compliance obligations.

Question 12: What measures should service providers implement to ensure that customers with Customer Premises Equipment [CPE] have sufficient backup power to maintain service continuity during power outages?

The Commission has not required providers to install, maintain, monitor, or supervise backup power for customer-owned CPE, although customer-notice and customer-education requirements may apply. The longstanding rule that customers are responsible for powering their own equipment reflects both established legal principles and practical realities. Customer premises and customer-owned equipment are outside a provider's ownership and control; providers generally cannot compel access to private property; CPE is often located in space-constrained areas; and shifting responsibility for backup power to providers would create substantial logistical, technical, and operational challenges. In the residential context, such a requirement could effectively require providers to ensure that customers install and maintain backup power within their own homes, even though providers lack authority to compel such action. The Commission's prior decisions have sufficiently addressed customer education on CPE backup power as part of Emergency Operations Plans, consistent with Decision 10-01-026. In the wireless context, the Commission specifically declined to extend resiliency rules to CPE.

E. Expansion Beyond High Fire Threat District (HFTDs)

Question 13: What criteria should be used to determine how the Resiliency Program should be extended beyond Tier 2 and Tier 3 High Fire Threat Districts (HFTDs)? What data would be required in order to determine which facilities beyond Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFTDs should be included in the Resiliency Program?

The Resiliency Program does not need to be extended beyond Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFTDs.

Expansion of resiliency requirements outside those tiers would impose additional costs and burdens on carriers, with limited benefits. The Commission's current risk-based Resiliency Program works by targeting Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFTDs – the areas where wildfires and PSPS events are most likely to occur.²³ PSPS events generally do not occur in non-HFTD areas, which are designated as having “zero to moderate wildfire risk.”²⁴ Expanding backup requirements to non-HFTDs would dilute resiliency efforts in those areas where it is more needed, without meaningful safety gains, and would divert capital and personnel from communities facing the greater wildfire threat.

Resiliency efforts should be applied only to high fire threat areas, not expanded to non-high fire threat areas. If additional areas are now to be considered as posing a high fire threat, they should be appropriately designated as either Tier 2 or Tier 3. If certain areas within non-HFTD areas are found to have elevated fire risk, the Commission should use Rulemaking 15-05-006 to consider elevating those areas to Tier 2 or Tier 3 status. This targeted approach is preferable to a sweeping expansion, and would ensure that any potentially necessary elevation in HFTD status aligns with the Commission's 10-year Fire Threat Map revision cycle, with the next update planned for 2027.²⁵

²³ See D.20-07-011 at 92; D.21-02-029 at 58.

²⁴ See D.17-01-009, *Decision Adopting a Work Plan for the Development of Fire Map 2*, Rulemaking (R.) 15-05-006 at 80 (Jan. 19, 2017); D.17-06-024, *Decision Amending the Work Plan for the Development of Fire Map 2*, Rulemaking (R.) 15-05-006 at Appendix A, A-13 (June 29, 2017).

²⁵ See generally, D.17-01-009 at 39; D.17-06-024 at Appendix A, A-24.

Question 14: Should the Commission also use third party risk maps, such as CAL FIRE’s Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), to determine whether to include facilities that may be outside of the CPUC’s Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFTDs in the Resiliency Program?

The use of additional risk maps to identify new facilities for inclusion in the Resiliency Program is unnecessary. Both D.20-07-011 and D.21-02-029 established that the resiliency requirements were “narrowly tailored” to facilities in Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFTDs.²⁶ In those decisions, the Commission considered “timing, siting, permitting, and cost constraints” and determined these were “real barriers to ensuring networks have the backup power necessary to withstand a disaster or de-energization event.”²⁷ The Commission also recognized the need to “prioritize investments based on risk of an outage.”²⁸

As stated above, if certain non-HFTD areas are found to have elevated fire risk, the appropriate mechanism is Rulemaking 15-05-006 to consider placing those areas within the existing Fire Threat Map framework. The Commission’s focus should remain on network facilities in the areas facing the greatest wildfire threat.

Question 15: If the resiliency requirements were expanded beyond Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFTDs, what would be the major cost drivers and estimated incremental cost for compliance?

The provision of 72-hour backup power to non-HFTDs would require some combination of generators, fuel storage, extended batteries, transfer switches, enclosures, and related electrical upgrades. Engineering would also be required at each site to determine whether it can physically accommodate backup power equipment. Urban sites, including rooftops, poles, and constrained rights-of-way, often lack sufficient space and may require structural reinforcement, concrete pads,

²⁶ See D.20-07-011 at 92; D.21-02-029 at 58.

²⁷ See D.20-07-011 at 88; D.21-02-029 at 53.

²⁸ See D.20-07-011 at 92; D.21-02-029 at 58.

wiring upgrades, or equipment relocation. In some cases, installation may be impracticable, increasing infeasibility reporting.

Expansion of resiliency requirements to non-HFTDs would also trigger extensive permitting and regulatory compliance. Generators may require air permits and CARB compliance; fuel storage may require fire-safety review and hazardous materials filings; and noise controls may require studies or mitigation. Some jurisdictions also require conditional-use permits, public hearings, and extended processing timelines.

The Commission has already recognized that timing, siting, permitting, and cost constraints are real barriers even within existing HFTDs.²⁹ Those constraints would be significantly greater in a statewide expansion, especially in dense urban areas where space is limited and local opposition is more likely.

Expansion of resiliency requirements to non-HFTDs would also trigger substantial operational, permitting, and regulatory burdens. Additional backup-power deployments usually require site-specific engineering reviews, local land-use approvals, air-quality permits, environmental review, fuel-storage compliance, fire-safety approvals, equipment maintenance programs, and ongoing inspection and testing obligations. Many facilities, particularly those in dense urban areas and constrained rights-of-way, may lack sufficient space for generators, fuel storage, batteries, or associated equipment. These siting, permitting, compliance, and maintenance requirements would apply regardless of the number of generators available and would substantially increase the complexity and cost of a statewide expansion. Expansion would also create substantial recurring operating costs – including equipment maintenance, fuel management, battery replacement, monitoring, permitting compliance, inspections, compliance reporting, and technician

²⁹ See D.20-07-011 at 88; D.21-02-029 at 53.

labor – across thousands of additional sites. These costs would continue for the life of the facilities and would be incurred regardless of whether outages ever occur at any of the affected locations.

The issue is not whether additional investment in resiliency is desirable, but whether investment in lower-risk, non-HFTD areas would generate greater resiliency benefits than investment in Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFTDs, where the Commission has already determined the risk of wildfire and PSPS-related outages is greatest. The Commission previously recognized this need for prioritization when it limited the 72-hour requirement to areas facing the highest wildfire-related risk.³⁰ Resources directed to lower-risk areas will produce fewer resiliency benefits than equivalent investments targeted to the communities facing the greatest risk of outage-related service disruption.

Question 16: Should the Commission develop a methodology for calculating a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR), at the facility/site level, to determine whether to expand the Resiliency Program? If yes, how should benefits and costs be calculated?

AT&T does not believe there is any benefit to extending a 72-hour power requirement to cell sites outside of High Fire Threat Districts. The Commission is statutorily required under Public Utilities Code Section 321.1 to assess the economic effect of its decisions. The potential benefits of expanded resiliency requirements must be balanced against the significant costs and compliance burdens for carriers and ultimately California consumers.

Should the Commission contemplate expansion of the 72-hour requirement, it must first conduct a rigorous cost-benefit analysis and consider, inter alia, the probability, duration, and frequency of extended power outages at non-HFTD facilities; the extent to which existing strategies (network redundancy, overlapping coverage) already maintain service without dedicated backup power; per-site compliance costs across facility types; and the aggregate cost to the industry and California consumers. The record does not currently demonstrate sufficient benefits to justify

³⁰ D.20-07-011 at 92; D.21-02-029 at 58.

expansion of the 72-hour backup-power requirement beyond Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFTDs. If the Commission elects to develop a BCR methodology, the analysis should rigorously quantify both the expected resiliency benefits and the full range of compliance, operational, and consumer costs associated with any expansion.

F. Mobile Generators

Question 17: How do communications service providers determine optimal strategies for the prepositioning and prioritization of sites for deployment of mobile backup generation? Should the Commission set requirements to facilitate rapid deployment mobile generators during emergencies, such as the establishment of standard connectors, strategic prepositioning, and guidelines for sharing resources among providers?

The Commission has repeatedly recognized that “communications networks are complex, diverse, and there may not be a ‘one size fits all’ approach to ensuring resiliency.”³¹ Rather than mandating specific infrastructure designs, flexibility is needed to provide carriers with the discretion to deploy solutions that best meet their specific facilities, operations, and other circumstances.

Service providers determine optimal deployment strategies based on their unique network designs, real-time information, and experience from previous events. Deployment decisions depend on numerous factors that can only be assessed by carriers’ network teams in real time, given the rapidly changing conditions inherent in disasters and power shutoffs. These factors may include network topology, outage conditions, facility accessibility, availability of overlapping coverage, public safety considerations, and service demand patterns in the affected area.

Providers use a combination of best practices – permanent generators and battery arrays, prepositioning of assets (fuel, generators, deployable communications equipment), fuel agreements, mobile generators, quick-connect plugs, and overlapping network design – that vary by region and circumstances.

³¹ D.20-07-011 at 99; D.21-02-029 at 70-71.

The Commission should not set prescriptive requirements for mobile generators.

The Commission has specifically stated that its requirements “are not an effort by the Commission to micromanage the providers’ operations” and that the Resiliency Plan “sets forth a flexible structure for providers to determine how best to maintain service.”³² Setting fixed parameters like ratios or maximum distances would be inconsistent with this recognized need for flexibility, and imposing detailed certain infrastructure requirements does not facilitate rapid deployment.

Question 18: How should the Commission consider preparedness requirements for a large-scale emergency where there may be more facility sites experiencing outages than there are mobile generators available to deploy? How should the Commission determine acceptable methods of meeting the Resiliency Program’s 72-hour backup power requirements including, but not limited to, a required ratio of mobile generators to assigned facilities or sites for supporting essential communications equipment and minimum service levels?

As stated above, the Commission has recognized that “communications networks are complex, diverse,” and there is no “one size fits all” approach to ensuring resiliency.³³

The Commission should not mandate a ratio of mobile generators to sites. The adequacy of portable generators depends on numerous fact-specific circumstances, including labor resources, outside power vendors, refueling capabilities, terrain, and accessibility.

Resiliency strategies cannot be reduced to mathematical formulas. Every provider’s network is different, and a one-size-fits-all rule would be inefficient; no two providers have the same facilities in the same locations operating the same way.

The Wireline Resiliency Decision recognized that a portable generator “is a feasible strategy as we expect it to be unlikely that every site on an individual network would be down at the same time.”³⁴ Mobile generators are only one tool in a broader resiliency strategy. Providers have multiple tools at their disposal including backup generators, overlapping coverage from neighboring cell sites,

³² See D.20-07-011 at 98-99; D.21-02-029 at 70-71.

³³ D.20-07-011 at 99; D.21-02-029 at 70-71.

³⁴ D.21-02-029 at 54.

remotely adjusting antennas and radio power, and leveraging low-band spectrum with robust propagation characteristics.

Question 19: Should the Commission determine an appropriate timeframe at which mobile generators should be deployed and operational at each facility or site during a power outage? How should the Commission determine the maximum allowable travel time between the location where a mobile generator is stored and the assigned facility or site that relies on it?

Flexibility, and the recognition that service providers must make decisions in real time regarding the optimal deployment of resiliency resources should discourage any fixed deployment timeframes for mobile generators, or a mandate of maximum travel times for potential generator delivery. The adequacy of deployment depends on evaluation of fact-specific circumstances, and any effort to establish a maximum distance presents the same issues as a generator-to-site ratio—it would be unrealistic and unproductive and discourage the flexibility already recognized as the basis for any effective resiliency framework.

Staging generators too close to disaster-prone areas may work at cross-purposes with resiliency goals, by placing those resources at risk in the disaster zone. There is no way to predict where or when the need for resiliency resources should be deployed, and providers must be able to deploy and reallocate assets without the risk of a Commission rule violation.

Question 20: Should the Resiliency Program account for situations where roads are impassable such that transport of mobile generators is infeasible? How much on-site battery backup power is reasonable to ensure connectivity during the interval between when a power outage begins and when a mobile generator is operational at a given facility or site?

AT&T already addresses the reasonable amount of backup battery power needed for wireline and wireless facilities in its Resiliency Plans. Moreover, the Commission already recognizes that certain events may make deployment of mobile generators impossible.³⁵ Flexibility

³⁵ See D.20-07-011 (“no matter how many strategies are employed, sometimes, because of their scale, disasters will cause severe service disruption”).

relating to carriers' use of mobile generators is essential to properly balancing costs and adequately evaluating the feasibility barriers related to installation of fixed generators at certain locations.

It is impossible to predict when and where roads will become impassable. Mandating specific amounts of on-site battery backup for all sites would be inconsistent with the Commission's flexible approach. Service providers maintain service through various means – including overlapping design and coverage – not solely through onsite backup power.

A mandated battery backup rule would not address circumstances in which facilities are destroyed or rendered inoperable by wildfire or other catastrophic events. In those situations, the principal challenge is not duration of available backup power, but the need to restore or replace damaged facilities. Such events are fundamentally different from PSPS and other commercial-power-outage scenarios, in which communications facilities generally remain intact but lack utility power. Service recovery and restoration strategies – not mandated onsite power – remain the most practical means of mitigating the effects of disasters on the public and first responders.

The suggested mandate regarding backup battery power would divert resources from recovery efforts, particularly if it is imposed without evidence that existing resiliency measures are inadequate.

G. Wildfire Resilience

Question 21: How should the Commission expand the Resiliency Program to expedite coordinated undergrounding with electric utilities during restoration of an area where infrastructure has been damaged by wildfire or other disaster?

The Commission's Resiliency Program was developed primarily to address service continuity during PSPS events and extended commercial-power outages. Undergrounding addresses a fundamentally different issue. It does not provide backup power, supply fuel, extend battery duration, or improve a provider's ability to maintain service during electric-utility de-energization events. Accordingly, undergrounding falls outside the core purpose of the Resiliency Program.

AT&T works closely with Cal OES, first responders, and local officials to coordinate emergency response. Carriers have established forums and processes for coordination and

cooperation with other communications providers and electric utilities for disaster preparation and response, including the Cross-Sector Resiliency Forum. These existing coordination mechanisms will continue without expanding the Resiliency Program to include undergrounding requirements.

The Commission is required under Public Utilities Code Section 321.1 to assess the economic effects of its decisions. Accordingly, any proposal to require or encourage undergrounding through the Resiliency Program would require careful evaluation of the associated engineering, permitting, deployment, operational, and cost implications. Existing undergrounding tariffs already establish frameworks governing undergrounding projects and allocation of associated costs. This resiliency proceeding should not be used to alter those established cost-allocation mechanisms. Moreover, communications facilities do not present wildfire-ignition risks comparable to electric utility transmission and distribution infrastructure. Because undergrounding does not address the backup-power and continuity-of-service issues that are the principal focus of the Resiliency Program, and because communications facilities are not a primary driver of wildfire ignition risk, the Commission should not impose undergrounding requirements through this proceeding.

Even if undergrounding were considered within the scope of this proceeding, it should not be treated as a presumptively superior resiliency solution. Underground facilities remain vulnerable to wildfire heat, theft or vandalism, flooding, earthquakes, or other ground movement, which can damage vaults, conduits, handholes, and associated equipment, causing service disruptions. Undergrounding also involves substantial engineering, permitting, construction, and cost considerations, and deployment timelines can extend for years. These characteristics further demonstrate why undergrounding is a distinct infrastructure-policy issue rather than a backup-power or de-energization resiliency measure.

Undergrounding is also not applicable to all communications infrastructure. Wireless antennas, radios, and related equipment must remain above ground to function and therefore cannot be addressed through undergrounding requirements. Existing undergrounding tariffs and related

regulatory frameworks already govern undergrounding projects and allocation of associated costs.

The Commission should not impose broad undergrounding mandates through the Resiliency Program or alter those established frameworks in this proceeding.

Question 22: What are the barriers and challenges to communicating with electric or other utilities to ensure a coordinated effort to rebuild facilities after a wildfire or other disaster? What rules or requirements should the Commission consider to improve this coordination?

Telecommunications providers already coordinate with electric utilities and local governments during and after disasters. Existing coordination mechanisms include direct operational communications, emergency-management channels, cross-sector resiliency forums, and Commission-sponsored de-energization working groups. The record does not demonstrate a need for additional Commission mandates governing communications-provider coordination. Before imposing new requirements, the Commission should identify specific deficiencies in existing coordination processes and determine whether those deficiencies cannot be addressed through existing emergency-management and industry-coordination frameworks.

To the extent the question concerns rebuilding damaged facilities following catastrophic events, those activities involve fact-specific engineering, permitting, property-rights, and local-government considerations that are not readily addressed through generic statewide requirements. The Commission should allow providers continued flexibility to coordinate restoration and reconstruction efforts based on the circumstances of each event.

Question 23: Should the Commission consider an undergrounding requirement for providers to concurrently underground affected network facilities, or in the alternative, require providers to install steel poles to replace wood poles where the electric utility has opted to underground? Why or why not?

The Commission should not impose requirements for concurrent undergrounding or mandatory replacement of wood poles with steel poles through the Resiliency Program.

As discussed above, the Communications Resiliency Program was principally developed to address service continuity during PSPS events and extended commercial-power outages. Undergrounding

does not provide backup power, extend battery duration, supply fuel, or otherwise improve a provider's ability to maintain service during de-energization events, and is not the type of resiliency measure contemplated by the Program.

Existing undergrounding tariffs already establish mechanisms governing undergrounding projects and the allocation of associated costs. This proceeding should not alter those established frameworks or create new undergrounding obligations under the guise of communications resiliency.

As set out above, undergrounding should not be treated as a default or presumptively superior resiliency solution. Undergrounding can involve great cost with limited incremental benefit, and underground facilities remain vulnerable to wildfire heat, flooding, earth movement, theft, vandalism, and damage to vaults, conduits, and related equipment. Underground facilities can also take longer to access and repair, which may delay restoration when rapid service recovery is most important. Wireless antennas and radios, moreover, cannot be undergrounded and must remain above ground to function.

The Commission has repeatedly recognized that “communications networks are complex, diverse, and there may not be a ‘one size fits all’ approach to ensuring resiliency.”³⁶ Decisions regarding network architecture, facility design, and infrastructure deployment should remain with providers, subject to the existing regulatory framework, rather than being prescribed through resiliency mandates.

H. Wildfire Mitigation Reporting

Question 24: How should the Commission require wireline and wireless facilities-based communications service providers to include wildfire preparedness and mitigation plans in their annual Communications Resiliency Plan and/or new wildfire mitigation filings?

Wildfire mitigation planning and communications resiliency planning serve different policy objectives and should not be conflated. Communications resiliency planning is focused on

³⁶ D.20-07-011 at 99; D.21-02-029 at 70-71.

maintaining service continuity during PSPS events, commercial power outages, and other emergencies. Wildfire mitigation planning, by contrast, is directed toward preventing wildfire ignitions. Because communications facilities generally do not present wildfire-ignition risks comparable to electric utility infrastructure, the Commission should not import electric-utility-style wildfire mitigation planning requirements into the Communications Resiliency Program.

The current annual Resiliency Plan filings already capture significant wildfire preparedness information. The existing Tier 2 advice letter filings include narrative responses addressing resiliency and emergency preparedness; carriers already address wildfire preparedness within their Resiliency Plans and Emergency Operations Plans.

To the extent wildfire preparedness is relevant to communications providers, existing Resiliency Plans and Emergency Operations Plans already address the communications-specific issues most relevant to emergency events, including service continuity, emergency response, restoration activities, coordination with public safety officials, and protection of communications facilities. No additional wildfire mitigation filing or expansion of the existing reporting framework has been shown to be necessary. Any wildfire preparedness elements should be incorporated into the existing annual reporting framework rather than made the subject of new, separate filings. Additional processes would detract from carriers' focus on their network facilities and existing resiliency obligations. Proposed modifications should be discussed in workshops and adopted through the resolution process.

AT&T already undertakes extensive resiliency and emergency-preparedness activities, including staging additional generators in fire-prone areas, boosting wireless capacity in high-risk areas, maintaining a team of meteorologists providing weather intelligence, and working closely with Cal OES and first responders.

Question 25: Should providers incorporate wildfire preparedness and mitigation plans into their annual Resiliency Plans, or would it be more appropriate for them to submit new and separate wildfire mitigation filings through the Tier 2 Advice Letter process?

The Commission should not require new and separate wildfire mitigation filings for communications providers. As discussed above, wildfire mitigation planning and communications resiliency planning serve distinct regulatory purposes. Wildfire mitigation plans are principally directed toward preventing wildfire ignitions, whereas communications resiliency plans are designed to support service continuity during PSPS events, commercial power outages, and other emergencies. Because, communications facilities do not present the same wildfire ignition risk as electric utility transmission and distribution infrastructure, the Commission should not import an electric-utility-style wildfire mitigation framework into the Communications Resiliency Program.

If the Commission determines – after workshops and a demonstrated need – additional communications-specific preparedness information is warranted, those clarifications should be incorporated into the existing annual Resiliency Plan and Tier 2 Advice Letter process rather than through a new, separate wildfire mitigation filing. Providers have submitted resiliency plans for five years, and the Commission already possesses established processes for reviewing those filings. Creating a separate wildfire mitigation filing would impose additional costs and administrative burdens with no showing that existing resiliency reporting is inadequate. Moreover, development of utility wildfire mitigation plan requirements has occurred through extensive proceedings addressing wildfire-ignition risks, mitigation strategies, risk assessments, and resource prioritization. The record in this proceeding does not demonstrate a comparable basis for establishing a separate wildfire mitigation planning framework for communications providers.

The Commission should consider reducing – not adding to – reporting requirements. Any proposed changes should be developed through workshops with stakeholders and adopted

through the Commission's resolution process to ensure service provider input, transparency, and proper Commission approval.

Question 26: In addition to the elements outlined in item h of the scoping memo, are there any further considerations or information that should be incorporated into the annual wildfire preparedness and mitigation plans? If so, please provide a list of these items.

Before adding any further elements to wildfire preparedness or mitigation plans, the Commission should first determine whether such plans are necessary for communications providers. As discussed above, wildfire mitigation planning and communications resiliency planning serve different policy objectives. The record does not demonstrate that additional wildfire-mitigation reporting requirements would improve communications resiliency or address a wildfire-ignition concern associated with communications facilities. . The Commission is statutorily required to perform a cost-benefit analysis of its decisions pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 321.1.

Service providers already undertake extensive resiliency and emergency preparedness activities, including backup-power maintenance, generator staging, emergency response planning, deployable communications assets, coordination with public safety agencies, and maintains a team of meteorologists providing weather intelligence and forecasts.³⁷ These activities are addressed through existing resiliency planning and operational processes. The Commission has not demonstrated that additional wildfire-mitigation-plan elements would provide information not already available through existing resiliency filings or emergency-preparedness requirements.

If the Commission determines that additional communications-specific preparedness information is necessary, it should first identify the specific objective to be achieved, evaluate whether existing reporting already addresses that objective, and consider any proposed changes through workshops and appropriate Commission process. Any new requirements should be narrowly

³⁷ See AT&T Connects, *AT&T Prepares for Peak Wildfire Season with Investments in Resilience and Readiness* (July 2, 2025).

tailored to a demonstrated need and should avoid creating a separate wildfire-mitigation reporting framework for communications providers, absent a sufficient evidentiary basis.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, AT&T respectfully urges the Commission to preserve the flexible, risk-based structure of the existing Resiliency Program. The current framework has enabled providers to deploy varied resiliency strategies suited to their networks, facilities, and real-world emergency conditions, while also providing the Commission with substantial reporting, oversight, and enforcement tools. The record does not support new prescriptive requirements, expanded reporting mandates, public disclosure of sensitive infrastructure information, or statewide expansion beyond Tier 2 and Tier 3 High Fire Threat Districts.

Any future refinements should be narrowly tailored to a demonstrated need, evaluated through collaborative workshops and appropriate Commission process, and supported by a cost-benefit assessment consistent with Public Utilities Code Section 321.1. The Commission should continue to encourage practical coordination, targeted emergency preparedness, and provider-specific resiliency solutions, rather than imposing rigid mandates that could divert resources from the communities and facilities facing the greatest risk.

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Respectfully submitted,

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