



# STAFF REPORT

DATE: 05/21/2025  
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
FROM: Utilities Department

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**2025-208**

## REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

### SUBJECT:

PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE UTILITIES DEPARTMENT WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to hold a public hearing regarding the Utilities Department Wildfire Mitigation Plan and receive and file the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board notification for 2025.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Hold a public hearing regarding the Utilities Department Wildfire Mitigation Plan.
- b. Receive and file the 2025 Wildfire Safety Advisory Board notification for the Utilities Department Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

### BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

In 2008, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) initiated a proceeding to address fires related to electric utility infrastructure. This proceeding aimed to establish new industry standards that would reduce the risk of electric line-ignited wildfires, with a focus on areas of the state where wildfire risks are elevated.

In 2016, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 1028, which required publicly owned utilities (POUs) to identify additional wildfire mitigation measures that could be taken if the POU's governing board found that its overhead electric lines and equipment posed a significant risk of causing a catastrophic wildfire. SB 1028 required that the POU's governing board base this determination on "historical fires and local conditions" and consult with local fire departments and other entities with responsibilities to control wildfires within the relevant area. These requirements were specified in the newly added Public Utilities Code (PUC) Section 8387.

In 2018, the CPUC completed the development of a statewide Fire Threat Map that designates areas of the state that have an elevated risk of electric line-ignited wildfires. This map incorporated historical fire data, fire-behavior modeling, fuel assessments, weather modeling, and a host of other factors. The CPUC's Fire Threat Map includes three tiers of fire threat risk. Tier 1 consists of areas that have the lowest risks. Tier 2 consists of areas where there is an elevated risk for destructive line-ignited wildfires. Finally, Tier 3 consists of areas where there is an extreme risk for destructive electric line-ignited wildfires.

The Utilities Department (UD) staff reviewed the CPUC's Fire Threat Map and determined that the City does not have any overhead electric utility infrastructure located in an area designated as either Tier 2 (elevated risk) or Tier 3 (extreme risk). The UD has electric utility infrastructure in a Tier 1 area that includes overhead electric lines, consisting of 3 poles spanning roughly 78 feet and totaling approximately 105 linear feet of overhead cable, including the dive to underground cable. Staff also reviewed historical fire data and local conditions. Based on this review, staff concluded the UD's electric lines and equipment have minimal overhead exposure and do not pose a significant wildfire risk.

On September 19, 2018, the City Council adopted Resolution 2018-099, which adopted staff's recommendation and found that UD's overhead electric lines and equipment did not pose a significant risk of causing a catastrophic wildfire. On May 15, 2024, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2024-026 adopting the most recent version of the Electric Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP). Under SB 1028, UD was not required to identify any additional wildfire mitigation measures.

In 2018, Governor Brown signed SB 901, which addressed a wide range of wildfire prevention, response, and recovery issues. SB 901 substantially revised PUC Section 8387, eliminating the prior process established by SB 1028 and requiring all POUs, regardless of size or wildfire risk, to develop a wildfire mitigation plan. Under the amended PUC Section 8387, all POUs must present a wildfire mitigation plan annually to their governing board. PUC Section 8387(b)(2) specifies the topics that must be addressed in the POU's wildfire mitigation plans, which include:

- the responsibilities of the persons tasked with executing the plan
- a description of the POU's wildfire mitigation objectives, preventative strategies, and programs

- a description of the metrics the POU will use to evaluate the wildfire mitigation plan's performance and a discussion of how those metrics informed the current wildfire mitigation plan
- protocols for disabling reclosers and de-energizing portions of the electrical system
- procedures for notifying customers who may be impacted by the de-energizing of electrical lines
- plans for vegetation management and inspections
- identification, description, and prioritization of all wildfire risks within the POU's service territory
- identification of any area in the POU's service territory that has a higher wildfire risk than is identified in a commission fire threat map
- a methodology for identifying and presenting enterprise-wide safety and wildfire-related risk
- a statement of how the POU will restore service after a wildfire
- a description of the processes and procedures the POU will use to monitor and audit the implementation of the wildfire mitigation plan, identify any deficiencies in the plan and correct them, and monitor and audit the effectiveness of electrical line and equipment inspections.

SB 901 requires POUs to present their WMP at an appropriately noticed public meeting open to public comments. The POU must verify that the WMP complies with all applicable rules, regulations, and standards.

In 2019, SB 1054 and SB 111 were enacted. SB 111 created a new state agency called the California Wildfire Safety Advisory Board (WSAB). SB 1054 requires that POUs submit their wildfire mitigation plans to the WSAB by July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The WSAB will then review the plans and provide comments and advisory opinions on their content and sufficiency.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

In December 2024, the WSAB issued an advisory opinion approving a change in process for POUs with no overhead lines in Tier 2 or Tier 3 areas. Pursuant to this guidance, POUs in this category may perform a simple review of their existing plan and provide notification to the WSAB that no substantive changes were required for the year. The notice must include a table with updated metrics for the prior calendar year. POUs are still required to conduct a hearing annually to present the existing plan at a public meeting.

Since the majority of UD's electric distribution system is located underground and no overhead lines are in Tier 2 or Tier 3 areas, UD qualifies for this change in process. UD concluded that the WMP approved in 2024, which is currently available on the City's website, meets all required criteria as provided in PUC Section 8387. Because no substantive changes are required in 2025, UD will present the existing plan (Exhibit 1) at this public hearing and will provide a notification to the WSAB along with updated metrics (Exhibit 2) by July 1, 2025.

SB 901 also requires that POU's have their plan reviewed by a qualified independent evaluator to assess the comprehensiveness of the plan. Pursuant to PUC Section 8387, the City of Corona Fire Department (CFD) reviewed UD's WMP and provided a qualified independent evaluator report in 2023, which is available on the City's website (Exhibit 3). An additional CFD review was not required for 2024 or 2025 as no substantive changes were made to the plan in either year.

Staff requests that City Council hold a public hearing to present the existing WMP and receive and file the 2025 WSAB notification regarding UD's WMP.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no financial impact as a result of the recommended actions.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action is to conduct a public hearing regarding the UD Wildfire Mitigation Plan, and there is no possibility that approving these changes will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

**PREPARED BY:** ERIN KUNKLE, ELECTRIC UTILITY MANAGER

**REVIEWED BY:** TOM MOODY, UTILITIES DIRECTOR

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Exhibit 1 – City of Corona Utilities Department Wildfire Mitigation Plan
2. Exhibit 2 – 2025 Wildfire Safety Advisory Board Notification
3. Exhibit 3 – Qualified Independent Evaluator Report