

# Wildfire De-Energization

Western Utilities Wildfire Communications Workshop  
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# Overview

- Wildfire Encroachment Policy
- Preparing
- Materials and Delivery
- Reaction
- Revisions and Engagement
- Lessons Learned



An aerial photograph showing a utility worker in a white hard hat and dark uniform working from a white bucket truck. The worker is positioned near a wooden utility pole, and the truck's boom is extended. The background shows a suburban neighborhood with houses, trees, and a street. A semi-transparent white banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text. In the bottom right corner, there is a red logo and the company name.

# Wildfire Encroachment Policy



# SOP 203

- When an active fire gets within a certain distance of our assets, we will de-energize
  - Threshold: combination of wind speed, asset type
- Directive from PacifiCorp leadership
  - Operators MUST turn off power
- *What does this actually look like?*

# A Policy is Born...



A photograph of a wooden utility pole with cross-arms and insulators, supporting power lines. The background features a scenic view of rolling green hills and a small village with houses nestled in a valley. The sky is clear and blue. A semi-transparent white banner is overlaid across the middle of the image.

# Preparing

# While the policy is being finalized...

- **The way we describe it**
  - Emergency, not proactive
  - De-energization, not encroachment
  - Power lines/equipment, not assets
- **It's about safety**
  - Safety of our customers and communities is our top priority
  - Helps protect first responders on the ground

# While the policy is being finalized...

- Provide context for customers
  - **WHY:** We may turn off power to mitigate against wildfire
    - Prevents catastrophic conditions
    - Protects responders
    - Protects infrastructure
  - **HOW/WHEN:** Here's what that might look like:
    - Public Safety Power Shutoff>proactive
    - Enhanced Safety Settings>event driven
    - Emergency De-Energization>instant/unplanned





# While the policy is being finalized...

- Brief internal teams to explain/engage with:
  - Customers
  - Businesses/communities
  - Elected officials/leaders/regulators
  - Public safety partners
  - Media

# Now that we have a policy...

- Develop new materials
- Re-brief teams
- Weave into our upcoming events





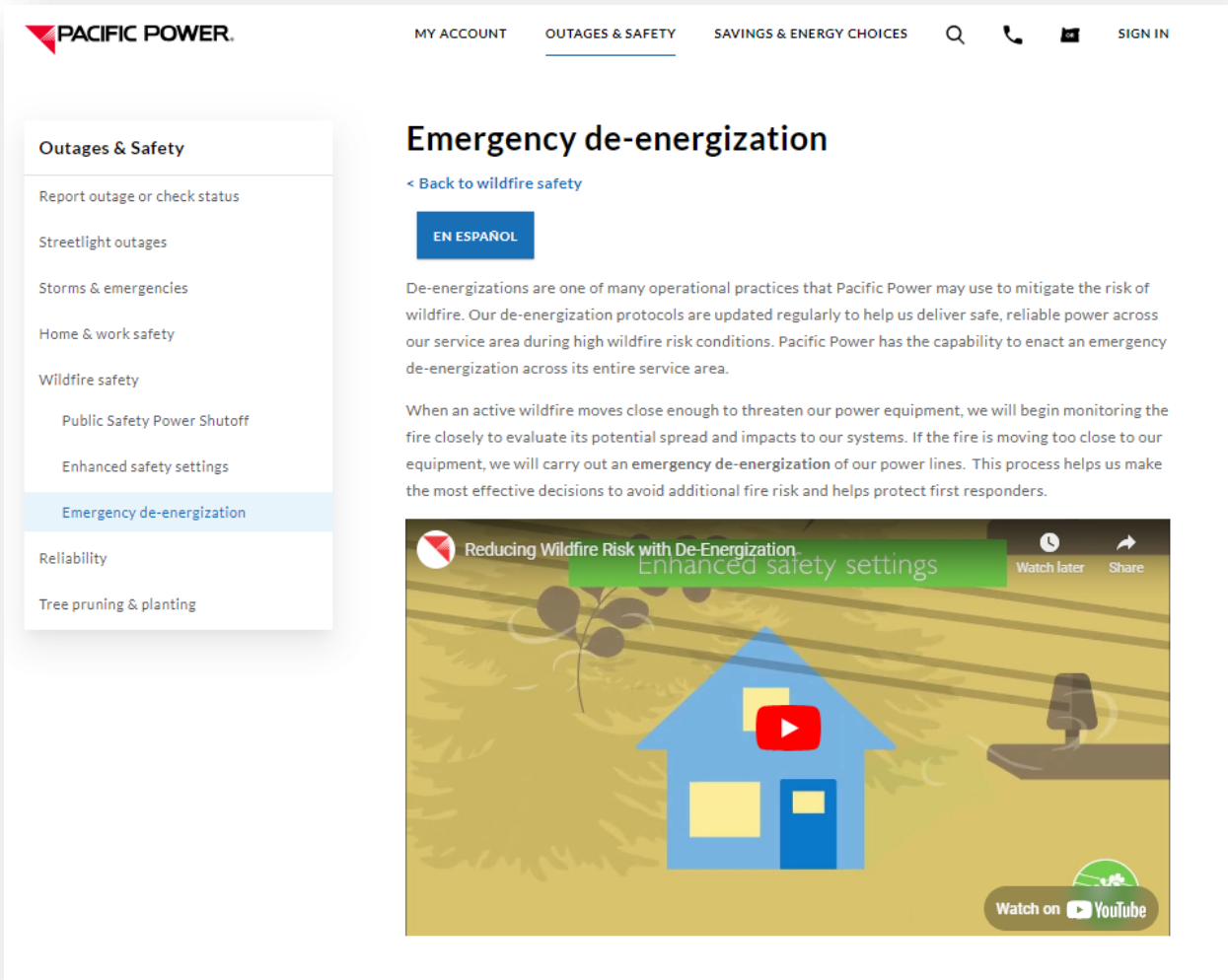
# Materials and Delivery



# Video



# Webpage



## FAQ

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Why is Pacific Power carrying out emergency de-energizations?   | ▼ |
| How does Pacific Power decide when to enact an emergency de-energization?   | ▼ |
| What impact will emergency de-energizations have on the average Pacific Power customer?                                     | ▼ |
| What does the restoration process look like for an emergency de-energization? How soon can Pacific Power re-energize lines? | ▼ |
| Will customers receive advanced notification before an emergency de-energization event?                                     | ▼ |
| Has Pacific Power carried out emergency de-energizations in the past?   | ▼ |

### Other types of de-energization

### Enhanced Safety Settings

We know that catastrophic fires occur almost entirely within a set of dangerous conditions, such as gusting winds and hot, dry weather. Enhanced safety settings are put into place when fire risk conditions are elevated. These settings are used with devices to de-energize the lines when a fault is detected, reducing the chance of a potential fire ignition. Customers are notified when their equipment has been placed on enhanced safety settings.

[Learn more](#)

### Public Safety Power Shutoff

Pacific Power may de-energize power lines as a preventative measure during periods of the greatest wildfire risk, through a measure known as a Public Safety Power Shutoff. If possible, Pacific Power sends notifications through phone, text and email, before, during and after a PSPS event to keep customers and stakeholders informed, depending on customers' individual notification preferences. The decision to implement a PSPS is based on extreme weather and area conditions, including high wind speeds, low humidity and critically dry fuels, and incorporates input from local public safety partners.

[Learn more](#)

# Handouts

- Pocket sized
- For field employees

## What you can do

- Update your contact information and sign up for alerts at [RockyMountainPower.net/Alerts](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Alerts) or call 1-888-221-7070.
- Get outage and restoration updates at [RockyMountainPower.net/Outages](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Outages).
- Prepare for outages with tips at [RockyMountainPower.net/Prepare](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Prepare).
- Consider backup power options if you have medical needs. Learn more at [RockyMountainPower.net/Medical](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Medical).



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## Wildfire Safety and Resilience

### Enhanced Safety Settings

At Rocky Mountain Power, we're dedicated to ensuring your safety, especially when wildfire risk is high.

- When fire risk is high, we may use enhanced safety settings on power lines to reduce the potential for equipment to start a fire.
- If a power line comes in contact with debris, it will deactivate within fractions of a second.
- Our teams will then inspect the equipment for damage and make necessary repairs before restoring power.
- Customers may experience more frequent outages because of these settings.



### Public Safety Power Shutoff

Using data from our extensive network of weather stations for daily forecasting and combining it with historic fire risk modeling informs our situational awareness.

- We monitor for elevated fire risk conditions like high temperatures, windy weather and dry or dead vegetation.
- In extreme wildfire conditions, Rocky Mountain Power may use a temporary power shutoff, known as a Public Safety Power Shutoff, to reduce the chance of electrical equipment starting a wildfire.
- In these situations, we will attempt to provide advance warning via various communication channels and updates throughout the event.
- Once weather conditions improve, we can inspect equipment and safely restore power.



**PSPS CONDITIONS**

### Emergency De-Energization

We identify risks promptly and take focused action when required, including, in certain specific situations, temporarily shutting off power in targeted areas.

- We closely monitor wildfires near our equipment and power lines.
- If a fire gets too close, we will turn off the power.
- This reduces the risk of any additional fires starting and protects first responders and keeps our customers and communities safe.
- Customers may experience more frequent outages.
- Once the fire risk has passed and we can inspect for damage, make repairs and turn the power back on.





# Handouts

- Trifold brochure
- More depth

At Rocky Mountain Power, we're dedicated to ensuring your safety, especially during wildfire season. Our teams are in the field year-round, maintaining our system, managing vegetation and working to minimize risks.

Our in-house meteorology team monitors weather conditions 24/7 across our system. Using data from our extensive network of weather stations for daily forecasting and combining it with historic fire risk modeling informs our situational awareness.

This integrated approach enables us to identify risks promptly and take focused action when required, including, in certain specific situations, temporarily shutting off power in targeted areas.



Vegetation management



Stay alert. Stay informed. Stay safe.

- Update your contact information and sign up for alerts at [RockyMountainPower.net/Alerts](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Alerts) or call 1-888-221-7070.
- Get outage and restoration updates at [RockyMountainPower.net/Outages](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Outages).
- Prepare for outages with tips at [RockyMountainPower.net/Prepare](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Prepare).
- Consider backup power options if you have medical needs. Learn more at [RockyMountainPower.net/Medical](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Medical).
- Learn how de-energization can help mitigate the risk of wildfire at [RockyMountainPower.net/Deenergize](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Deenergize).



## Wildfire Safety and Resilience



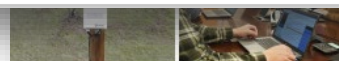
### De-energization

When there are fires burning near power lines, poles close to our homes and businesses, we may need to temporarily shut off power in targeted areas to help ensure the safety of our customers and communities.

### Public Safety Power Shutoff

Under certain conditions – such as high temperatures, strong winds and the presence of dry or dead vegetation – something as simple as debris blown onto powerlines can pose a wildfire ignition risk. Public Safety Power Shutoffs are a critical part of our strategy to protect surrounding areas. Relying on real-time data, we carefully assess these factors to determine when we may have to temporarily shut off power in specific areas for a limited time to help ensure the safety of our customers and communities.

In these situations, we will give advance warning via various communication channels. Updates continue throughout the event. Once conditions improve, our field crews inspect and clear lines during daylight hours before safely restoring power.



### A GROWING NETWORK OF SENSORS

We have installed sensors on our lines to detect faults and pinpoint potential problems, using built-in cellular modems to deliver real-time updates. We've placed these devices on some circuits within our highest fire risk services areas. We continue to evaluate new areas for deployment.

### REAL-TIME MONITORING

- Temperature
- Humidity
- Wind speed and direction
- Fuel sources on the ground



Advanced recloser control

# Handouts


- Infographic
- Maintain visual consistency
- Could pull elements into other materials

## Wildfire Safety and Resilience

At Rocky Mountain Power, your safety is our top priority. In addition to hardening our system, we've upgraded our power equipment with settings and devices to reduce wildfire risk. Monitoring conditions and risk in real-time allows us to take action where needed.

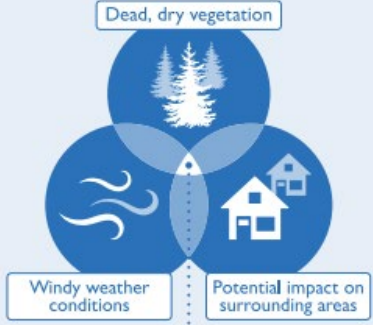
### TAKING ACTION TO REDUCE RISK

#### Enhanced Safety Settings



We may adjust settings on power lines to reduce ignitions. If debris comes in contact with our lines, they will de-energize within fractions of a second.

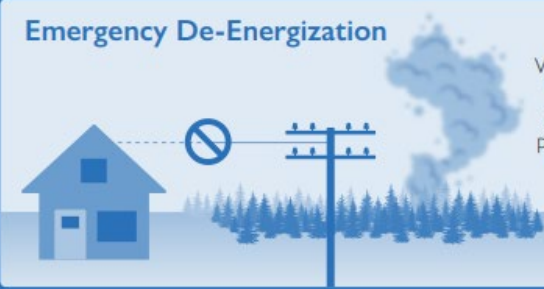
#### Public Safety Power Shutoff



**PSPS CONDITIONS**

We may temporarily turn off power to targeted areas when weather conditions create higher risk for wildfire.


### Emergency De-Energization



When an active wildfire gets too close to our equipment, we may turn off power to reduce the risk of ignition, protect first responders and keep our customers and communities safe.

### STAY SAFE, ALERT AND INFORMED

- Update your contact information and sign up for alerts at [RockyMountainPower.net/Alerts](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Alerts) or call 1-888-221-7070.
- We will send important safety information via text, phone and email based on your preferences.



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# Direct Customer Communications

- Weave in message in planned activities
  - Oregon Wildfire Forums
  - Pre-season customer email





# Businesses/Communities/Elected Officials

- Talking Points
- FAQs
- Email Template
- Slide Deck

## Emergency De-energization

- **Monitoring:** fires getting close to equipment
  - May be able to provide advanced notification
- **Immediate:** When a fire is reported as too close, power is turned off immediately
  - May not be able to provide advanced notification



7 | Wildfire Safety

PACIFIC POWER  
Subject Line: Reducing Wildfire Risk with De-Energization  
Graphic [download here](#)

Body:

<Valued customers/salutation>,

At Rocky Mountain Power, we're taking steps to reduce wildfire risks by expanding our weather monitoring abilities, actively managing vegetation and strengthening our system.

The safety of our customers and communities is our top priority. Rocky Mountain Power may [de-energize power lines](#) as a preventative measure during periods of the greatest wildfire risk anywhere across our service area.

- **Enhanced Safety Settings:** These settings are used with devices that de-energize lines when a fault is detected, reducing the chance of a potential fire ignition.
- **Public Safety Power Shutoff:** The decision to implement a Public Safety Power Shutoff is based on extreme weather and area conditions, including high wind speeds, low humidity and critically dry fuels.
- **Encroachment Strategy/Emergency De-energization:** When an active wildfire moves close enough to threaten burning into the area of our lines or equipment, we may complete an emergency de-energization of our power lines. Our encroachment strategy refers to how we use emergency de-energization to reduce catastrophic wildfire risk.

# Media

- Responses for de-energization
- Reactive



## Emergency De-energization (Wildfire Encroachment) Media Holding Statements

APPROVED | UPDATED 7/23/24

**\*\*\*To be used reactively if media reaches out to us\*\*\***

- If media reaches out and we are **NOT AWARE of an outage** related to an emergency de-energization (wildfire encroachment):
  - Thank you for reaching out. Let me verify the details with our operations team and get back to you.

---

- If media reaches out and we have been **NOTIFIED but do not have additional details** of an outage related to an emergency de-energization (wildfire encroachment):
  - Thank you for reaching out. There is currently an outage in the **<LOCATION>** area impacting **<NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS>** customers. Our crews are currently investigating the cause of the outage and determining possible restoration times. We understand that outages impact our customers and communities and appreciate their patience. We encourage customers to visit the outage map at [PacificPower.net/Outages](https://PacificPower.net/Outages) [[RockyMountainPower.net/Outages](https://RockyMountainPower.net/Outages)] for updates.
  - *If media asks more specific location/outage questions:*
    - Let me verify the details with our operations team and get back to you.

# Internal Comms

- *Currents* series
- Invite local employees to wildfire forums

## FOCUS ON WILDFIRE

### *How we take action to safeguard against wildfire risk*

#### *May is National Wildfire Awareness Month*

Because the safety of our customers and communities is our top priority, PacifiCorp has procedures in place that guide how we operate during periods of elevated fire risk conditions – such as when hot, dry weather combines with gusting winds.

#### **Enhanced Safety Settings**

To start, when elevated risk conditions exist, we activate [enhanced safety settings](#) on our equipment. These settings ensure our power lines are de-energized within fractions of a second if interference is detected, reducing the chance of a potential fire ignition. Learn more by watching the video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWIDxp8N5BI>



#### **Emergency De-energization**

In addition to adopting a preventative mindset through the use of enhanced safety settings, we keep an eye on active conditions near our infrastructure. We closely monitor any wildfires burning near our equipment, including power lines, poles and substations. If a fire gets close to our equipment, we will take measures to safeguard against its potential impact through a targeted, emergency de-energization.

Learn more about how we reduce wildfire risk:

[https://youtu.be/\\_D74RXIIOI4](https://youtu.be/_D74RXIIOI4)



#### **Public Safety Power Shutoff**

And finally, as also described in the above video, we're ready to carry out what's known as a Public Safety Power Shutoff, or PSPS.

A PSPS is a preventative measure for use during periods of the greatest wildfire risk, when power lines are de-energized to help ensure public safety. The decision to implement a shutoff is based on extreme weather and area conditions, including high wind speeds, low humidity and critically dry fuels. The process also incorporates input from local public safety partners.

If a PSPS is enacted, PacifiCorp sends notifications to customers through phone, text and email – before, during and after a shutoff event – in order to keep customers and stakeholders informed.

As wildfire risk in the Western U.S. continues to grow, helping to safeguard our communities is more important than ever. Together they represent one part of our growing investments in wildfire mitigation, which will reach \$2.5 billion in 2026.

Learn more about our wildfire safety plans and programs on the websites of Pacific Power and Rocky Mountain Power. If you want to share further information with customers or neighbors, a list of resources available to customers can be found on the intranet.



# Reaction



# Local Media

Pacific Power outlines program for shutting down power during wildfires

YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

**Multiple fires in Utah threaten homes and cause widespread power outages**

©2KUTV


**Rocky Mountain Power: Electricity restored; RMP shut off power due to wildfire**


© OIL CITY NEWS


**Fires cause power outages for thousands in 2 Utah communities**

FOX 13


# Social Media


 **Michael Sherwood**  
You guys are doing a really bad job. We need a new utility company capable of providing service that's reliable.


20w Like Reply Hide 



 **Mindy Durrant**  
More information on de-energization:  
<https://www.rockymountainpower.net/.../de-energization.html>

20w Like Reply Hide


 **Jordan Murray**  
Outages in vernal are getting ridiculous. You guys need to figure something out! Are you going to start issuing credits to the residents and especially businesses that are loosing thousands from the constant outages? It's not acceptable for us to not pay the bill so why can't you hold up your end of the deal?

18w Like Reply Hide 


 **Nellie Clyburn Messerly**  
How would you explain the sudden outage in beryl junction? Before 11 am, no wind and no fire 🔥. As I sit sweltering in a 100 degree heat I'm awfully disappointed in you. The increased outages over the last few years has been caused by your lack of maintenance!!!! The rural communities are suffering because you ignore us.


20w Like Reply Hide  


Most relevant ▾

 **Amber Phillips Lucatero**  
Power still out in yakima.


23w Like Reply Hide

 **Pacific Power** ✓  
I'm sorry to hear your power is still out. If you can please send us a direct message with your full address, we would be happy to look into further information regarding the outage in your area. -Dave


23w Like Reply 

 **Lindsey Welsh**  
This policy is just stupid and greedy. It makes no sense to cut power to areas that aren't even close to a fire (as in the case of this particular fire). Who decided this policy? I'd bet a majority of consumers don't agree and didn't get a say in this. We have wildfires every year and if this is your new "policy" then you may have some lawsuits on your hands.


23w Like Reply Hide

 **Richard Khan**  
Stop paying Warren Buffett dividends and put the money into equipment upgrades including "undergrounding" transmission lines.

23w Like Reply Hide

 **Michael Hernandez**  
Turn it on

23w Like Reply Hide

 **Pacific Power** ✓  
I'm sorry to hear your power is still out. If you can please send us a direct message with your full address, we would be happy to look into further information regarding the outage in your area. -Dave

23w Like Reply



# Public Safety Partners

- PacifiCorp Emergency Management briefed all counties in service area
- Met with some skepticism
  - “The threat isn’t as bad as you think here in X community”
- Helped carry the message on personal preparedness
- Provided feedback/insights to help us improve the policy



Brush fire east of Redmond prompts Pacific Power to conduct emergency power shut-off to over 10,000 customers

While it's unfortunate so many customers were affected, the fire chief said, "I appreciate the steps taken out of an abundance of caution to aid in firefighter safety and avoid issues that may have contributed to the fire's spread."



# Revisions and Engagement

# Yakima, WA Community Meeting

- 100+ attendees
- Media availability before event
- A lot of statements along with questions

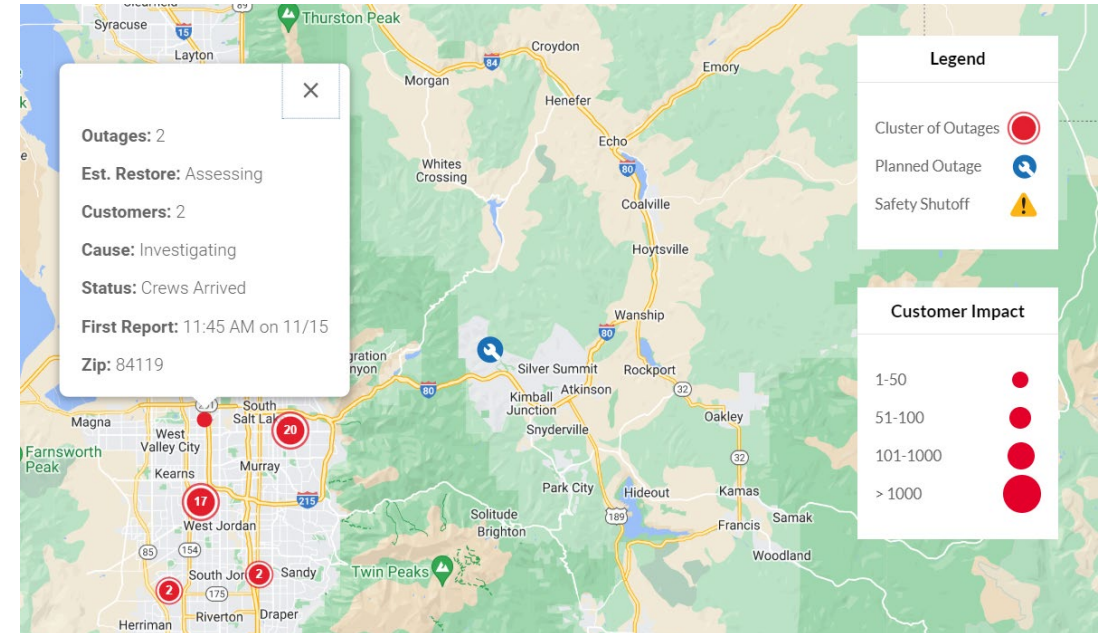
Pacific Power explains de-energization plans





# Information Seeking/Sharing

- Changes to the Outage Map codes
  - Added "De-energization due to wildfire"
- Use of FEA Tool
  - Fire Encroachment Analyst
  - Proactively pulling info on current fires to respond to media



# “Buffer” Added to Policy

- One hour for us to get boots on the ground
  - Verify if we need to de-energize
  - Doesn't work with fires on top of our assets
- Potential De-energization
  - Notification to customers
- Retrain
  - Update messaging
    - Reassure customers that we don't do this lightly

# Lessons Learned



# What We Learned

- Impact varied
  - Some communities hit multiple times/earlier on in season
  - Fewer outages than Enhanced Safety Settings
- Policy was effective at stopping fires, but disastrous at building trust
- The standard methods and cadence was not enough
  - Needed to *see and hear* the impacts for communities
- Lead with empathy: it's a hardship, not an inconvenience
- There are still policy difficulties we don't have a good answer for

# Plans for Next Year

- Change ad buy to include more local/rural stations to get the word out
- We need to go out to the impacted communities
- Look at automated calls to large/critical infrastructure customers
  - Pilot of manual calls for RMP customers starting Aug. 2024



# Questions?



THANK YOU

