



CITY OF CARSON

Legislation Text

File #: 2021-316, Version: 1

Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

Consent

SUBJECT:

**CONSIDERATION OF SUBMITTING A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SB 533
(ELECTRICAL CORPORATIONS: WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLANS: DEENERGIZATION
EVENTS: MICROGRIDS (CITY COUNCIL))**

I. SUMMARY

SB 533 requires the state's investor owned utilities (IOU) to repair their infrastructure to prevent reoccurring public safety power shutoff (PSPS) outages. The bill also requires the state to create a database of critical circuits and infrastructure to help prioritize locations for microgrid development in Tier 2 and 3 high fire threat districts. IOUs will also be required to collaborate with local governments and community choice aggregators (CCAs) to identify critical circuits for microgrid projects.

Although the City of Carson does not reside in a high fire threat district and is not as vulnerable to PSPS events, this bill also supports efforts to strengthen the power grid and make more resilient to all risks through microgrid development, which would benefit Carson residents, businesses, and industries. A draft letter of support is attached for City Council consideration. (Exhibit No. 1)

II. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE the City of Carson's support position on SB 533 in the 2021/2022 legislative session.

III. ALTERNATIVES

1. DO NOT TAKE a support position for SB 533.
2. TAKE another action the City Council deems appropriate.

IV. BACKGROUND

The growing effects of climate change have resulted in large portions of the state becoming so susceptible to wildfires they are categorized as Fire Threat Severity Zones or High Fire Threat Areas. Both areas are prone to wildfires, caused by electric utility wires and poles that are not fire hardened or properly maintained. As a public safety precaution, the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) allows IOUs to shut off power under specified weather conditions.

Problem

California's energy grid is not reliable or resilient during windy weather conditions. PSPS events have resulted in multiple power shut off events affecting as many as 2 million customers, lasting days at a time, on multiple occasions. For medically vulnerable customers, including seniors, life-sustaining devices are forced to run on limited back-up battery power, refrigerated medications spoil, and communication services are shut-down isolating these customers. For businesses, the loss of power means lost income and temporary unemployment for workers. For students of all ages, education is interrupted until power is restored. For tens of thousands of customers, refrigerators full of food are lost, often more than once.

Solution

SB 533 requires the state's IOUs to start fixing their wires and poles prone to PSPS outages using any of the following solutions on any portion of their infrastructure experiencing 5 or more outages since 2019:

- Modernizing
- Upgrading
- Microgrids
- Replacement
- Hardening
- Undergrounding

IOUs would have 12 months to undertake any of these solutions and over time would be required to repair more and more of their infrastructure prone to power outages.

The bill also requires the PUC and the Office of Emergency Services to develop a database of critical circuits and infrastructure located in a high fire-threat district served by an IOU, and identify whether it serves low-income households or communities to help prioritize locations for upgrades and microgrids.

The bill also codifies a PUC requirement for IOUs to collaborate with local governments,

including working with CCAs to identify critical circuits for microgrid projects.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. Letter of Support for SB 533. (pgs. 4-5)

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