



Contra Costa County
Public Works
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December 5, 2013

TO: Transportation, Water, and Infrastructure Committee
Supervisor Candace Andersen, District II, Chair
Supervisor Mary N. Piepho, District III, Vice Chair

FROM: Julia R. Bueren, Public Works Director *W. Bueren*

SUBJECT: *For* Report on PG&E Coordination with Cities and County for Street Light Maintenance

RECOMMENDATION

ACCEPT this status report on the street light coordination effort between Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), the County Public Works Department (County), and participating cities for street light maintenance.

BACKGROUND

The Transportation, Water and Infrastructure Committee (TWIC) requested Public Works staff to report annually on the status of street light maintenance coordination efforts with PG&E.

Street light maintenance program improvements continue to take place. The Letter of Understanding (LOU), dated February 2008, between PG&E and County, states the commitment of PG&E for open communication and responsive service levels and actions in resolving issues related to street light performance. Communication channels have continued to remain open by conducting regular discussions at street light coordination meetings with the County, and its constituent cities and towns.

Continuing the effort initiated in May 2008, and since reporting to TWIC on December 6, 2012, the County Public Works Department, PG&E and cities have met on a quarterly basis. In 2013, meetings took place at City of Pleasant Hill, City of Pittsburg and Contra Costa County Public Works Department. Topics discussed throughout this year included street light vandalism (specifically for copper wire theft) and related legislation; street light maintenance and cost-saving measures; and financing for Light Emitting Diode (LED) projects and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) rate schedules for

PG&E's replacement of high pressure sodium lights with LEDs. The quarterly meetings were valuable because those present were able to address issues related to street light maintenance, operations and increased efficiencies. Topics discussed at quarterly PG&E Street Light Coordination meetings are described in more detail below:

Street Lights Vandalism (Copper wire theft and Legislation updates)

Copper wire theft: Theft of copper wire from street lights in several Cities and unincorporated County areas continue. Some cities in the County have opted to secure their electrical boxes with anti-theft devices such as security lids. Some cities are using more elaborate measures such as having tracking devices on copper wire to deter vandals from stealing the wire. Following the example of the City of Vallejo, the City of Concord adopted "Copper Stoppers" program, a metal theft protection and recovery service company from a company based in Michigan. Police in Concord have caught six offenders in one month; City of Vallejo has been free of copper wire theft for over a year. The cost of Copper Stoppers is relatively inexpensive compared to the cost to replace stolen copper wire and repair damaged infrastructure.

County electricians installed aluminum instead of copper wiring along Richmond Parkway, our most sensitive area for copper theft. Stickers were added to poles with the words: "No copper wire" to deter thieves from stealing the wire. To date, there has been no additional vandalism in this area.

Legislation updates: Since reporting to TWIC on December 6, 2012 and throughout the year, Tom Guarino, PG&E, has been delivering updates on legislation that would increase the penalties for copper wire theft and make it more difficult to sell to recyclers. Recently two bills, AB 841 and AB 909, were vetoed by the Governor. Another bill, AB 801, is being held by the author. However, SB 485 was approved by the Governor on October 3, 2013 and is now a chaptered law. For descriptions of the legislation, please see below:

- AB 841 required that junk dealers and recyclers pay for nonferrous materials only by check mailed to the seller's address. Existing law prohibits a junk dealer or a recycler from providing payment for nonferrous material, as defined, unless the payment is made by cash or check, the check is mailed, or the cash or check is provided no earlier than 3 days after the date of sale, and other specified requirements are met.
- AB 909 required the Department of Justice to establish a Metal Theft Task Force Program to provide grants to establish regional task forces for the purpose of providing local law enforcement and district attorneys with the tools necessary to successfully interdict the commission of metal theft and related metal recycling crimes.

- AB 801 would require junk dealers and recyclers to obtain specified information before providing payment for nonferrous materials marked with "indicia" (distinctive ownership markings), as defined, and would require that this information be retained as part of the written record of purchases.
- SB 485 requires weighmaster license applicants to provide information and a fee to the Department of Food and Agriculture's Division of Measurement Standards. If Department determines, after investigation, that information submitted in the application is materially inaccurate, the license issued to the junk dealer or recycler is revoked unless the applicant complies with the information requirements within 14 days of notice, as specified.

Street Light Maintenance, Operations, Repairs and Cost Saving Measures

Overall coordination between PG&E, Cities and County on street light repairs is ongoing. Discussions in 2013 focused on completion of routine calls for service. The year before, PG&E dedicated a unit in Fresno to the reporting and followup on street light outages and repairs. Notable improvements have been made for reporting the repairs done. This was a team effort between PG&E and street light coordinators in Cities and the County. Notification is received – with a reference or case number – for all outages reported directly to PG&E's website. PG&E monthly repair reports use this same reference or case number. The result has made the tracking of cases and receiving information on closed cases (street light repairs) a much simpler and faster task.

14-day "routine" repair cases: Response time for most routine repairs has been within 14 days throughout the year as stated in the LOU. When an outage repair takes longer, PG&E previously was not consistent with communicating to County staff with a response timeframe. Notable improvements have been made since the new opening of the Fresno unit in 2012. Currently, the number of cases taking longer to repair is very small and it was zero at the beginning of October 2013. The flow of information and communications regarding the pending repairs is excellent. County staff and PG&E at the Fresno unit are in constant communication via email.

The busiest time of the year for street light outage reports is the fall and winter season. It is around this time that the communications in repair status lacked in prior years. Although we are early in the fall and winter seasons, we believe that the establishment of the Fresno unit and the improvement in the notification process by PG&E will result in improvements in communication this year.

Electric Corrective (EC) 90-day cases: PG&E submits a monthly outage report to agencies. With this report, agencies can track repairs and also see outages of which they were previously unaware that may have been reported directly to PG&E and not come through the County or City which they are located within. This can allow staff to followup, as needed.

PG&E continues to provide the County monthly outage reports with information on outstanding and incomplete repairs for the EC 90-day cases. With the new improvements in the notification process, PG&E's Streetlight Maintenance Department is now sending emails to County staff when street lights are repaired. County staff continues to assist PG&E by providing a list of outstanding cases and requesting their status. In the past, responses have not been consistent and, at times, information about the status of a case has been difficult to obtain from PG&E. This has notably improved in 2013 where immediate responses via email are now available to County staff by PG&E. The number of EC-90 cases that extend beyond 90 days improved in 2013. Delayed reporting on field work completion in the West County continued into the first part of the year; however, the last six months of 2013 have demonstrated improvements in West County EC-90 day case reporting.

LED Financing and CPUC Rate Schedule

LED Financing: Several cities were interested in information related to financing for LED projects. Agencies were identified that can provide low rate (APR) loans for LED retrofit and similar projects. The California City-County Street Light Association (CALSLA) has a list of resources that can provide special loans. The California Energy Commission can be a great source of information as well.

CPUC updates: The CPUC approved a tariff for the conversion of PG&E-owned (LS1) high pressure sodium (HPS) lights to LED throughout the state last year. PG&E does not yet have an approved rate schedule for doing these conversions. City of Pittsburg has sent letters to the CPUC in an effort to accelerate the process of developing the rate schedule which would allow PG&E to do LED conversion in cities and counties. Currently, CPUC approval is expected by spring of 2014.

PG&E's Group Lamp Replacement Program, which was created to replace HPS lights across the County and Cities at the end of their life cycle, has been completed in many areas including Discovery Bay, Brentwood, Martinez, Richmond, Lafayette, Oakley and Bethel Island, however, others remain incomplete at this time. The group lamp replacement program mainly focuses on areas that may have underground wiring issues due to third party digging and damaged wires. When the CPUC approves the funds (approximately \$40 to \$50 million) for PG&E to convert HPS lights to LEDs, the group replacement program will use those funds and continue the program to install LEDs.

CONCLUSION

Key topics discussed in 2013 were street light vandalism and ways to deter copper wire theft; street light maintenance and reporting on work done to repair street lights; Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights; and the upcoming California Public Utilities Commission

(CPUC) rate schedules for PG&E's replacement of high pressure sodium lights with LEDs. PG&E's reorganization and relocation of the call center in 2012 resulted in demonstrable program improvements in 2013 with better communications on the status of outage cases and more timely information on repairs that are completed.

It is recommended that PG&E Street Light Coordination meetings continue on a regular, quarterly basis. These meetings enable City and County staff to collaborate on street light issues and to work together to develop improvements for timely repairs and innovations. City, County and PG&E staff obtain benefits from the interactions at the quarterly meetings and help all of us deliver excellent customer service to residents by assuring timely street light repairs. Major topics to be discussed in 2014 include new copper wire theft deterrent systems, funding and implementation of LED replacements, and developing standards for LED installations in new developments. The County, Cities, and PG&E remain committed to the well-organized and efficient system for street lights.

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