



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT NO. 2005

"Public Safety Power Shutoff"

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' RESPONSE

FINDINGS – *California Penal Code Section 933.5(a) requires a response to the designated findings of the Grand Jury.*

- F1. As of the date of this report, the County does not have a comprehensive operational PSPS response Master Plan for County departments.**

Response: **Agree.** The County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), supporting De-energization Plan, and Continuity of Operation Planning template currently serve as the comprehensive operational response plans for all County departments.

- F2. Not all County departments have formalized PSPS plans.**

Response: **Agree.**

- F3. The County Office of Emergency Services has a supporting plan to the Contra Costa County Emergency Operations Plan dated June 16, 2015, that is used for long-term power outages.**

Response: **Agree.**

- F4. There is no evidence that all County departments have used the County Office of Emergency Services plan as a guide for the development of their departments' specific PSPS plan.**

Response: **Agree.**

- F5. During the October 9 and 26, 2019 PSPS events, PG&E did not provide the County departments with accurate descriptions of impacted areas in real time.**

Response: Agree.

- F6. With cell, cable, and internet phone service impacted by the loss of power, Health Services could not easily communicate with at-risk residents.

Response: Agree.

- F7. With cell, cable, and internet phone service impacted by the loss of power, there were communication issues among the staff of public safety departments.

Response: Agree.

- F8. There were not enough emergency generators pre-positioned for adequate backup to essential County services during the October events.

Response: Agree.

- F9. During the PSPS event of October 9, 2019, the PG&E Community Resource Center location in San Ramon was not close to areas most impacted by the shutdown. The locations of the Community Resource Centers were improved in the second event on October 26.

Response: Agree.

- F10. The interface between some County entities and the resource facility providers was not clearly established. Therefore, the County did not have enough information about available services at non-PG&E resource facility locations.

Response: Agree.

- F11. As of the date of this report, the Grand Jury has found no evidence that the County has a process for tracking its labor costs and other expenses directly associated with a PSPS event.

Response: Partially agree. The County tracking personnel costs exists through ICS 214 activity logs. In addition to the ICS 214 forms, during known disasters the CAO's office would assign a unique County Organization Number to code and track PSPS expenses.

- F12. As of the date of this report, the Grand Jury has found no evidence that the total fiscal impact of the two October 2019 PSPS events has been provided.

Response: Agree.

- F13. Grant opportunities for County PSPS support are available through various State and Federal agencies.**

Response: Agree.

- F14. The County may be able to use existing and pending State of California legislation to mitigate negative impacts of a PSPS on the County and its residents.**

Response: Agree.

- F15. As of the date of this report, the County's After-Action Report for the two October 2019 PSPS events has not been made publicly available.**

Response: Agree.

RECOMMENDATIONS - *California Penal Code Section 933.05(b) requires a response to the designated recommendations of the Grand Jury.*

- R1. By December 31, 2020, the Board of Supervisors should consider commencing the development of a unified approach to PSPS events to be used by all County departments which includes: requirements for backup power, communications, Community Resource Center coordination, and training of additional staff to support essential activities.**

Response: The recommendation has already been implemented. The County responds to PSPS events through a unified system shared by County departments. In compliance with State and Federal law, Contra Costa County follows the organizational structure of the Incident Command System, and the Strategic Emergency Management System. This approach is shared by each County in the State and is consistent with best practices in emergency management. The County De-energization plan is based on this approach.

With respects to requirements for backup power and communications, County OES identified an issue with one cell tower which was able to be mitigated prior to the October 9 PSPS event. Disruption of communication services was mitigated to the extent possible by preposition of supplemental communication resources before the event. Cellular service proved to be a challenge throughout the PSPS incidents, and cellular service providers are responsible for maintaining their cellular towers and continuous service. To improve communication with cellular service providers, contact information for each cellular tower provider in the County has been shared among County emergency response partners.

Regarding coordination of community resource centers, PG&E determines where Community Resource Centers (CRCs) are located. Cities communicate with PG&E directly about PG&E CRCs set up within their jurisdictions.

On the training of additional staff to support PSPS response, all County departments receive the OES activity sheet, and are invited to participate in trainings, workshops, exercises, and meetings year-round. The goal of training, meeting, and exercising together is to prepare County departments for the unified approach to emergency response provided by the Incident Command System.

- R2. By December 31, 2020, the Board of Supervisors should consider directing County departments to develop a list of real-time information to be required of PG&E before initiation and during PSPS events.**

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is **not warranted or is not reasonable**. In 2018, County OES requested system maps and detailed information about areas targeted for de-energization including critical infrastructure and the locations of baseline medical customers. County OES requested that the County shall be notified ahead of any planned outage, and whenever an unplanned outage occurred affecting more than 1000 people. PG&E fulfilled this request by notifying County OES for multiple unplanned outages during 2018 and 2019, and during the PSPS events of 2019. During the 2019 PSPS events, PG&E released this information to the County 48 hours before each PSPS event. In 2020, PG&E provided this information to the County ahead of time through the PG&E PSPS Portal. The County expects that PG&E will again provide real time information regarding areas targeted for de-energization 48 hours ahead of any PSPS event.

- R3. By December 31, 2020, the Board of Supervisors should consider directing Contra Costa Health Services to have a protocol in place for working with PG&E to ensure that CCHS receives the information it requires to notify medical base-line customers of a PSPS event.**

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is **not warranted or is not reasonable**. PG&E now includes medical base-line customer data accessible through the PG&E PSPS Portal. Contra Costa Health Services will now access medical base-line customer information upon notification of a PSPS incident via the PSPS Portal.

- R4. By December 31, 2020, the Board of Supervisors should consider evaluating alternative communication coverage during a PSPS event to address service disruption to cell sites, internet, and cable providers dependent on the PG&E power distribution system.**

Response: The recommendation has already been implemented. County

OES plans for alternative communication coverage in the event of a power disruption. Alternative communication coverage includes a satellite phone system, backup satellite communication system, portable radio repeaters, and other contingency plans for first responder communications throughout the County. The effectiveness of backup communications plans is critical, where pre-positioning resources and deploying alternative systems prevented significant disruption to public safety communications during extensive power outages.

The primary public safety infrastructure for Contra Costa County is the EBRCS radio system, a system that is hardened by power generation plans independent of the PG&E power grid. All EBRCS radio towers have backup generators and alternative fuel plans in the event of power disruption. Much of the County's public safety equipment uses dual cellular carriers to prepare for an event where one of the two carriers become unavailable.

County OES recognizes one alternative communications gap in the form of a backup plan for data coverage in the event of a disruption to data services. This gap could be mitigated by a countywide microwave system in the form of a high through-put microwave link for data. Should funding become available, this would provide further resilience to the alternative communications system already in place.

R5. The Board of Supervisors should consider directing the County Administrator to establish a means of tracking PSPS costs by December 31, 2020.

Response: The recommendation has already been implemented. The means for tracking PSPS personnel costs exists through ICS 214 forms. In addition to the ICS 214 forms, during known disasters the County Administrator's Office will assign a unique County Organization Number to code and track PSPS expenses.

R6. By December 31, 2020, the Board of Supervisors should consider establishing a requirement that a final After-Action Report and a fiscal impact report be completed no later than 60 days after a PSPS event.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. The County is required to submit an After-Action Report and supplemental fiscal impact report to the California Office of Emergency Services within 60 days of a proclaimed emergency to seek reimbursement funding. The Board of Supervisors works with this understanding when an emergency is proclaimed.

R7. The Board of Supervisors should consider developing a plan to take advantage of funding available for PSPS events from various programs at State and Federal levels by December 31, 2020.

Response: **The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.** It is already a regular practice for the County to seek and apply for funding available for PSPS event from various State and Federal programs.

- R8. By December 31, 2020, The Board of Supervisors should consider tracking and communicating to County departments the status of existing and pending legislation which may mitigate the effects of a PSPS event on the County and its residents.**

Response: **The recommendation will be implemented by December 31, 2020.**