

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Order Instituting Rulemaking to Examine Electric  
Utility De-Energization of Power Lines in Dangerous  
Conditions.

Rulemaking 18-12-005  
(Filed December 13, 2018)

**BEAR VALLEY ELECTRIC SERVICE, INC. (U 913 E)  
PHASE 2 GUIDELINES PROGRESS REPORT**

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**I. Introduction**

Pursuant to Decision (“D.”) 20-05-051, Ordering Paragraph 4, Bear Valley Electric Service, Inc. (“BVES”) presents below its first of two reports on the progress of the implementation of the Phase 2 updated and additional guidelines for the de-energization of electric facilities in mitigating wildfire risk. BVES’ first progress report follows the guidelines set forth in D.20-05-051, Appendix A.

**II. Phase 2 Guidelines Progress Report**

As required by D.20-05-051, this report provides details regarding BVES’ progress towards implementing the guidelines set forth in Appendix A to D.20-05-051. The nine sections of Appendix A are addressed in greater detail below.

**A. Working Groups and Advisory Boards**

BVES is working to establish an advisory board to provide hands-on, direct advisory functions regarding all aspects of de-energization, emulating the approach San Diego Gas &

Electric Company (“SDG&E”) has implemented with its advisory board. BVES is reaching out to stakeholders and potential advisory board members from the following pool of candidates:

- San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Services (“County OES”)
- Big Bear Fire Department
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (“CAL FIRE”)
- U.S. Forest Service
- San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department Big Bear Lake Patrol Station
- California Highway Patrol (“CHP”) Arrowhead Area
- California Department of Transportation (“Caltrans”)
- Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency (“BBARWA”)
- Big Bear City Community Services District (“CSD”)
- Big Bear Lake Water Department (“DWP”)
- Big Bear Municipal Water District (“MWD”)
- Southwest Gas Corporation
- Bear Valley Community Hospital
- Bear Valley Unified School District
- Big Bear Chamber of Commerce
- Big Bear Airport District
- Big Bear Mountain Resorts

BVES plans to hold the first meeting of the advisory board in August of 2020. BVES will continue to refine the list of advisory board members based on feedback from its letter of intent sent to these organizations and through the course of regularly scheduled meetings.

## **B. De-energization Exercises**

BVES completed its first de-energization exercise on June 26, 2020. Due to COVID-19 concerns, the exercise was conducted as a tabletop online meeting. The de-energization exercise was simulated and did not disrupt power to BVES’ customers. The results of the exercise will be

discussed with the advisory board and lessons learned are being used to refine the design and the implementation of de-energization program elements.

**C. Who Should Receive Notice, When Should Notice Occur, and How Should Notice Occur?**

BVES will post Public Safety and Power Shutoff (“PSPS”) information on its website, Facebook page, and will issue press releases to local media outlets. Notices will also be sent through BVES’ interactive voice response (“IVR”) and text messaging systems. BVES will update public information as it becomes available and make the location and times of the affected areas available to the public through the same information outlets. Local media and Community Based Organizations will be notified as soon as information becomes available.

BVES has reviewed the technology requirements with its IT team and will reach out to the California Department of Technology (“CDT”) to ensure its website and server meets the requirements necessary for effective and uninterrupted communication to the general public regarding PSPS events. Due to its small service territory, BVES believes that its noticing and outreach efforts are effective to inform its customers.

BVES will provide information to communication carriers about the location and the estimated period of times the de-energization and re-energization events will occur.

**D. Community Resource Centers**

BVES has reached out to several businesses, public entities, and non-government organizations (“NGOs”) to assess their interest in partnering with BVES and hosting a Community Resource Center (“CRC”). Some of the facilities that BVES has approached include the local public library, hotels, and city health care facilities. BVES has also evaluated its own

facilities. BVES is currently negotiating terms with the Bear Valley Community Healthcare District for a potential host site. In the interim, BVES plans to host the CRC on its property. BVES has the capability to host a reasonable number of the affected public, depending on the season and any city restrictions in place such as COVID-19 social distancing requirements. Additionally, BVES will work through the Bear Valley Mountain Mutual Aid Association to offer assistance to affected populations.

**E. Restoration of Power Service upon Conclusion of Public Safety Need for De-energization**

BVES ensures that any loss of electric service due to outages, including PSPS, is restored as soon as safe and possible. In the case of a PSPS event that impacts service points, power loss is restored as soon as possible and typically within hours from the termination of the PSPS event, unless it is unsafe to do so. Due to its small service territory, BVES crews are able to quickly patrol and restore electric service, generally in less than 24 hours, provided no damage occurred to facilities during the PSPS event. Service will be restored only after facilities have been properly inspected and determined to be safe.

**F. Transportation, Communications, and Water System Resilience**

BVES' PSPS Plan provides for the notification of transportation, communication, and water system providers of impending PSPS events through the same measures described above in Section II.C. BVES has confirmed that these organizations have backup generation and are capable of sustaining their services during a PSPS event. This includes local radio, cell phone towers, and water and wastewater facilities. There is only one small public transportation service in the Big Bear Lake Valley which is fueled by a small fleet of natural gas vehicles. Street and

highway intersections have battery backup for traffic signals and several local fuel stations have backup generation as well. This was evident during past emergencies such as the Holcomb fire, which ignited outside of BVES' service area. Critical services located within BVES' service area remained intact during the Holcomb fire emergency.

### **G. Medical Baseline and Access and Functional Needs Populations**

BVES has reached out to mobile home parks located in its service area to ensure that mobile home park residents are being served correctly with regard to any medical baseline conditions. Most mobile home parks have master metered accounts and residents of these mobile home parks share a master electric bill which is included in the lease. This billing structure does not provide BVES any direct or relevant information about the resident medical conditions or situation. As a result, BVES has increased its efforts to gather information about residents who are served behind-the-meter to assess whether they are medical baseline or Access and Functional Needs ("AFN") customers.

BVES has also approached several business enterprises and asked whether they would be interested in building a working Community Based Organization ("CBO"). The CBO would include members of the Senior Citizen Center, Big Bear Lions Club, Soroptimist International, local library, and various non-profit organizations. Contacts and relationships among for profit and non-profit organizations are vital to the dissemination of information to difficult to reach individuals within the community, although this is less of an issue in BVES' small service territory.

In addition, BVES has coordinated with the fire department, city, and county agencies for assistance on obtaining a list of AFN populations. To date, due to privacy issues, BVES has been unable to collect data on AFN populations, but BVES is still pursuing its efforts.

BVES is also working with its public relations contracted service to create a flyer that will be mailed to customers to help determine whether any AFN person(s) is part of their household. This outreach effort will help establish a census of the AFN population, which can be combined with data from medical baseline customers to allow emergency medical services teams, firefighters, and the sheriff's officers to respond quickly during PSPS events and emergency situations.

## **H. Transparency**

BVES recognizes the importance of transparency in any reporting of de-energization events and it will include a thorough and detailed description of the quantitative and qualitative factors it considered in calling, sustaining, or curtailing each de-energization event. Information about the PSPS event will include the reasons why the de-energization was a last resort option, and also an explanation of the factors that led to the conclusion of the de-energization.

BVES' PSPS Plan includes specific short, medium, and long-term actions that it will take to reduce the impact of and the need for PSPS events to mitigate wildfire risk. This information will be made available and easily accessible on BVES' public website.<sup>1</sup>

## **I. Definitions**

BVES includes public safety answering points in the definition of critical facilities to ensure 9-1-1 emergency services receive priority notification and any additional assistance necessary to ensure resiliency during de-energization events. Similarly, BVES includes the transportation sector (including facilities associated with automobile, rail, aviation, major public

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<sup>1</sup> See BVES' PSPS website at <https://www.bvesinc.com/safety/public-safety-power-shutoff/>.

transportation, and maritime transportation for civilian and military purposes) in the list of critical facilities.

### **III. Conclusion**

BVES believes its efforts to date will help minimize impacts of de-energization events on its customers, while still providing reliable and safe service and mitigating wildfire risks. BVES expects to make additional progress on implementing the Commissions de-energization guidelines, and will provide an update on this progress in its next Phase 2 progress report in four months.

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Respectfully submitted,

By: \_\_\_\_\_ /s/ \_\_\_\_\_

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