



Wildfire Risk Update

House Committee on Climate, Energy,
and Environment

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Preventing and Mitigating Wildfire Risk

- Background
 - PUC and role with utility safety
 - Heightened Risk of Wildfires
 - Call to Action
- Key Wildfire Mitigation Strategies
 - Oregon Wildfire & Electric Collaborative (OWEC)
 - Utility Wildfire Protection Plans
 - Public Safety Power Shut-off (PSPS)
 - Shared intelligence
- PSPS Preparedness

PUC Overview

Economic regulator of investor-owned utilities

- Electric – PGE, PacifiCorp, and Idaho Power
- Natural Gas – NW Natural, Cascade, and Avista
- Select telecom and small water companies

Broader role in utility safety and emergency support

Quasi-judicial and policy functions

3 full-time Commissioners – 142 FTE

Our **mission** is to ensure Oregonians have access to **safe, reliable and fairly priced** utility services that advance **state policy** and promote the **public interest**.

We use an **inclusive process** to evaluate differing viewpoints and visions of the public interest and arrive at **balanced, well-reasoned, independent decisions** supported by fact and law.

PUC's Traditional Safety Role

Requires utilities to proactively manage all safety and reliability risks (wildfire, earthquake or cybersecurity threats)

- Nat'l Electric Safety Code and minimum vegetation clearance requirements
- Field inspections for compliance

Reviews whether the utility has sufficient revenue to operate and maintain its system in a safe manner

Part of Oregon's Emergency Response System

- ESF 2 – Communications
- ESF 12 - Energy

Heightened Wildfire Risk – Call to Action

PUC Action:

- 2019 - Directed IOUs to report on wildfire mitigation plans and efforts to address risk
- West Coast Forum to share lessons learned, emerging best practices, and actions taken throughout the region
- Convened forum in Southern Oregon to bring utilities, emergency partners, utilities, and state agencies on wildfire risk

Executive Order 20-04 and SB 762:

- PUC to hold workshops to assist all operators of electrical systems to develop and share best practices for mitigating wildfire risk
- Required all utilities operate under Wildfire Protection Plans:
 - IOUs submit plans for PUC approval
 - COUs file approved plans with PUC

Key Wildfire Mitigation Strategies

1. Oregon Wildfire & Electric Collaborative (OWEC)
2. Utility Protection Plans
3. Public Safety Power Shut-offs
4. Shared Intelligence



1. Oregon Wildfire & Electric Collaborative

- Meetings held year-round (except fire season)
- Seven meetings held to-date:
 - Utility wildfire risk identification, PSPS protocols, system hardening, adaptive vegetation management, and collaborating with gov't land managers
- Next meeting June 2023
- Future topics include:
 - PSPS messaging
 - Technology and pilot project experiences
 - Vegetation management and coordination with land managers
- For more information: [Oregon Wildfire Electricity Collaborative](#)

2. Wildfire Protection Plans (WPPs)

- IOUs:
 - File annual WPPs at end of year
 - PUC reviews and approves within 180 days
- COUs file copies of approved plans
- First IOUs plans approved in 2022
- PUC now reviewing 2023 plans
- [Link to Copies of Plans and PUC Dockets](#)

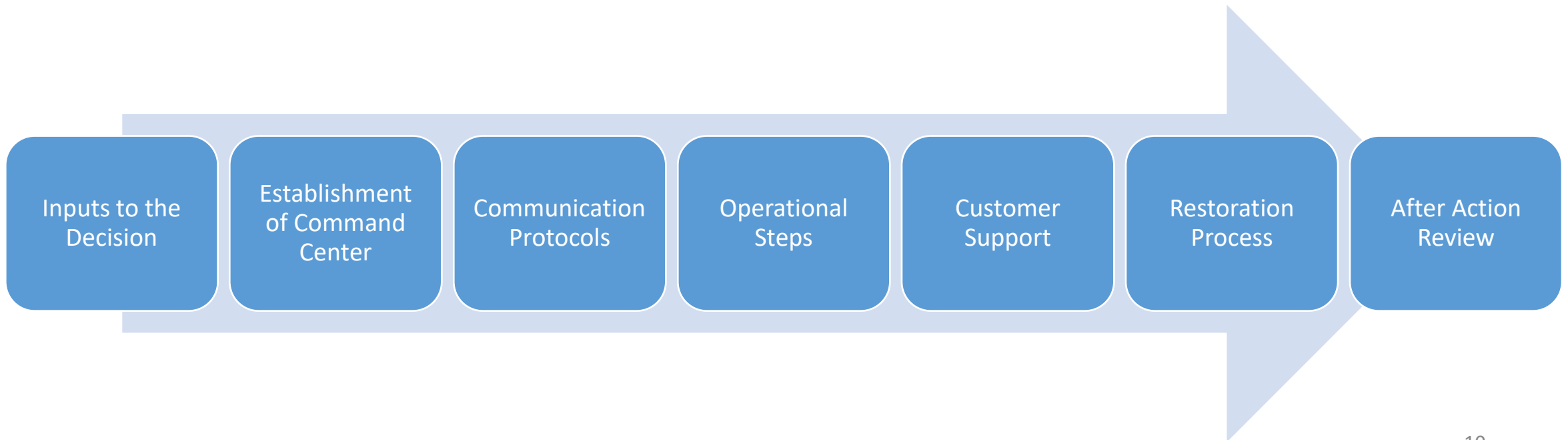


WPP – Key Requirements

- Identify high-risk areas in service territory or rights-of-way
- Provide risk analysis and plans to prevent and mitigate wildfire risk
- Plans for community engagement and strategies for collaborating with gov't agencies and local communities
- Public Safety Power Shut-off (PSPS)
- Infrastructure inspection and vegetation management practices
- [PUC Rules - WPP Requirements](#)

3. Public Safety Power Shutoffs

- Proactive de-energization of electricity during extreme weather conditions
- Last resort - must balance risks of disconnecting service during emergency
- Utility decision based on knowledge of system and equipment, real time conditions
- Coordinate with local emergency managers and impacted communities



PSPS Communication Requirements

Requirements	What	Timing			Notes
Before	Where, when, how long, impacts	72-48 hours	48-24 hours	4-1 hours	
During	24-hour updates				
Public Safety Partners		✓	✓	✓	When feasible utility will support local emergency management efforts to send out notifications
ESF 12		✓	✓	✓	Will notify Oregon Emergency Response System partners and Local Emergency Mgt in coordination with Oregon's Dept of Emergency Mgt
Utility Identified Critical Facilities		✓	✓	✓	IOUs also notify medically vulnerable customers that self-identify
Customers			✓	✓	Notice provided via email, phone call, website, social media, radio, television, and media

September 2022 PSPS Event

7 utilities performed PSPSs (2 IOUs, 5 COUs)

- Red Flag Weather:
 - 25+ mph winds, with gusts to 60 mph
 - Low humidity, high fuel load
- Over 51,000 customers across 7 counties
 - Broad and robust communications
 - Coordination with Public Safety Partners
 - Community Resource Centers
- PUC After-Action review
 - Recording available [here](#)
 - Details of utility actions [here](#)



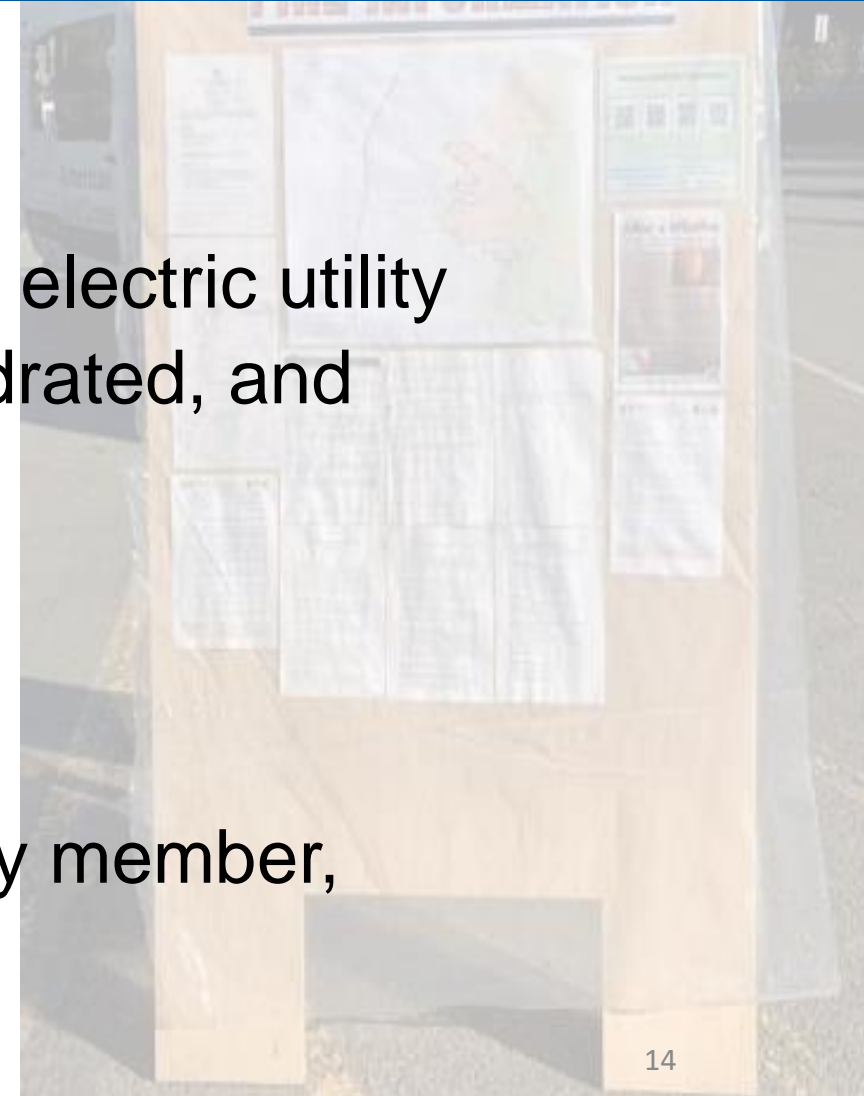
4. Collaboration and Shared Learning

- PUC-ODF Memorandum of Understanding
- Wildfire Detection Camera Network
- Wildfire Programs Advisory Council
- Regional Forums

PSPS Preparedness

Be prepared for a possible PSPS:

- Update your contact information with your electric utility
- Create an outage kit to help stay cool, hydrated, and connected
 - ✓ Flashlights
 - ✓ Battery powered radios and fans
 - ✓ Cell phone car chargers
- Plan ahead to relocate with a friend, family member, or to a shelter





Questions?

For follow-up questions, please contact
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