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California State Senate

SENATOR
SCOTT WILK
TWENTY-FIRST SENATE DISTRICT



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November 4, 2019

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Toni Atkins
President Pro Tempore, State Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker, State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Special Session on Public Safety Power Shutoffs

Dear Governor Newsom, Pro Tem Atkins, and Speaker Rendon,

I am writing to officially request that you call for a special session of the Legislature in order for the Joint Legislative Audit Committee to meet and approve an audit of the Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) guidelines and Investor Owned Utilities' (IOUs) practices concerning the Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS).

I represent rural communities that have had no cell coverage and where residents draw their water from wells. Without power, people have no access to water and are unable to communicate with family and first responders.

PSPS outages can shut off people's ventilators or sleep apnea machines that allow them to breathe, can cause people on wheelchairs to be completely immobile once their battery packs run out, and can cause life-saving dialysis machines to stop working. These medical emergencies happened in my Senate District in the past week. Assemblyman Lackey and I rented a generator and delivered it to a resident in Acton whose life saving ventilator had run out of power.

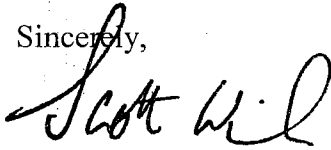
It is unacceptable for the IOUs to claim that this will be the new normal for the next decade. It is unacceptable for thousands of Californians to be without power for days at a time whenever the wind blows. California is the fifth largest economy in the world and our energy policies must reflect that.

We must investigate whether these power shutoffs are being conducted in a manner where they are absolutely necessary, whether less burdensome alternatives are being ignored, and whether the IOUs are simply choosing to shut off the power as a simple way to avoid any costs of maintenance or making any lasting investments in their infrastructure.

The PUC is entrusted with great power to regulate the IOUs and it has failed in its mission to protect California's ratepayers. The IOUs in turn have been entrusted with monopoly authority over our electrical system for far too long, and they have failed continuously in keeping the power on and keeping Californians safe.

Calls for the PUC to investigate these shutoffs are inadequate. The investigating agency must be independent from undue influence of both the administration and IOUs. The State Auditor has a proven track record of independence and thoroughness in her investigations. Therefore, I request an immediate call of a special session so that I and other members of the legislature can request the State Auditor to audit both the PUC and IOUs actions regarding the PSPS. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 916-651-4021. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Wilk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scott Wilk
Senator, 21st District

CC:

Assemblyman Rudy Salas, Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Senator Richard Roth, Vice Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee