



Public Advocates Office

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUBLIC ADVOCATES OFFICE URGES IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ENSURE COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS WORK DURING EMERGENCIES

SAN FRANCISCO, May 21, 2019 – The Public Advocates Office, the independent consumer advocate at the California Public Utilities Commission (“CPUC”), today urged the CPUC to immediately act to ensure communication systems work during emergencies. Evidence unfortunately shows that emergency calls and notifications are failing during fires, floods and other disasters, leaving customers without essential communication services to contact emergency services or their loved ones.

In its motion, the Public Advocates Office seeks to better protect Californians during emergency situations by asserting that communication providers need to (1) ensure that calls and data be transmitted, without delay, during times of emergencies, (2) install backup generators or battery power at wireless facilities in high fire threat areas to reduce outages, (3) develop plans for alternative methods needed to support 9-1-1 call centers; (4) and take steps to improve their emergency alert and warning systems.

“Californians deserve access to reliable telephone services, especially during emergency situations,” said Elizabeth Echols, Director of the Public Advocates Office. “Given the danger posed by wildfires and other natural disasters in California, now is the time to establish essential public safety and consumer protection standards to ensure that communication systems are available and reliable in emergency situations.”

The Public Advocates Office was pleased to contribute to the CPUC’s forum yesterday on “The Future of California's Communications Grid.” Our motion builds upon these efforts by vigorously advocating for new public safety and consumer protection standards to better protect Californians who unfortunately find themselves in catastrophic situations.

The Public Advocates Office motion can be found [here](#).

For more information please visit www.publicadvocates.cpuc.ca.gov.

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