



Item Number: 2

City Council / Board of Directors

Consent Calendar

Meeting of: June 20, 2023

Submitted By:

Brenda Hampton, Director of Electric Utility Services

Subject:

Wildfire Mitigation Plan for the City of Victorville Municipal Utility Services

Recommendation:

No action is required at this time. The VMUS 2023 Wildfire Mitigation Plan is being presented to the City Council for their review and possible comment.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Strategic Plan Goal:

Public Safety

Background:

In 2016, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 1028 (stats. 2016), which required publicly owned utilities (POUs) to identify additional wildfire mitigation measures that the POU could take if the POU governing board first found that its overhead electric lines and equipment posed a significant risk of causing a catastrophic wildfire. SB 1028 required that the POU governing board (City Council) must base this determination on "historical fires and local conditions," and must consult with local fire departments and other entities with responsibilities for the control of wildfires within the relevant area. These requirements were specified in the Public Utilities Code Section 8387.

In 2018, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) completed the development of the statewide Fire Threat Map that designates areas of the state at an elevated risk of electric line-ignited wildfires. Governor Brown signed SB 901 (stats. 2018), which addressed a wide range of issues relating to wildfire prevention, response, and recovery. SB 901 substantially revised the Public Utilities Code Section 8387, eliminating the prior process established by SB 1028 and instead making it mandatory for all POUs (regardless of size or wildfire risk) to develop a wildfire mitigation plan. Pursuant to the

amended Section 8387, all POU's were to present their initial wildfire mitigation plan to its governing board prior to January 1, 2020, and annually thereafter. The City Council adopted the initial Victorville Municipal Utility Services (VMUS) Wildfire Mitigation Plan (plan) at the November 19, 2019, regular city council meeting.

In 2019, two new bills (SB 1054 and SB 111) made additional major reforms relating to wildfires. As part of these reforms, SB 111 created a new state agency, the California Wildfire Safety Advisory Board (WSAB). SB 1054 requires that all POU's must submit their wildfire mitigation plans to WSAB by July 1 of each year beginning in 2020. WSAB reviews the POU plans and provides comments and advisory opinions on the content and sufficiency of the plans.

SB 1054 also requires POU's to conduct a comprehensive review and revision of the adopted wildfire mitigation plan at least every third year, and 2023 is considered a comprehensive review year. The WSAB desires POU's plans to include more comprehensive, concise, and tailored information than previous years.

WSAB has since adopted the Guidance Advisory Opinion for the 2023 Wildfire Mitigation Plans of Electric Publicly Owned Utilities and Cooperatives (Guidance Advisory Opinion) on November 16, 2022, in response to the POU's 2022 wildfire mitigation plan submittals. The Guidance and Advisory Opinion offers recommendations to the POU community to achieve the most effective and appropriate wildfire mitigation measures and strategies for their service territories and customers.

Discussion:

VMUS staff have prepared an updated Wildfire Mitigation Plan based on WSAB's guidance and suggestions (Attachment A). These updates include expanding on the utility overview and context setting, adding sections describing the adoption and submittal process of the plan and where it can be located on the Victorville website, adding a section describing community outreach and public awareness, expanding on the impact of wildfire mitigation plan metrics by providing a table documenting the performance metrics and other minor updates throughout the plan.

Since the 2023 plan required a comprehensive review, VMUS determined that it would be appropriate to have a qualified independent evaluator to review and assess the completeness of the updated VMUS plan. Pursuant to Public Utilities Code, Section 8387, the Victorville Fire Department has reviewed the VMUS wildfire mitigation plan and has provided the evaluation report (Attachment B). The Victorville Fire Department has determined that VMUS complies with this standard due to the construction of VMUS equipment and resources not being located in an area that is considered an elevated or extreme risk of electric line wildfire. Furthermore, since VMUS' electrical system is mostly underground, Fire staff have concluded that there are minimal risks for wildfires to occur above ground during high fire danger. VMUS staff has reviewed the Victorville Fire Department's evaluation report and concludes that the plan meets all the required criteria as provided in PUC section 8387.

Staff is available for questions.

A. Wildfire Mitigation Plan
B. Independent Evaluation of the VMUS Wildfire Mitigation Plan by the Victorville Fire Department