



## CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

### **CPUC Strengthens Process for Public Outreach Before, During and After Wildfires**

**Sacramento CA | March 23, 2020** - Last week, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) adopted a [decision](#) that requires California utility companies to engage in a more rigorous process of community preparedness and outreach in the event of a wildfire. The CPUC declared that community outreach must be conducted in all languages spoken by more than 1,000 people within a utility, as well as any indigenous languages spoken by the community regardless of how many people speak them. The CPUC has stated that utilities must use a diverse range of methods to inform community members while participating in an ongoing evaluation of those methods with community-based organizations.

***Shana Lazerow, Legal Director for Communities for a Better Environment, a CEJA member organization, issued the following statement:***

California's environmental justice communities, especially those that are linguistically isolated, are at the most risk from wildfire and wildfire-related impacts such as planned power shutoffs. With this decision, the PUC is recognizing that it is unacceptable to leave linguistically isolated communities out of vital communications. In some proposals, more than a million people statewide would not have received information about planned shutoffs, resource centers, and other key wildfire resources! This decision is a wise and thoughtful approach to keeping people safe in the face of climate change impacts.

***Mad Stano, CEJA Program Director, issued the following statement:***

As the climate crisis continues to increase the rate and severity of wildfires throughout the state of California, CEJA celebrates this decision by the CPUC as a necessary and urgent step towards ensuring that all of California's residents—regardless of race, class, ethnicity, ability or age— are supported before, during, and after these community-threatening blazes. Our environmental justice residents, including undocumented and non-English speaking residents, cannot prepare for the possibility of a wildfire without adequate warning in their languages. Now more than ever, we applaud the CPUC for adopting the majority of recommendations by CEJA, advocates and environmental justice residents as a step towards greater equity in disaster response.