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California State Senate

**SENATOR
BEN ALLEN**
TWENTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON
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CO-CHAIR

August 11, 2026

Patricia "Patti" Poppe
Chief Executive Officer
Members of the Management Team
Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) Corporation
300 Lakeside Drive
Oakland, CA 94672

Pedro Pizarro
President and Chief Executive Officer
Members of the Management Team
Edison International, parent company of Southern California Edison (SCE)
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue
Rosemead, CA 91770

RE: August 5, 2026, Los Angeles Times article "Utilities threaten action if lawmakers fail to cut their wildfire liability risk"

Dear Ms. Poppe and Mr. Pizarro:

According to reporting by the *Los Angeles Times*[1], executives at both of your companies (including each of you) are threatening action if lawmakers fail to cut your utilities' wildfire liability risk this legislative session. According to the article reporting on your recent calls with investors, you are threatening to "protect shareholders' money" potentially including reducing moneys available for the utilities' California programs.

As Chair of the Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Communications, I am deeply troubled by the reported willingness of company executives to threaten to limit the essential services utilities are obligated to provide as part of their privileged license to operate in California, including the constitutional, statutory, and regulatory requirements that govern your operations. While these threats are unclear as to their specific implications, it is imperative that California residents and businesses are not hindered in their reliance on the electricity and natural gas utility service they require for daily life.

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[1] Peterson, Melody. "Utilities threaten action if lawmakers fail to cut their wildfire liability risk." *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 2026. https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2026-08-05/utilities-threaten-action-if-lawmakers-fail-to-cut-their-wildfire-liability-risk

To that end, I am considering calling an oversight hearing to have you explain these issues you are implying on your calls with investors and to ensure that none of the constitutional and statutory obligations that govern your obligations to serve are impeded. These include, but are not limited to:

- The power of the Legislature to control public utilities, including electrical and gas corporations, and the authority of the California Public Utilities Commission to fix rates, establish rules, examine records of public utilities, as enumerated in Article XII of the California Constitution.
- The statutory requirements and responsibilities as enumerated under the Public Utilities Act[2], such as maintaining safe operation of utility equipment and administering rate-assistance and energy efficiency programs, including those for low-income residents and residents with medical needs.
- Statutory requirements to achieve the state's clean energy goals, including compliance with the Renewables Portfolio Standard program and the state's goal to achieve 100% zero-carbon and renewable energy by 2045.
- Statutory requirements to implement wildfire mitigation measures to reduce wildfire risks, including those related to implementing wildfire mitigation plans as overseen by the Office of Energy Infrastructure and Safety.

Wildfire issues are complex and deserve cooperation from all partners to help resolve and reduce risk, including good-faith cooperation from utilities. To read that the state's largest investor-owned utility companies might be threatening to harm service to Californians if they don't get the outcomes they seek on liability reform in the Legislature does not bode well for a cooperative approach.

Moreover, if true, I am astounded by the audacity of such threats by your companies and cannot help but notice the unfortunate timing coinciding with the release of the Eaton Fire investigation report[3] which confirmed the long-speculated theory that SCE's out-of-service transmission line ignited the deadly fire that destroyed most of Altadena, killed 19 residents, and has left a community completely displaced. All of this comes amidst reports of soaring utility profits and raises and massive bonuses for certain executives.

While I understand that utility investors seek predictability for their invested dollars, and stable utilities are important to the state of California, we as legislators must balance the additional interests of wildfire victims and survivors, our residents' ability to access affordable insurance, and the need to ensure affordable utility service. We are certainly not interested in being threatened as we seek a balanced path that is right for California. In that spirit, I wanted to share my deep concerns as we consider the committee's next steps.

Respectfully,

BEN ALLEN
Senator, 24th District

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[2] Public Utilities Act as enumerated in Division 1 of the California Public Utilities Code.

[3] Los Angeles County Fire Department Chief Fire Captain Anthony C. Marrone. "County of Los Angeles Fire Department Releases the Investigative Reports on the Cause of the Eaton Fire," August 4, 2026. https://lacounty.gov/2026/08/04/county-of-los-angeles-fire-department-releases-the-investigative-reports-on-the-cause-of-the-eaton-fire/