

February 6, 2025

202500250

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
ATTN: ED PIKE, WILDFIRE SAFETY ENFORCEMENT BRANCH
500 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94102-3298

Re: Date of Incident: January 7, 2025
 Location of Incident: Near Eaton Canyon, Altadena, California

Dear Mr. Pike:

In accordance with the reporting requirements set forth in Resolution ESRB-12, this letter supplements the notice Southern California Edison Company (SCE) provided to the Commission via the web-based emergency reporting system on Thursday, January 9, 2025, at 6:09 p.m. regarding the above-referenced incident, as well as the interim update SCE submitted to the Commission on January 27, 2025. SCE is required to submit this information pursuant to Commission instructions, resolutions and the Public Utilities Code, and submits this report under Public Utilities Code Section 315.

The Eaton Fire brought immense challenges and heartbreak to our community. SCE is undertaking a careful and thorough investigation and does not know what caused the ignition of the fire. While information and data have come to light, such as videos from external parties of the fire's early stages, suggesting a possible link to SCE's equipment, SCE has not identified typical or obvious evidence that would confirm this association (e.g., broken conductors or fresh arc marks in the preliminary origin area, or evidence of faults on the energized lines running through that area). SCE understands that the government investigation into the origin and cause of the fire is ongoing and is not aware of what physical evidence government investigators have collected from the area before they released it to the public on January 16. Further investigation and evaluation of information, including information which can be obtained only through closer examination and testing of the equipment in the area of origin as well as any material recovered by government fire investigators, is ongoing and will take time.

The Eaton Fire

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), the Eaton Fire ignited in the Eaton Canyon area, east of Altadena on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, shortly after 6:00 p.m. The Eaton Fire ignited and spread under conditions of an extreme Santa Ana windstorm, with reports of blowing embers into and throughout the Altadena area. According to Cal Fire, the Eaton Fire is now 100 percent contained and burned approximately 14,021 acres.

Cal Fire also reported that there were 17 confirmed civilian fatalities and nine confirmed fire personnel injuries/illnesses attributed to the fire. According to information provided by Cal Fire, approximately 6,018 single residence structures were destroyed and 750 damaged; 3,146 other minor structures destroyed and 260 damaged; 96 multiple residences destroyed and 28 damaged; and 158 mixed commercial/residential and nonresidential commercial structures destroyed and 35 damaged. The fire also burned into and damaged SCE distribution facilities in the Altadena area, including the Fair Oaks substation.

The County Investigation Remains In Progress

SCE understands that the Los Angeles County Fire Department (County) is the lead agency investigating the origin and cause of the Eaton Fire, with support from other agencies, including Cal Fire. Their investigation remains ongoing. On January 12, 2025, SCE received a letter from the County identifying the preliminary origin area of the Eaton Fire around coordinates N34.1860422292 W118.09357612511549 in Eaton Canyon. SCE has three transmission towers in proximity to these coordinates: (1) the M6T1 structure, carrying the Eagle Rock-Mesa 220kV and Mesa-Vincent No. 2 220kV transmission lines, (2) the M24T3 structure, carrying the Mesa-Vincent No. 1 220kV and Goodrich-Gould 220kV transmission lines and (3) the M16T1 structure, carrying the Mesa-Sylmar transmission line, which is no longer in service. See map at Appendix A.

On January 16, 2025, the County informed SCE that it had released its investigation scene related to the origin and cause of the fire. The County has asked that SCE preserve in place its transmission facilities proximate to the County's preliminary area of origin but has not asked for SCE's assistance in removing any SCE facility from the field. SCE is complying with the County's request. SCE is not aware what evidence or materials the agency investigators removed from the preliminary origin site. SCE has received requests from Cal Fire and the County for the preservation and production of data and records related to its transmission facilities and other information. SCE is gathering the requested data and records.

SCE's Investigation Remains In Progress

Preliminary analysis of electrical data for the four energized transmission lines that run through Eaton Canyon for 12 hours prior to the reported start time of the fire shows that there were no faults on those lines until more than one hour after the reported start time of the fire. In addition, SCE has conducted a preliminary review of electrical data from January 7, 2025, for other portions of its transmission system, including certain transmission lines in the Los Angeles basin that do not traverse Eaton Canyon. Electrical data indicates that a fault was detected at approximately 6:11 p.m. on the Eagle Rock-Gould 220 kV line, which connects the Gould substation in La Cañada Flintridge to the Eagle Rock substation in Eagle Rock. SCE's system protection devices detected this fault and opened to isolate it. An earlier attempt to disable the automatic reclosing function was unsuccessful; therefore, it automatically tested the line to determine if the fault had cleared. As the fault had not cleared, that line locked out and was not

re-energized until it was patrolled and determined safe. SCE did not find the cause of the fault, which is not unusual in an extreme weather event.

The Gould and Eagle Rock substations are approximately five circuit miles and 12 circuit miles away, respectively, from the County's preliminary origin area, and the Eagle Rock-Gould 220 kV line does not traverse the Eaton Canyon corridor. Preliminary analysis shows that because SCE's transmission system is networked, the fault on this geographically distant line caused a momentary and expected increase in current on SCE's transmission system, including on the four energized lines on M6T1 and M24T3. The current increase remained within the design limits and operating criteria for these circuits and as intended, did not trigger system protection on these lines. See map in Appendix A.

The Mesa-Vincent No. 2 line relayed and locked out at approximately 7:17 p.m. on January 7, approximately one hour after the fire was reported. The Mesa-Vincent No. 1 and Goodrich-Gould lines, which are supported by the same towers in this area, relayed and locked out approximately three hours later at 10:35 p.m. The Eagle Rock-Mesa line relayed, tested and locked out at approximately 12:35 a.m. on January 8. The active transmission lines in Eaton Canyon and the Eagle Rock-Gould line remained de-energized until they were returned to service on January 9-10, 2025. Those lines remained energized until January 12, 2025, when SCE proactively de-energized them for a PSPS event. Given suggestions that SCE's transmission equipment may have been involved in the ignition of the Eaton Fire, SCE deenergized these lines even though the forecast wind speeds were below specified thresholds for SCE's PSPS protocols.

As the four active transmission lines in Eaton Canyon and the Eagle Rock-Gould line were again re-energized on January 19, 2025, following the January 12 PSPS de-energization, SCE assigned field observers—who are qualified electrical workers—to monitor and visually observe the lines in Eaton Canyon from a distance. They observed a small flash of white light upon each re-energization, which appeared to be in the vicinity of the M24T3 structure, carrying the Mesa-Vincent No. 1 220kV and Goodrich-Gould 220kV transmission lines and the M16T1 structure, carrying the Mesa-Sylmar transmission line. The field observers viewed the lines for a reasonable period of time after re-energization and observed no further flashes or safety concerns with the lines. However, due to recent events and out of abundance of caution, following the re-energizations, on January 20, 2025, SCE conducted thermal scans of the towers and connection points using drones and did not detect any hotspots on the energized or the idle transmission tower while the lines were energized. Subsequently, on January 20, 2025, the four lines in Eaton Canyon were again proactively de-energized due to an impending wind event and have remained de-energized since that time in light of requests from interested parties to inspect the lines and facilities, as detailed further below.

In connection with an article published by the *New York Times* on January 26, 2025, SCE first became aware of the existence of a copy of a surveillance video that appears to show two flashes of light in the Eaton Canyon area on the evening of January 7, 2025, which SCE provided to the

County investigator, who had not received it. SCE subsequently obtained what it understands to be the native copy of that video on January 30, 2025, and immediately provided it to the County investigator, who had not yet received it. SCE is reviewing the video further to assess any potential relation between the flashes shown in the video and SCE's facilities in Eaton Canyon. Based in part upon this video and statements made by plaintiffs' counsel alleging damage to SCE's equipment, SCE continues to assess the condition of our equipment in Eaton Canyon and to compare the current condition with pre-fire inspection photographs. A comparison between pre-fire and post-fire photos of the M16T1 structure does not show obvious signs of arcing or material changes in the condition of the tower, including the condition of a grounding paddle near the top of the tower. SCE also has not identified obvious signs of arcing on the grounding cable at the base of the tower. SCE will learn more once it can examine the equipment related to the M16T1 structure more closely, including in a laboratory setting. With respect to the tower at the northwest end of the idle Mesa-Sylmar line, which is located near the Gould substation and approximately five circuit miles from the preliminary origin area, pre- and post-fire photos show signs of potential arcing and other damage on the grounding equipment for two of the three idle conductors. SCE does not know when this damage occurred and a comparison between pre- and post-fire photographs is underway. SCE continues to assess these facilities, including any potential relation to the cause of the fire.

SCE maintains transmission facilities in accordance with its Transmission Inspection and Maintenance Program and its filed Wildfire Mitigation Plan (for lines located in HFRA), which include comprehensive processes and standards that design, operate, inspect, and repair its equipment. SCE is conducting a review of its inspection and maintenance records related to its transmission facilities in Eaton Canyon. The four energized transmission lines were subject to numerous inspections in recent years. Each of the lines was patrolled annually from 2020-2024 and the most recent detailed inspection reviews for the M6T1 and M24T3 structures were performed in 2024. The idle line was also patrolled annually from 2020-2024 and the most recent detailed inspection review of the M16T1 structure was performed in 2024.

SCE continues its investigation and ongoing inspections of its facilities, records, potential witnesses, information from third parties and other issues that could potentially shed light on causation. SCE is evaluating a number of potential causes, including whether the idle Mesa-Sylmar transmission line could have become energized (e.g., through induction) and the extent to which that line or its grounding¹ could be related to the cause of the fire. The review is complex because it is focused on potential causes that are rare and not those more typically observed in connection with ignitions associated with energized facilities, such as faults on the line where the

¹ While SCE's investigation remains ongoing, SCE has taken immediate steps to further strengthen and standardize its grounding practices with respect to idle lines, including updating SCE's Transmission Operations and Maintenance Policies and Procedures (TOM).

ignition occurred, vegetation that comes in contact with lines or readily observable equipment failures. SCE is also investigating human activity near the County's preliminary area of origin.

Evidence Preservation

On January 25, 2025, after providing notice to the County and counsel for certain wildfire plaintiffs, SCE collected evidence from Eaton Canyon, including metal items found on the ground near the towers and items from an encampment located approximately 300 yards downhill from the towers. These items were recovered after the County released the area, and the metal items found on the ground near the towers appear to be unrelated to the ignition but will require further review. Collected items are being preserved in a secure location.

The transmission lines that run through Eaton Canyon are not currently energized and SCE currently is preserving them in place. Counsel representing certain plaintiffs have requested that the transmission lines attached to the transmission towers be lowered for further visual inspection and remain de-energized until that can be accomplished. Taking down the lines for examination is a complex request due to the challenging terrain, the lack of accessibility in this area, and the potential that this activity could damage the facilities. SCE is working cooperatively with interested parties to find a reasonable solution and will notify SED prior to undertaking any such activity for your awareness and participation. Performing in situ testing of the subject equipment in the field, and/or taking down the lines and related equipment for further inspection and testing is a critical next step in the investigation, as this will provide additional information that is not currently available with the lines in their existing location and configuration.

SCE has undertaken extensive work to make its distribution system in Altadena safe and to restore power. Although no fire agency investigator has suggested that the origin of the Eaton Fire occurred anywhere outside of Eaton Canyon itself, some law firms that have filed lawsuits against SCE have nonetheless requested preservation of materials associated with SCE's distribution facilities in the residential neighborhoods adjacent to Eaton Canyon. SCE has documented and is preserving SCE equipment removed from an approximately one-square mile area west of Eaton Canyon in the area of Altadena closest to the fire investigators' preliminary area of origin, as shown in the figure below.

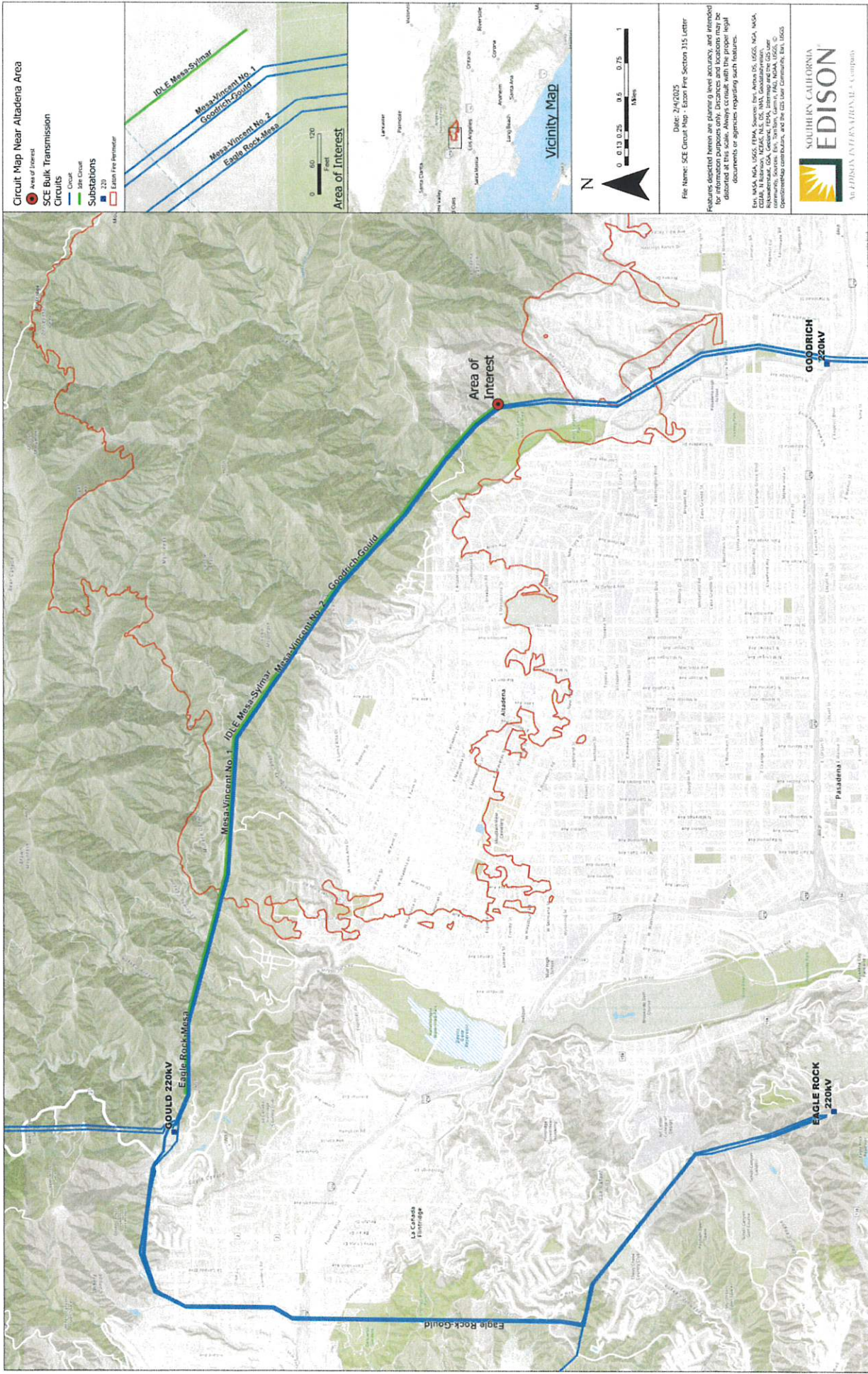


One law firm sought a court order requiring SCE to expand its documentation and preservation of damaged or downed distribution equipment to all of Altadena. The Los Angeles Superior Court did not grant that request. That firm subsequently narrowed its request to equipment along distribution lines in Altadena where faults occurred for an eight-hour period prior to 6:11 p.m. on January 7, which is approximately the time that the Eaton Fire was first reported, and the court did not grant that request. At present, no plaintiff-side law firm or media report has made SCE aware of any specific, credible information that SCE's distribution equipment in Altadena was involved in any ignition on January 7. While a further hearing on evidence preservation is set for February 18, 2025, SCE is working with plaintiff-side law firms to resolve any outstanding issues over the scope of equipment that SCE will preserve. Requiring SCE to preserve additional areas in Altadena may delay repair and clean-up efforts for those areas impacted by the windstorm and fire.

Sincerely,


Paul Pimentel

Appendix A



GOULD 220KV
 EAGLE ROCK 220KV
 GOODRICH 220KV

Eagle Rock-Goald
 Mesa-Vincent No. 1
 IDLE Mesa-Sylmar
 Mesa-Vincent No. 2
 Goodrich-Goald

Area of Interest