



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CAL-ISO MOVES TO STAGE TWO EMERGENCY AT 12:30 p.m. Investor-Owned Utilities Ask Commercial & Industrial Customers to Curtail Usage

(Folsom, CA) September dawned with no signs of relief after one of the hottest Augusts on record pushed California's electric transmission grid to its limits. Today's continuing heat wafting over the western states required the California Independent System Operator (Cal-ISO) to move to a Stage Two Emergency as of 12:30 p.m. At that time the Cal-ISO requested the state's utilities to shed 1,175 megawatts of electricity in order to reduce the power demand on the state's transmission system. The Cal-ISO anticipates reaching a revised peak load of 45,600 megawatts today, a potentially record-breaking demand on the power grid since the Cal-ISO's inception in March of this year.

A Stage Two Emergency is declared when operating reserves dip below 5 percent or are expected to within the next two hours. At this stage, the Cal-ISO asks the state's utilities to implement their load management programs. These programs rely on commercial and industrial customers who receive discounted electricity rates to voluntarily curtail their electricity use in order to lower the state's demand for power. Today many utilities around the state assisted in shedding load, including the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, San Diego Gas & Electric, PG&E and Southern California Edison.

Yesterday, the Cal-ISO declared a Stage Two Emergency at 3:05 p.m. as the state's suffered under yet another lengthy heat wave. Within the Cal-ISO's control area (the region served by investor-owned utilities or 75% of the state) electricity consumption peaked at 44,339 megawatts at 3:30 p.m. Californians broke the all-time electricity consumption record in the Cal-ISO's control area on Monday, August 3, 1998 when they used 44,927 megawatts of energy at 4:11 p.m.

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The National Weather Service reports that Sacramento alone has encountered a total of 26 days this summer with temperatures above 100 degrees. Last summer the area saw only 14 days of triple digit heat.

While not anticipated today, if an operating reserve shortfall of less than one-and-a-half percent is unavoidable, Stage Three is initiated. Involuntary curtailments of service to customers, including “rolling blackouts”, are probable during this emergency declaration. The Cal-ISO’s Electrical Emergency Plan (EEP) is part of the state’s enhanced reliability standards created by landmark legislation Assembly Bill 1890, which restructured California’s electricity industry.

Cal-ISO is chartered by the state to manage the flow of electricity along the long-distance, high-voltage power lines that make up the bulk of California’s transmission system. The not-for-profit public-benefit corporation assumed the responsibility in March, 1998, when California opened its energy markets to competition and mandated the investor-owned utilities turn their private transmission power lines over to the Cal-ISO’s public power grid. The mission of the Cal-ISO is to safeguard the reliable delivery of electricity and ensure equal access to the state’s “electron highway”, which spans 124,000 miles or three-quarters of the state. The Cal-ISO is the second-largest control area in the U.S. and the fifth largest in the world. Its computerized control center is located in Folsom, 22 miles from the capital city of Sacramento.

Other helpful contacts:

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