



**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 19, 2001

**Contact:** Patrick Dorinson  
Director of Communications  
1 (888) 516-NEWS

**ELECTRICAL EMERGENCY ESCALATES TO STAGE THREE  
ROTATING OUTAGES UNDERWAY**

**More than a Third of the Generation Connected to the ISO Grid is Off-line**

(Folsom, CA) Immediate rotating blackouts have been ordered after operating reserves the California Independent Systems Operator (California ISO) depends on to maintain power grid reliability dropped dramatically. Grid operators declared a statewide Stage Three Emergency between the 11:46 a.m. and midnight today, March 19, 2001.

The California ISO has requested the state’s utilities to curtail 500 megawatts at noon today, affecting both northern and southern California. The extent of the outages and whether they are anticipated to last all afternoon and possibility into the evening will be evaluated on an hourly basis today.

Specific details will be available at a 1:00 p.m. media briefing.

**Media News Teleconference**

<b>TIME (PST):</b>	<b>1:00 p.m.</b>
<b>PHONE NUMBER:</b>	<b>800/374-1387</b>
<b>PASSCODE:</b>	<b>ISO News</b>

Operating reserves started out low this morning when 11,500 megawatts worth of power plants reported they couldn’t produce electricity due to planned maintenance or malfunctioning equipment. By mid morning, another 1,000 megawatts became unavailable when two units at a desert facility tripped offline.

-MORE-

In addition, half of the state's Qualifying Facilities (QFs) are not operating because of reported financial concerns, low wind or an inability to purchase natural gas to run the plants. QFs are small independent power generators that include biomass plants, wind farms and photovoltaic (solar) projects.

Conservation is strongly encouraged today and could easily make the difference in maintaining operating reserves at a level that could prevent blackouts.

California ISO anticipates reaching a peak load of 29,348 megawatts this evening. A Stage Two Emergency issued at 6:00 a.m. today is in effect until midnight tonight. Voluntary load interruption programs were activated this morning.

Stage Three of the state's Electrical Emergency Plan (EEP) is required when operating reserves fall below one-and-a-half percent. The California ISO's EEP is part of the state's enhanced reliability standards created by landmark legislation Assembly Bill 1890, which restructured California's electricity industry.

California ISO is charged with managing 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 the state's investor-owned utilities turned their private transmission power lines over to the California ISO to manage. The mission of the California ISO is to safeguard the reliable delivery of electricity, facilitate markets and ensure equal access to a 25,526 circuit mile "electron highway."

Information about the California ISO control area's electricity supply and the current demand is available on the web at [www.caiso.com](http://www.caiso.com).

Contact local investor-owned utilities for information regarding which customers will be affected:

Investor-Owned Utility Media Offices

Pacific Gas and Electric	415/973-5930
Southern California Edison	626/302-2255
San Diego Gas and Electric	877/866-2066

###