

Introduced by Senator MoorlachFebruary 19, 2016

An act to add Section 761.2 to the Public Utilities Code, relating to electrical lines.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1463, as introduced, Moorlach. Electrical lines: mitigation of wildfire risks.

The California Constitution establishes the Public Utilities Commission, authorizes the commission to establish rules for all public utilities, subject to control by the Legislature, and authorizes the Legislature, unlimited by the other provisions of the California Constitution, to confer additional authority and jurisdiction upon the commission that is cognate and germane to the regulation of public utilities. The Public Utilities Act provides the commission with broad authority over public utilities, including electrical corporations. Existing law establishes standards that are applicable to any person, as defined, to run, place, erect, or maintain wires or cables used to conduct electricity and requires the commission to enforce these provisions. Pursuant to its existing authority, the commission has adopted rules for the construction of electrical lines and the trimming of trees near electrical lines.

Except as specified, existing provisions of the Public Resources Code require any person that owns, controls, operates, or maintains any electrical transmission or distribution line upon any mountainous, forest-covered, brush-covered, or grass-covered land to maintain a clearance in all directions between all vegetation and all conductors that are carrying electric current, as prescribed.

This bill would require the commission, in consultation with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, to prioritize areas in which communities are at risk from the consequences of wildfires when determining areas in which it will require enhanced mitigation measures for wildfire hazards posed by overhead electrical lines and equipment.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 761.2 is added to the Public Utilities
2 Code, to read:
3 761.2. In determining areas in which to require enhanced
4 mitigation measures for wildfire hazards posed by overhead
5 electrical lines and equipment, the commission, in consultation
6 with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, shall prioritize
7 areas in which communities are at risk from the consequences of
8 wildfires.

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