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Wildfire Commission Recommendation on Liability Reform a Positive Step to Protect Communities

(Sacramento, Calif., June 20, 2019) — The California Municipal Utilities Association applauds the Commission on Catastrophic Wildfire Cost and Recovery for its recommendation to reform wildfire liability laws.

In its [final report](#) delivered to the Legislature this week, the Commission recommends that California replace its strict liability application of inverse condemnation for electric and water utilities and instead apply a fault-based negligence standard.

“We greatly appreciate the Commission’s leadership and hard work, and we understand that liability reform is a complex issue and look forward to working with California’s legislative leadership to address it,” said Barry Moline, CMUA executive director. “For publicly owned electric utilities and water agencies, the issue of strict liability is of special concern because a catastrophic wildfire could have negative, outsized impacts on our communities.”

CMUA’s members have already implemented a variety of measures to reduce ignition of wildfires and ensure the continuous flow of electricity, including hardening infrastructure, aggressively clearing vegetation near infrastructure, and expanding weather assessment capabilities, as appropriate.

CMUA represents 62 publicly owned electric utilities and water agencies statewide. Together, CMUA members provide water service to 70 percent of Californians and electric service to 25 percent of the state.

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