



# MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

*Rely on us.*

TO: Commissioners McRae, Barofsky, Schlossberg, Brown, and Carlson  
FROM: Rod Price, Assistant General Manager; Karen Kelley, Chief Operations Officer;  
Tyler Nice, Electric Division Manager; Jeannine Parisi, Resiliency Program Manager  
DATE: July 1, 2024  
SUBJECT: Wildfire Season and Mitigation Plan Update  
OBJECTIVE: Information

---

## **Issue**

This memo summarizes 2023 wildfire mitigation activities, preparations for the 2024 wildfire season and upcoming risk mitigation work. More detailed information will be presented at the July Board meeting.

## **Background**

All Oregon electric utilities are required to develop a risk-based Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) and submit the approved plan to the Public Utility Commission (PUC). The EWEB Board approved the utility's first WMP in July 2022, and agreed to an annual cadence for plan updates. The second plan, developed with the benefit of fully adopted regulatory requirements, was approved in July 2023.

## **Discussion**

The increasing frequency of extreme weather events, shifting regulatory environment and threat of natural disasters is prompting EWEB to adapt its operational practices while making strategic investments to maintain public safety and improve resiliency. Wildfire is now impacting EWEB assets, operations, and customers on a near-annual basis. Addressing this growing threat requires accelerated implementation of multi-hazard risk reduction strategies as well as on-going maturity of our WMP.

Several iterations have been implemented since the July 2023 Board update, including:

- Procuring vendor expertise to validate/refine EWEB's High Fire Risk Zones (HFRZs).
- Contracting for localized fire weather forecasting services.
- Enacting powerline protective settings seasonally vs. intermittently. In 2023, HFRZ circuits were in wildfire safety settings from June 30 – Sept 24.
- Developing an Enhanced Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) Notification Program for residents in HFRZs who are medically reliant on power.
- Conducting equipment research and load analysis to enable re-fusing of HFRZs circuits and add other devices for faster fault detection and outage restoration.
- Acquiring satellite imagery with AI enhancements to assess encroachment risk and identify potential hazard trees.

EWEB's WMP will continue to evolve as we operationalize the plan and apply continuous improvement methods. Federal and/or State grant funding may accelerate technology investments and grid resiliency projects.

**Recommendation/Requested Board Action**

No action is requested at this time as adoption of a new WMP has been postponed to early 2025. This is due in part to the consultant's timeline to complete the risk modeling work necessary to update EWEB's HFRZ maps (part of PUC compliance). This timing change has the additional benefit of reporting plan metrics on a calendar year cycle.