

**CITY OF SIMI VALLEY  
STAFF REPORT**

January 26, 2026

**To:** City Council

**From:** Office of the City Manager  
Heather Sumagaysay, Deputy City Manager

**Subject:** Provide direction to support Simi Valley residents impacted by Public Safety Power Shutoffs through outreach and education efforts

**Staff Recommendation**

It is recommended that the City Council provide direction to City staff to support Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) preparedness through outreach and education.

**Background**

In Simi Valley, electric service is provided by Southern California Edison (SCE). The City does not own or operate the electric utility and does not control when power is shut off or restored. Decisions regarding the timing, duration, and geographic scope of PSPS events are made by SCE in accordance with state regulations and wildfire mitigation requirements.

In recent years, SCE has implemented Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events in response to wildfire risk, significantly affecting residents in Simi Valley. During major PSPS events in 2025, approximately 20 of the City's 24 electrical circuits were affected, leaving more than 32,000 customers without power, sometimes for several days. These extended outages disrupted daily life, caused food to spoil, interrupted phone and internet service, and created challenges for residents and local businesses, particularly those who rely on electricity for essential operations or medical equipment.

In response to these impacts, Mayor Cavanaugh requested that an item be brought to the City Council for discussion regarding how the City can better support residents in preparing for and responding to future PSPS events.

When PSPS events affect large portions of the community, City staff advocates for residents and businesses by sharing local impacts and concerns with SCE, helping connect residents and businesses with SCE representatives, and circulating PSPS preparedness information and resilience center locations through City communication channels. At the regulatory level, City staff and the City Council frequently engage with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to raise concerns about the impacts of prolonged outages, including the need for improved notification, greater utility accountability, stronger protections for medically vulnerable residents, accelerated grid hardening to reduce reliance on shutoffs, and stronger regulatory oversight of utilities.

## **Discussion**

While utility and state programs exist to support residents during Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events, navigating eligibility requirements and understanding available options can be challenging, particularly during or immediately following an outage. As a result, cities in PSPS-prone areas generally focus on education, outreach, and assistance with navigating existing utility and state programs.

Peer cities such as Thousand Oaks, Moorpark, Camarillo, Ventura, and Malibu emphasize preparedness education, centralized PSPS resource webpages, targeted outreach to vulnerable populations, and coordination with SCE, fire agencies, and community partners. These approaches improve awareness of available assistance and help community members more easily access existing resources and programs.

In California, backup power incentives and rebates are funded and administered by electric utilities and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Southern California Edison (SCE) offers several programs intended to support customers during power outages, including portable generator rebates, portable power station rebates, free backup battery systems for qualifying Medical Baseline customers, and access to the Self-Generation Incentive Program (SGIP) for battery storage and solar-plus-storage systems.

For general context, residents who pursue backup power options most commonly rely on portable generators, which typically cost between \$700 and \$3,000 and can support limited essential household needs. Permanently installed standby generators that can provide whole-home backup power require a substantially greater investment, often exceeding \$10,000 to \$20,000 once installation costs are included.

Existing SCE and CPUC incentives may offset a portion of the cost of a portable generator. Current programs include backup power, rebates, and battery storage. These include portable generator rebates of up to \$200 and up to \$600 for qualifying California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE), Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA), and medical baseline customers located in tier 2 or tier 3 high-fire risk areas. Portable power station rebates of \$150 are also available. In addition, qualifying medical baseline customers may be eligible to receive free battery systems through the Critical Care Backup Battery Program.

Consistent with practices in peer cities, the City currently provides outreach and education related to PSPS preparedness through existing Citywide communication channels, including the City's website, the monthly "City Focus" eNewsletter, social media, coordination with partner agencies, SVTV messaging, informational materials at City-sponsored events, and brochures available at City facilities.

Potential actions for City Council consideration may include opportunities to build on existing PSPS outreach and education efforts by strengthening and coordinating messaging and expanding public education on available backup power and preparedness programs. In addition to broad community awareness efforts, City staff recommends focusing enhanced education and outreach on neighborhoods most impacted by PSPS events, informed by 2024–2025 Southern California Edison data. This could include targeted informational materials, social media marketing with short video public service

announcements, educational presentations at Neighborhood Council meetings, and sharing PSPS preparedness resources through homeowner associations representing these neighborhoods.

### **Financial Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with receiving and discussing this item. No funding allocation, program creation, or implementation approval is requested at this time.

### **City Council Priority**

This item supports the City Council's Public Safety priority by strengthening emergency preparedness, improving community awareness during power shutoff events, and supporting coordinated response efforts to help maintain a safe and secure City.

### **Suggested Motion**

No recommended motion.

### **Summary**

PSPS events significantly affected Simi Valley in 2025 as SCE implemented de-energization protocols in response to elevated wildfire risk. Prolonged outages, lasting multiple days in some neighborhoods, disrupted daily activities, affected food storage and communications, and created additional challenges for medically vulnerable residents and others who rely on electricity for essential needs. While the City does not control electric service or PSPS decision-making, it plays an important role in community communication, preparedness, and advocacy.

In response to these impacts, Mayor Cavanaugh requested that this item be brought before the City Council for discussion. A review of peer city practices in PSPS-prone areas indicates that jurisdictions such as Thousand Oaks, Moorpark, Camarillo, Ventura, and Malibu emphasize preparedness education, targeted outreach, centralized PSPS resource information, and assistance with navigating existing utility and state programs. Consistent with these practices, the City currently provides PSPS-related outreach and education through existing Citywide communication channels, including the City's website, the monthly City Focus eNewsletter, social media, coordination with partner agencies, SVTV messaging, informational materials at City-sponsored events, and brochures available at City facilities.

This item is intended to facilitate City Council discussion regarding whether the City should build on these existing outreach and education efforts to better connect residents to available programs and resources that support PSPS preparedness. No funding or program approval is requested at this time, and City Council direction will determine any next steps.

**Prepared by:** Heather Sumagaysay, Deputy City Manager