

CPUC rules utility can't pass fire lawsuit costs onto customers

By Kevin Fixler, Santa Rosa Press Democrat

State regulators moved Thursday to deny a California utilities giant the ability to pass costs from a wildfire legal settlement onto its customers – a decision that could have broad implications for the fire-ravaged North Bay.

With its unanimous 5-0 vote, the California Public Utilities Commission rejected San Diego Gas & Electric's request for authority to hike rates to cover \$379 million in uninsured damages it must pay stemming from three costly wildfires in 2007.

Ahead of the meeting, commission staff recommended against granting the petition that both Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison supported. Two of the agency's administrative judges wrote a lengthy opinion outlining how they found the publicly-traded utility's control and management of its facilities before the wildfires to be "imprudent" and "unreasonable."

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