BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of Pacific Gas and Electric Company for Approval of its Mobile Application and Supporting Systems Pilot. (U 39 E)	Application No. 19-07-019 (Filed July 29, 2019)

PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY'S (U 39 E)
REPORT IT MOBILE APPLICATION STRAW PROPOSAL

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Dated: September 29, 2023

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The California Public Utilities Commission staff has requested a proposal concerning the Safety Reporting Mobile Application Pilot (Report It App). In response to that proposal, Pacific Gas and Electric Company respectfully presents as Exhibit A, the preliminary proposal of the program outlining its preferences and potential options for the near to mid-term future, years 2023- 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

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EXHIBIT A

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September 29, 2023

California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
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RE: <u>A.19-07-019, PG&E's Report It Mobile Application Straw Proposal</u>

I.   INTRODUCTION

In response to the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) staff's request for a proposal regarding the future of the Safety Reporting Mobile App Pilot (Report It App), Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) respectfully presents the following preliminary proposal outlining its preferences and potential options for the near to mid-term future (2023-2025) of the program.

PG&E acknowledges the Report It App pilot as a success, given that 23% of newly identified safety issues pose potential ignition risks. Customer responses from Tier 2 and 3 High-Fire Threat Districts (HFTD) optimize our limited program resources by prioritizing our service territory's vulnerable areas for targeted risk mitigation. To enhance risk reduction and cost-effectiveness, we propose continued marketing to HFTD electric customers and transitioning the Report It App's functionality to a mobile-friendly web page. This choice offers significant cost savings, eliminates app downloads and device requirements, and reduces maintenance needs. We've also presented two alternative options for the Commission's consideration, offering enhanced features with associated increased costs. Below, you will find a comprehensive discussion of the proposal and the three program continuation options for your review.

II.   BACKGROUND

PG&E launched its Safety Reporting Mobile App Pilot on July 28, 2021, as part of Rulemaking A.19-07-019. The mobile app, available for download on Apple and Android devices, lets users report non-emergency electric safety hazards to PG&E. It can be used by all PG&E customers within PG&E's service area. Customers in HFTD received invitations by mail or email to facilitate awareness and increase adoption. Customers interested in monitoring safety reports can do so without an invitation using the app or PG&E's website.

III. PG&E'S NEAR-TERM PLANS (2023) FOR THE PG&E REPORT IT APPLICATION

In light of the program's success, we propose the transformation of the Report It Application Pilot into a permanent program, solidifying its role in PG&E's operations. Completed and in-flight program enhancements for 2023 include:

1. Initiate a customer research program aimed at understanding customer preferences around how they would prefer to report safety concerns. I.e.: using a mobile app that must be downloaded from an app store versus a mobile-friendly website that can be used immediately by any smart phone or PC, and seek additional insights into potential enhancements that can be integrated into both platforms to augment their appeal to users.

2. Incorporate learnings from the pilot and pilot evaluation, including:

   - Enhance the mobile app and mobile app web page to help users distinguish between emergencies that require calls to 9-1-1 and non-emergencies suitable in the app.

   - Improve explanations for why a customer report is closed out by PG&E.

   - Add a survey link to PG&E response emails to collect feedback on the response process.

   - Update the Report It web page to include success stories from submissions through the app.

   - Remind customers to check for updates in their Spam and Junk email folders.

   - Incorporate more data science and analytics to continue to improve the program.

3. Implement enhancements to ensure continued performance due to higher volumes of users and submissions, including:

   - Upgrades to manage higher submission volumes.

   - Add ability to remove the registration process.

IV.   PG&E'S MID-TERM PLANS (2024/2025) FOR THE REPORT IT APPLICATION

PG&E intends to maintain open access to the Report It application for all electric customers with a focus on customers in HFTD. This will keep the program focused on high risk assets visible to our customers, primarily PG&E overhead lines and facilities, as the majority of gas assets are underground. As such, our marketing efforts and submissions will be dedicated towards HFTD electric customers. We foresee the potential for expansion of the Report It app to encompass all electric and gas customers in the future as further cost-benefit analysis warrants.

The pilot program has exceeded expectations in supporting PG&E's stand that catastrophic wildfires shall stop. PG&E views this Report It application as an important component in the multi-pronged strategy to reducing ignition risk, prompting PG&E to continue the pilot without substantial alterations to ensure PG&E focuses program and marketing resources in the areas of greatest ignition risk. Notably, 63% of new Report It safety issues are related to vegetation management, and vegetation-caused ignition risk is highest in HFTD due to areas of high tree density.

A.   Establish Report It Application as a Permanent Program

PG&E will resource the Report It mobile application program as a permanent program and continue marketing it towards customers in Tier 2 and Tier 3 HFTD.

PG&E is committed to hiring dedicated staff to ensure program success and customer satisfaction. Currently, our plans include hiring the following types of additional team members:

- Manager

- Triage team members

- Program manager

- Product manager

B.   Report It Mobile Application Program Improvements

Following the launch of the mobile application pilot in July 2021, PG&E has accrued a wealth of 25 months' worth of customer and user feedback, internal insights, and findings from the Evaluation Final Report. These inputs will be integrated into PG&E's ongoing enhancement efforts of the Report It mobile application program, with a particular emphasis on three core areas: 1) application, systems, and internal goals, 2) improved performance and user interface, and 3) marketing. PG&E's plan entails a phased implementation of these improvements, scheduled to continue through 2025. These enhancements include the following:

1. Incorporate learnings from the pilot and Evaluation Final Report, impacting application, systems, and internal goals.

- Enhance the mobile application data capabilities with data science.

- Gain insights by correlating the wildfire risk model and Report It case submissions for future program enhancements.

- Improve internal procedures and guidance documents to further mitigate operational risk.

- Refresh internal training for program team.

- Improve case detail and case closure metrics (e.g. tracking duplicate submissions, Wood management related submissions, out of scope submissions) including SAP to Salesforce communication.

- Enhance internal key performance indicators focused on program improvements.

- Develop capability to report outages.

2. Enhancements in performance and optimization of the user interface for improved user experience:

- Systems and application upgrades to manage submissions.

- Add functionality to track submissions details.

3. Strategic improvements in marketing and outreach:

- Target marketing to customer base via a dedicated email.

- Engage messaging via email multiple times per year.

- Continue regular and reoccurring website updates.

- Enhance social media marketing.

- Publish press releases related to the program.

- Add application mentions to existing wildfire communications – print, email, and otherwise.

- Encourage customer calls in HFTD to adopt and use the Report It application.

- Add functionality for customers to request a link to the application through an Interactive Voice Response call.

V.   REGULATORY OVERSIGHT AND COST RECOVERY

In an effort to reduce reliance on consultants, streamline the review process, and furnish substantive progress updates for the Report It application, and to ensure the CPUC Commission is comprehensively apprised of all Report It application program-related developments, PG&E intends to submit annual reports. These reports will encompass essential program enhancements, encountered challenges, and pertinent statistics linked to the operation of the application. Upon the CPUC Commission staff's review of the annual report, PG&E will extend an invitation to engage in discussions, address inquiries, and receive feedback on the report's content. This collaborative process aims to enhance subsequent reporting cycles and maintain transparency with the Commission.

The Report It application has proven its utility to our customers, with approximately 80% of users expressing a likelihood to utilize the application in the future. This application serves as a valuable platform for customers to report safety concerns and remain informed about the resolution of their submissions. To capitalize on the achievements of the pilot phase and unlock the full potential of a permanent program, it becomes imperative to implement additional improvements, allocate resources for staffing, and expand supporting infrastructure. PG&E will seek cost recovery for the Report It application for the continuance of the app in either the web based format or app format to the extent the CPUC orders continuance beyond the pilot phase of this program, in accordance with the CPUC guidance under I.19-06-015[1].[1]

VI.   PG&E'S RECOMMENDATION AND PROPOSAL FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE REPORT IT APPLICATION

The current status of the Report It application encompasses several essential functionalities, with recorded costs amounting to $3.17 million in 2021, $3.05 million in 2022, and $3.2 million in 2023. The existing functionalities associated with the application include:

- Enabling users to submit potential safety concerns (non-emergency)

- Providing prompts to call 911 for emergency situations

- Facilitating case and submission tracking

- A tutorial for capturing photos

- Incorporating informational links about the application and submission criteria

- Utilizing basic Salesforce functionality

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[1]   Ordering paragraph 13 of the Order Instituting Investigation and Order to Show Cause, June 27, 2019, order the costs to develop and operate the mobile app and asset management system/database to be paid by shareholders. Therefore, PG&E intends to seek cost recovery via a general rate case for costs associated with the continuation of a mobile app, either web or app based, beyond the pilot phase of this program.

- Implementing essential data models for trend analysis

- Supporting manual triage processing

- Sending automated emails regarding case status

To maintain the Report It application's current operational status and functionality, PG&E will need to invest in the following areas:

- Technical support

- Consultant support

- Customer testing

- Staffing costs

- Mobile application functionality, upgrades, and maintenance

- Personnel and processing for case submission triage

- Development of web application components

- Ongoing operations and maintenance

- Training initiatives

- Marketing, engagement, and outreach efforts (ME&O)

With these factors in mind, PG&E presents three possible options for consideration regarding the future of the Report It program:

- **Option 1:** The replacement of the current mobile application (sunsetting the Report It mobile application) with a mobile-friendly web-based version with the incremental maintenance investments detailed above.

    o Estimated program cost of $3.4M and $3.7M for 2024 and 2025, respectively.

- **Option 2:** The continuation of the mobile application and program in their existing state- maintaining the status quo with the incremental maintenance investments detailed above.

    o Estimated annual program costs of $4.2M in 2024 and 2025.

- **Option 3:** The continuation of the mobile application and development of a web-based version (combination of options 1 & 2), in the existing state-maintaining the status quo with the incremental maintenance investments detailed above.

  o Estimated program costs of $6.75M and $5.55M for 2024 and 2025, respectively.

PG&E recommends Option 1 which would retire the current mobile application and move to a mobile-friendly web page with existing marketing to Tier 2 and Tier 3. PG&E prefers this option because of its proven effectiveness and value for our customers. PG&E views an added benefit would be consolidating customers under a single PG&E web page/platform. PG&E's existing web-team will minimize immediate incremental costs; additionally, PG&E will seek cost recovery on further upgrades and annual maintenance of the Report It application.

PG&E considers the below items out of scope for this phase of the program:

- Bill pay

- Energy Use

- Rebate tracking

- Appointment setting

- Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) alerts

- Non-safety related issue reporting

VII. CONCLUSION

PG&E recognizes the Report It application as a success, not only in terms of its envisioned use case but also in its customer adoption. Our commitment is to further enrich the program, enhancing its capacity to serve our communities and contribute to a reduction in safety incidents. We extend our sincere appreciation to the dedicated efforts and guidance provided by the Commission staff throughout the process.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bahar Hajian
/s/ Lori Geoffroy

Bahar Hajian, Senior Director, Execution Performance
Lori Geoffroy, Senior Director, Digital Strategy
Pacific Gas and Electric Company