



Misunderstanding Caused Alameda Power Outage

Ekene Ikeme

Last Tuesday's power outage in Alameda was the result of a misunderstanding between the Northern California Power Agency (NCPA) and the California Independent System Operator (CAISO), according to an NCPA press release.

NCPA is Alameda Municipal Power's (AMP) electric load scheduler. They are a joint power agency that provides electrical energy purchasing, aggregation, scheduling and management to its 16 members including AMP. In its role as AMP's electric load scheduler, NCPA has the authority to command AMP to lower its electrical load, which can be done by rotating power outages. NCPA is also responsible for communicating CAISO's directives to AMP and the other public utilities in its network.

CAISO manages the flow of electricity across the high-voltage, long-distance power lines for the grid serving 80 percent of California. On Tuesday, Sept. 6, around 5:17 p.m., CAISO issued an Energy Emergency Alert (EEA) 3, due to the record heat and consumer demand.

"[Tuesday] was an extremely challenging day for California," said Elliot Mainzer, President and CEO of CAISO in a video message on CAISO's YouTube page. "We endured the hottest triple-digit temperatures in a historic week-long heat wave. Demand on our electrical grid peaked at 52,061 megawatts, a level we have not seen in California."

Under EEA 3, CAISO alerts grid operators like NCPA to prepare for possible rotating outages if supply gets low. However, dispatchers at NCPA took the alert as a directive to lower power consumption.

"At 5:53 pm, NCPA's dispatch center was contacted by CAISO with an order our dispatcher understood



Alameda Municipal Power

About 1,400 AMP customers were hit with an unnecessary power outage on Tuesday, Sept. 6. (Map of the areas that were affected by the power outage.)

as a request to shed 46.02 MW of load to help prevent widespread outages," read the NCPA statement.

NCPA contacted AMP and the other public utilities in its network to begin preparation for rotating power outages. However, after NCPA made the rotating outage orders, they learned they made a mistake.

"Once the outages had been initiated, our dispatcher contacted CAISO to inform them that the curtailment action had been undertaken and was then notified there had been a misunderstanding of the initial order," read NCPA's statement.

NCPA began the process of returning the load back onto the system and notifying its public utilities, but by then it was too late.

AMP dropped two circuits in the first hour of the rotating outages, according to an AMP Twitter post. The two circuits affected residents and businesses located at the center of the city including Marina Village and the East End. The power was shut off from 6:05 to 7:05 p.m. About 1,400 customers were without power. AMP called off the rotating outages after the first hour. Outages

also took place in Lodi, Santa Clara (Silicon Valley Power), Palo Alto, Healdsburg, and Ukiah.

AMP did not acknowledge publicly that the power outage was a mistake but did say they were taking steps to correct communication procedures in the future.

"In conjunction with NCPA working with the CAISO, we are working to clarify procedures to ensure unnecessary outages do not occur moving forward," wrote AMP in a social media post. "We thank you all for your patience and support as we navigate these dynamic situations that change frequently."

CAISO President Mainzer said they did not have to make the order for rotating outages because the organization saw about 2,000 to 2,500 megawatts of load reduction after the EEA 3 went into effect. Earlier in day, an EEA 2, or Flex Alert, was ordered for 4 to 9 p.m. An EEA 2 signals to participants to bid more energy into the market and allows CAISO to tap into emergency demand response programs.

AMP has not yet responded to Alameda Sun's request for comment.

Alameda CARE Team to Receive \$1.8 million in State Budget

Sun Staff Reports

The Alameda Community Assessment Response & Engagement (CARE) Team is set to receive \$1.8 million from the California state budget for 2022-2023.

California Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 179, the Budget Act of 2022, implementing funding for key state priorities. The CARE Team allocation item is under the Health and Human Services section of the bill, authored by Assemblymember Philip Ting (D-San Francisco).

In a press release announcing the state's decision, the City of Alameda thanked Assemblymember Mia Bonta and State Senator Nancy Skinner. "The city thanks Assemblymember Mia Bonta for championing funding for this critical project as part of the budget process," the press release stated. "The city is grateful for the support of this program by Senator Skinner as chair of the budget committee."

The \$1.8 million in state revenues coming to the City of Alameda will fund the CARE Team pilot program for the upcoming year. At its April 19 meeting, the City Council approved a plan to extend the CARE Team pilot program to June 23, 2023 ("CARE Team Pilot Program Extended by City Council," April 27).

The CARE Team offers an alternative to police intervention when emergency dispatchers receive calls regarding people dealing with mental health issues. Instead, the CARE Team, which consists of Alameda Fire Department (AFD) personnel and case workers from Alameda Family Services (AFS),

tends to the person in need.

The CARE Team offers five different options of support to clients (people with mental health issues). First, a medical assessment by the team paramedic which leads to a medical referral or ambulance transport if medical care is needed. Second, transport to a friend, family member, pharmacy or transportation system (BART or bus stop). Third, a safety plan that allows the client to remain at the scene if they are deemed not dangerous to themselves or others. Fourth, being placed on a 5150 or 5585 (for minors) psychiatric hold if the client is deemed a danger to themselves or others. Lastly, a referral to AFS for case management services.

In July, AFD personnel gave a six-month CARE Team update to the City Council ("Academic Report Praises Fire Department's CARE Team," August 25). The CARE Team began on Dec. 16, 2021. In the six-month time period ending on June 16, the CARE Team received 529 calls for service and the team responded to 376 of those calls. Of those 376 responses, the CARE team engaged with clients on 290 occasions. Of the 290 engagements, the client was referred to case workers from Alameda Family Services 204 times.

As a result, the CARE Team received praise in an academic jour-

nal for its reduction in EMS transports to emergency departments.

"Although early on in implementation, the initial outcomes appear promising for alternative response and navigation options for people experiencing behavioral health emergencies that would be safer than an emergency department or jail," wrote Tim Hong, MD, in an article in the Journal for Emergency Medical Services on Aug. 18. "Additionally, local emergency departments experiencing a lower burden of transported behavioral health patients can free up precious resources to meet other departmental demands."

"The city is grateful for the support of this program by Senator Skinner as chair of the budget committee."

— City of Alameda Press Release

The implementation of the CARE Team came in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the arrest of Mali Watkins in Alameda in 2020. As a result, the City Council created a community-led police reform and racial equity steering committee to advise council on how to make Alameda's response protocol more equitable and diverse. One of the committee's recommendations was to shift responsibility for mental health crisis responses from Alameda Police Department to non-police programs. At its March 16 meeting, the Alameda City Council unanimously approved moving forward with this program ("Council Ponders Police Reform" March 10, 2021).

Election Forum Held for Council Hopefuls

Ekene Ikeme

The Alameda League of Women Voters (LWV) held a virtual election forum on Monday, Sept. 12, for the five candidates vying for two City Council seats in the November 8 Election.

Each of the five candidates running for the two council seats (Paul Beusterien, Hannah Groce, Tracy Jensen, Jim Oddie and incumbent Tony Daysog) attended the virtual forum, which was open to the public via Zoom. LWV board member Anna Crane moderated the forum.

The forum began with each candidate giving a brief introduction.

"I'm running to serve Alameda because we need trust and community leadership," said Tracy Jensen, director of the City of Alameda Health Care District Board.

Jim Oddie referenced his experience on the Alameda City Council. "I've had the honor to serve as a councilmember for six years. If you want to know what my agenda is just look at the areas where I have led. I have led in areas Alamedans believe in," he said.

Crane began the Q&A session by asking the candidates whether they would be in favor of the council putting a measure on the ballot to implement ranked-choice voting in Alameda elections.

"I think [ranked-choice voting] would encourage people to work together, and Alameda would benefit from that," said Groce, a housing policy fellow. "As far as having council placing something like that on the ballot, I have mixed feeling about that. I definitely would support another organization, like League of Women Voters, for putting it on the ballot."

Daysog was intrigued by instant runoff voting, but also expressed his support for expanding the council.

"Instead of having five people, let us have seven people, similar to San Leandro," he said.

ALAMEDA MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

COUNCIL MEMBER CANDIDATES



Paul Beusterien



Tony Daysog
(incumbent)



Hannah Groce



Tracy Jensen



Jim Oddie

Vote on Nov. 8, 2022

Nandini Sharma

The five City Council Candidates took part in an election forum conducted by the Alameda League of Women voters on Sept. 12.

"One mayor elected citywide, two councilmembers elected citywide, and four councilmembers elected district wide."

Oddie agreed with Daysog. "The worst thing about running

for city council is the cost, and I think if we were able to focus on a smaller subset of the city, whether it's one-sixth or one-seventh, it definitely would drive down the cost of elections. I hope it would increase participation," said Oddie.

Crane's second question asked the candidates how the city should address the state mandated housing requirements and affordable housing.

"I think 5,353 is going to be a huge challenge for Alameda," said Beusterien. "We shouldn't try to go beyond that. We also

need to deal with the traffic implication, the infrastructure implication, and keeping parks and things we love about Alameda in the process."

The software engineer also said he would like to see more incentives for middle income people. And that it was critical Alameda has an approved Housing Element.

Oddie touted his history for advocating for housing issues.

"I have been a leader in all the areas of housing," he said. "Whether it be affordable housing, standing up for the wellness center... and also tenant protections." Other topics discussed include sea level rise, campaign spending and budgeting plans.

To watch the full forum, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=lg91ZwojH1o.

"I'm running to serve Alameda because we need trust and community leadership."

— Tracy Jensen, director of the City of Alameda Health Care District Board

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Alameda Sun Almanac

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Sept. 17	6:58	7:04
Sept. 18	6:59	7:03
Sept. 19	7:00	7:01
Sept. 20	7:01	7:00
Sept. 21	7:02	6:58



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