

North State District Attorneys



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Press Release

For immediate release

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Today, the District Attorneys of Plumas, Lassen, Tehama, Shasta and Butte Counties announced they have reached a settlement with PG&E over that company's responsibility for the 2021 Dixie Fire.

The civil prosecution settlement obligates PG&E to make rapid payments by this summer to those who lost their homes in the Dixie Fire; to continue to make extensive improvements in the safety and reliability of PG&E infrastructure in the North State and the affected counties; to be subject to oversight by the District Attorneys through an independent safety monitor; to pay nearly \$30 million to recompense local charities and organizations involved in mitigating the effects of the fire; and to pay penalties and costs of the investigation to the DA offices (none of which can be recoverable in customer rates).

The consortium of District Attorneys, labeled the "North State DAs" in the settlement, filed a civil rather than criminal complaint in Plumas County Superior Court accusing PG&E of unlawful business practices. [See attached.] After negotiations with PG&E, a stipulated Final Judgment was filed today resolving the case. [See attached.] The DAs noted the civil Judgment allowed more flexibility in demanding changes in PG&E's safety practices, and to obtain rapid restitution to those who lost homes and property in the Dixie Fire, while putting the company on essentially a five-year probation.

The North State DAs said the settlement was part of a larger settlement involving the Sonoma County District Attorney's settlement of the 2019 Kincadee Fire that also occurred today in the Sonoma County Superior Court. The local DAs expressed appreciation for the technical and legal help by the Sonoma County District Attorney Jill Ravitch and her consumer/environmental protection staff in crafting the Dixie Fire civil complaint.

The DAs stated it was decided to pursue the Dixie Fire as a civil prosecution rather than a criminal prosecution to maximize the return to the fire victims rather than to seek criminal penalties. The DAs noted that the maximum criminal fines possible in the Dixie Fire, where thankfully no one died, was only \$329,417. The civil contributions, penalties and payouts established for PG&E in the settlement judgment will instead be in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

The DAs also expressed appreciation for PG&E's good-faith cooperation in the settlement process noting the company's behavior and safety practices seem to be greatly improving under its new leadership. Additionally, the DAs felt the required five-year independent DA safety monitor will give assurances to the public that PG&E will live up to its promises.

The various sections of the FINAL JUDGMENT (see attached for precise details) commit PG&E to do:

- **EXPEDITED DIRECT PAYMENTS FOR HOME LOSS**
 - Within 30 days, PG&E will provide an expedited compensation program for individuals whose homes (owned or rented), including mobile homes, were destroyed in the Dixie Fire.
 - PG&E to offer \$400 per square foot for owner-occupied primary residence destroyed, or \$240,000 for mobile home destroyed.
 - PG&E to offer \$140 per square foot for contents of rental residences destroyed, or \$150,000 for contents of mobile home destroyed.
 - PG&E to offer \$150 per square foot for other structures (e.g. detached garage/tool shed).
 - PG&E has 30 days to verify and make an offer (or reject).
 - Claimant homeowner/renter has 30 days to accept or reject offer.
 - If accepted, PG&E has 30 days to pay.
 - PG&E will establish on-line portals and in-person help centers to assist individuals in submitting claims.
- **COMMERCIAL TIMBER LANDOWNERS**
 - Implement a mediation program to rapidly resolve any claims by Commercial Timber Landowners for loss of timber due to the Dixie Fire.
- **PERFORMANCE COMMITMENTS**
 - To create a minimum of 100 new PG&E in-house positions in the North State DA counties to conduct electrical system inspections, greatly increasing the percentage of in-house employees (vs. outside contractors) for greater accountability.
 - Establish a training program for tree crew and line inspectors (modeled after the Butte College Program) at Feather River College.
 - Establish a program to perform actual visual inspection on all sides of potential strike trees near power lines in high fire threat areas.
- **WILDFIRE MITIGATION**
 - Implement PG&E's new "Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings" by the end of 2022 to rapidly and automatically shut off power if an object comes into contact with any of the approximately 5,229 miles of high fire threat area distribution lines in the North State DA Counties.
 - Underground at least 400 miles of distribution lines in the North State DA Counties by December 31, 2024.
 - Increase real time weather stations and wildfire cameras in the North State DA Counties.
 - Increase and enhance equipment and vegetation inspections of PG&E equipment and lines in the North State DA Counties.
 - PG&E to consult on PG&E's Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) in North State DA Counties.
- **NORTHSTATE DA SAFETY MONITOR**
 - Establish an Independent Safety Monitor that will report to the North State DAs and be paid for by PG&E up to \$15 million per year for the life of the five-year Judgment.
 - [The parties have selected the same engineering and technical firm used by federal judge William Alsup during his monitoring of PG&E.]
- **GOOD FAITH CONTRIBUTIONS TO COUNTY NON-PROFITS**
 - PG&E to pay \$29,500,000 to North State County Non-Profit Organizations that either helped during the fire, helped with recovery from the fire, or will help prevent the next fire.
 - Payments to be complete by July 12, 2022.
 - None of this money shall be recoverable by PG&E in customer rates.
- **CIVIL PENALTIES / DA ATTORNEY FEE**
 - \$1,000,000 to each North State District Attorney Office.
 - \$250,000 to the Butte County District Attorney for Investigative Costs.
 - None of this money shall be recoverable by PG&E in customer rates.

Plumas County District Attorney David Hollister noted, “this is a tremendous settlement for Plumas County and a huge step in our recovery. This settlement provides expedited payments for those who lost homes, protects our timber industry, provides for local hiring and education, makes important safety improvements for the safe delivery of electricity. Through this settlement hundreds of millions of dollars will come to those who most need it in Plumas County at a time when such resources are desperately needed.”