Resolution 18-04

Sponsors: Northern California Power Agency; California Municipal Utilities Association; Southern California Public Power Authority; Florida Municipal Electric Association; Tennessee Municipal Electric Power Association

In Support of Improved Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Natural Disasters

Each year, between 100 and 200 federal natural disasters are declared. Federal statistics show that the frequency and severity of natural disasters are increasing. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 2017 saw record-breaking losses from natural disasters, totaling $306 billion worth of damages. Nearly every area of the country has been touched by hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, and ice storms. These events threaten loss of life and property, both from direct impact and the often extended periods before electric service can be restored, disaster assistance can be provided, and facilities and personal property can be rebuilt.

As community-owned resources, public power utilities are committed to improving the resiliency of their systems and responding expeditiously to disasters, including by restoring service as quickly and efficiently as possible. Public power utilities also help each other—through the provision of mutual aid by public power utilities providing crew and equipment to repair both neighboring and distant utilities.

Recent experience underscores the value of mutual aid and federal disaster assistance, but also highlights how improvements should be made, including:

- An expansion of voluntary participation in, and coordination of, mutual aid efforts;
- Improvement in the administration and determination of Federal Emergency Management Agency grants to reimburse utilities, in part by allowing state and local government procurement policies to meet federal procurement requirements under the public assistance grant program.
  This, in turn, will expedite payments to those utilities that have provided mutual aid;
- A reform of federal disaster assistance programs to facilitate greater focus on disaster prevention, staging, system resiliency, program efficiency, and improved oversight; and
- A reform of hazard mitigation programs to avoid penalizing hazard mitigation investments prior to an event.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the American Public Power Association (APPA) commends its members for executing and participating in mutual aid agreements and encourages greater member participation in mutual aid; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That APPA commits to enhancing and expanding the mutual aid program among its members, including improved promotion and coordination of member efforts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That APPA calls on Congress to reform federal disaster assistance programs to improve the administration and determination of Federal Emergency Management Agency grants to: better enable utilities to use federal funds for disaster prevention and system resiliency investments; expedite federal payments to utilities for both direct disaster responses and mutual aid payments; and provide adequate federal funding for disaster response.