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19	Attorneys for PLAINTIFFS					
20	SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA					
21						
	COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES					
22	MICHAEL HENTHORN, and individually and Trustee of the MICHAEL HENTHORN	Case No.				
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26	4. PRIVATE NUISANCE 5. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON 5. PREMISES LIABILITY					
27	COMPANY; EDISON INTERNATIONAL, 6. TRESPASS					
	CODE §2106					
PODERTEON	Defendants.					
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COMPLAINT

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5	Plaintiffs, MICHAEL HENTHORN
6	HENTHORN TRUST, bring this action for
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8. VIOLATION OF HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 13007

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Plaintiffs, MICHAEL HENTHORN, individually and as Trustee of the MICHAEL HENTHORN TRUST, bring this action for damages against Defendants SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON COMPANY ("SCE"), EDISON INTERNATIONAL ("EDISON") and DOES 1 through 50 (collectively "SCE Defendants") as follows:

INTRODUCTION

- 1. This case arises from the deadly Woolsey Fire, which has burned approximately 98,362 acres, destroyed at least 504 structures, damaged another 96 structures, killed three (3) civilians and injured three (3) firefighters. The Woolsey Fire has been a traumatic event for its victims, who through no fault of their own, went from homeowners to homeless in a matter of hours and comes less than one year after the deadly Thomas Fire ravaged Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.
- 2. According to Cal Fire, the Woolsey Fire started at approximately 2:24 p.m. on November 8, 2018 near E Street and Alfa Road on the Rocketdyne facility in Simi Valley, California. On November 8, 2018 at 8:12 p.m., Defendant SCE sent an "Electric Safety Incident Report" to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) advising: "Preliminary information indicates the Woolsey Fire was reported at approximately 2:24 p.m. Our information reflects the Big Rock 16kV circuit out of Chatsworth Substation relayed at 2:22 p.m." Plaintiffs are informed and believe that the image below depicts two separate starts of the Woolsey Fire at the Rockedyne facility directly beneath SCE's 16kV transmission power lines, and immediately adjacent to SCE's Chatsworth Substation, which is located on the Rocketdyne facility.

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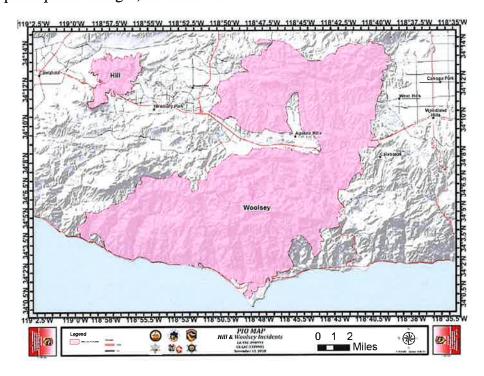
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- 3. The Woolsey Fire spread quickly, pushed by strong Santa Ana winds and dry vegetation created by years of drought conditions in Southern California.
- 4. Over the following days, the Woolsey Fire spread rapidly and charred approximately 151 square miles, caused evacuations of hundreds of thousands of residents and caused widespread power outages, as well as school and road closures.



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5. As set forth in more detail below, the Woolsey Fire was caused by SCE's negligence in (a) failing to maintain its overhead electrical facilities in a safe manner; (b) failing to perform vegetation management in accordance with applicable regulations and/or (c) failing to shut down the Big Rock 16kV circuit to prevent a catastrophic wildfire during the Red Flag weather conditions that preceded the Woolsey Fire.

- 6. SCE had a duty to properly construct, maintain and operate its electrical infrastructure. SCE violated these duties by knowingly operating aging and improperly maintained infrastructure. In fact, SCE's violations had caused wildfires before, and SCE was fined by the California Public Utilities Commission ("CPUC") numerous times before the Woolsey Fire began.
 - 7. Had SCE acted responsibly, the Woolsey Fire could have been prevented.
- 8. Plaintiffs have suffered property damage, economic loss, and disruption to their homes, businesses, lives and livelihoods, and they seek fair compensation for themselves in this case.
- 9. Plaintiffs bring claims on behalf of themselves for damages for, *inter alia*, damage to and loss of use of real and personal property; loss of income; loss of business; consequential and incidental damages; emotional distress; and other harm caused by Defendants' wrongful conduct.
- 10. On November 6, 2018, SCE activated its Emergency Operations Center and began its 48-hour notification program to government officials, emergency management agencies, fire chiefs and customers in Agoura Hills, Agoura, Chatsworth, Malibu, Simi Valley and other areas that "due to meteorological forecasts of dangerous high winds in designated Red Flag high risk fire areas, SCE has now determined" that approximately "27,000 customers are being notified today of possible power shut-offs in portions of these communities." However, SCE did not deenergize its Big Rock Circuit prior to the Woolsey Fire.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

11. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to California

Code of Civil Procedure § 395(a) because, at all times relevant, Defendants have conducted significant business in the County of Los Angeles, State of California, so as to render the exercise

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of jurisdiction over Defendants by California courts consistent with the traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice. The amount in controversy exceeds the jurisdictional minimum of this Court.

12. Venue is proper in this County pursuant to California *Code of Civil Procedure* § 395.5 because, at all times relevant herein, the Defendants wrongful conduct which caused the Woolsey Fire occurred in Los Angeles County and damaged the Plaintiffs' property, businesses and livelihoods in the County of Los Angeles.

THE PLAINTIFFS

- 13. Plaintiff, MICHAEL HENTHORN, is a resident of the County of Los Angeles and owner of the real properties located at 8570 and 8567 Mitolomol Street, Malibu, California 90265. The Woolsey Fire completed destroyed the Plaintiff's 20 acre ranch, home, guest home, barn, vehicles and pets. Plaintiff was forced to run for his life to escape the flames as they consumed his nome, where he had lived for the past 30 years. Plaintiff suffered extreme emotional distress.
- 14. Plaintiff, the MICHAEL HENTHORN TRUST, is the owner of the real properties located at 8570 Mitolomol Street and 8567 Mitolomol Street, Malibu, California 90265. The Woolsey Fire completed destroyed the Plaintiff's 20 acre ranch, primary home, rental home and barn. Plaintiff was forced to run for his life to escape the flames as they consumed his home, where he had lived for the past 30 years.

THE DEFENDANTS

15. At all times herein mentioned SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON COMPANY ("SCE") and is a corporation authorized to do business, and doing business, in the State of California, with their principal place of business in the County of Los Angeles, State of California. Defendant EDISON INTERNATIONAL ("EDISON") is an energy-based holding company headquartered in Rosemead, and it is the parent company of Defendant SCE. EDISON subsidiaries provide customers with public utility services, and services relating to the generation of energy, generation of electricity, transmission of electricity and natural gas, and the distribution of energy.

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16. SCE is both an "Electrical Corporation" and a "Public Utility" pursuant to, respectively, Sections 218(a) and 216(a) of the California Public Utilities Code. SCE is in the business of providing electricity to the residents and businesses in Southern California, and more particularly, to Plaintiffs' residences, businesses, and properties through a network of electrical transmission and distribution lines and power generation plants.

- 17. At all times mentioned herein, SCE was the supplier of electricity to members of the public in Ventura County, and elsewhere in Southern California. As part of supplying electricity to members of the public, SCE installed, constructed, built, maintained, and operated overhead power lines, together with supporting utility poles and transformers, for the purpose of conducting electricity for delivery to members of the general public. Furthermore, on information and belief, SCE is responsible for maintaining vegetation near, around, and in proximity to their electrical equipment in compliance with State and Federal regulations, specifically including, but not limited to, Public Resource Code § 4292, Public Resource Code § 4293, CPUC General Order 95, and CPUC General Order 165.
- SCE is a privately owned public utility, which enjoys a state-protected monopoly or 18. quasi-monopoly, derived from its exclusive franchise provided by the State of California and is more akin to a governmental entity than a purely private entity, and runs its utility affairs like a governmental entity. SCE's monopoly is guaranteed and safeguarded by the California Public Utilities Commission, which possesses the power to refuse to issue certificates of public convenience and necessity to permit potential competition to enter the market. The policy justifications underlying inverse condemnation liability are that individual property owners should not have to contribute disproportionately to the risks from public improvements made to benefit the community as a whole. Under the rules and regulations set forth by the California Public Utilities Commission, amounts that SCE must pay in inverse condemnation can be included in their rates and spread among the entire group of rate payers so long as they are otherwise acting as a reasonable and prudent manager of their electric distribution systems.
- 19. SCE, based in Los Angeles County, is one of the nation's largest electric utilities, serving a 50,000 square-mile area within Central, Coastal, and Southern California. It is wholly-

owned by Edison International, which has a market cap of over \$ 20.5 billion. SCE's assets total approximately \$53 billion.

- 20. At all times mentioned herein, Defendant SCE was a supplier of electricity to members of the public. As part of supplying electricity to members of the public, SCE installed, constructed, built, maintained, and operated overhead electrical distribution systems including power lines, together with supporting poles and appurtenances, for the purpose of conducting electricity for delivery to members of the general public.
- 21. EDISON is a publicly traded company that owns and/or manages an "Electric Plant" as defined in Section 217 of the Public Utilities Code, and, like its subsidiary, SCE, is both an "Electric Corporation" and a "Public Utility" pursuant to, respectively, Sections 218(a) and 216(a) of the Public Utilities Code. It develops and operates energy infrastructure assets related to the production and distribution of energy such as power plants, electric lines, natural gas pipelines and liquefied natural gas receipt terminals. EDISON'S total assets are approximately \$ 53 billion.
 - 22. Defendants have at least \$ 1 billion in wildfire insurance.
- 23. Plaintiffs allege that SCE and EDISON are jointly and severally liable for each other's wrongful acts and/or omissions as hereafter alleged, in that:
- a. SCE and EDISON International operate as a single business enterprise operating out of the same building located at 2244 Walnut Grove Ave., Rosemead, California for the purpose of effectuating and carrying out SCE's business and operations and/or for the benefit of Edison International;
- b. SCE and EDISON do not operate as completely separate entities, but rather, integrate their resources to achieve a common business purpose;
- c. SCE is so organized and controlled, and its decisions, affairs and business so conducted as to make it a mere instrumentality, agent, conduit or adjunct of EDISON International;
- d. SCE's income results from function integration, centralization of management, and economies of scale with EDISON;

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1	e.	SCE'S and EDISON's officers and management are intertwined and do not					
2	act completely independent of one another;						
3	f.	SCE's and EDISON's officers and managers act in the interest of SCE as a					
4	single enterprise;						
5	g.	EDISON has control and authority to choose and appoint SCE's board					
6	members as well as it	s other top officers and managers;					
7	h.	Despite the fact that they are both Electric Companies and Public Utilities,					
8	SCE and EDISON do	not compete with one another, but have been structured and organized and					
9	their business effectu	ated so as to create a synergistic, integrated, single enterprise where various					
10	components operate i	n concert with one another;					
11	i.	EDISON maintains unified administrative control over SCE;					
12	j.	SCE and EDISON are insured by the same carriers and provide uniform or					
13	similar pension, health, life, and disability insurance plans for employees;						
14	k.	SCE and EDISON have unified 401(k) Plans, pension and investment plans,					
15	bonus programs, vaca	ation policies, and paid time off from work schedules and policies;					
16	1.	SCE and EDISON invest funds from their programs and plans by a					
17	consolidated and/or coordinated Benefits Committee controlled by SCE and administered by						
18	common trustees and	administrators;					
19	m.	SCE and EDISON have unified personnel policies and practices and/or a					
20	consolidated personnel organization or structure;						
21	n.	SCE and EDISON have unified accounting policies and practices dictated					
22	by Edison Internation	nal and/or common or integrated accounting organizations or personnel;					
23	o.	SCE and EDISON are represented by common legal counsel;					
24	p.	EDISON's officers, directors, and other management make policies and					
25	decisions to be effectuated by SCE and/or otherwise play roles in providing directions and making						
26	decisions for SCE;						
27	q.	EDISON's officers, directors, and other management direct certain financial					
28	decisions for SCE, in	cluding the amount and nature of capital outlays;					

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- r. EDISON's written guidelines, policies, and procedures control SCE's employees, policies and practices;
- s. EDISON files consolidated earnings statements factoring in all revenue and losses from SCE, as well as consolidated tax returns, including those seeking tax relief, and/or without limitation.
- t. EDISON generally directs and controls SCE's relationship with, requests to, and responses to inquiries from the CPUC and uses such direction and control for the benefits of EDISON.
- u. Plaintiffs are informed and believe that the SCE and EDISON, and each of them, were the agents and/or employees of each of the other and in acting and/or failing to act as alleged herein, SCE and EDISON, and each of them, were acting in the course and scope of said agency and/or employment relationship.

DOE DEFENDANTS

- 24. The true names of DOES 1 through 50, whether individual, corporate, associate, or otherwise, are unknown to Plaintiffs who, under California *Code of Civil Procedure* § 474, sue these Defendants under fictitious names.
- 25. Each of the fictitiously named Defendants is responsible in some manner for the conduct alleged herein, including, without limitation, by way of aiding, abetting, furnishing the means for, and/or acting in capacities that create agency, *respondeat superior*, and/or predecessor or successor-in-interest relationships with the other Defendants.
- 26. The Doe Defendants are private individuals, associations, partnerships, corporations, or other entities that actively assisted and participated in the negligent and wrongful conduct alleged herein in ways that are currently unknown to Plaintiffs. Some or all of the DOE Defendants may be residents of the State of California. Plaintiffs may amend or seek to amend this Complaint to allege the true names, capacities, and responsibility of these Doe Defendants once they are ascertained, and to add additional facts and/or legal theories. Plaintiffs make all allegations contained in this Complaint against all Defendants, including DOES 1 through 50.

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FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

The Damage Caused By The Woolsey Fire

- 27. Plaintiffs are informed and believe that on November 8, 2018 at approximately 2:24 p.m., the Woolsey Fire ignited in the vicinity of E Street and Alpha Road, at the Rocketydyne facility in an unincorporated area of Ventura County, California. At the time of filing this Complaint, the Woolsey Fire has burned approximately 98,362 acres, destroyed 504 structures, damaged 96 structures and threatened an additional 57,000 structures.
- 28. The Woolsey Fire also created serious air quality problems in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. The air quality in Ventura County was rated "unhealthy" by the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, which warned people with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly and children to remain indoors during the duration of the fire. Due to the poor air quality, classes at many schools, community colleges and outdoor activities were cancelled in a number of cities in Ventura County.
 - 29. The full extent of the damage has not yet been quantified.
- 30. Because the fire spread so rapidly, individuals often could not protect their properties and structures, or even remove personal possessions, irreplaceable heirlooms, and valuable inventories of products, materials or records.
- 31. The fire damage and destruction also has negatively impacted the value of the Plaintiffs' real property, and will continue to affect its resale value and development for an indefinite period of time in the future.
- 32. In addition to damage and destruction of real and personal property, the Woolsey Fire caused widespread economic losses to individuals and businesses throughout Ventura and Los Angeles Counties, and will continue to do so into the future.
- 33. Individuals who were displaced have incurred and will continue to incur costs related to temporary lodging while being displaced.
- 34. Businesses that suffered property damage have incurred and will continue to incur economic losses due to their inability to operate their businesses, loss of access to their business

locations, and inability of employees to reach their businesses. These conditions are ongoing and will continue for an unknown duration of time.

SCE Had A Non-Delegable, Non-Transferable Duty To Safely Maintain Its Electrical Infrastructure

- 35. At all times prior to November 8, 2018, SCE had a non-delegable, non-transferable duty to properly construct, inspect, maintain, repair, manage and/or operate its electrical power lines, utility poles and appurtenant equipment and to keep vegetation and trees properly trimmed at a safe distance so as to prevent foreseeable contact with its electrical equipment.
- 36. In the construction, inspection, repair, maintenance, ownership, and/or operation of its power lines, utility poles and other electrical equipment, SCE had an obligation to comply with a number of statutes, regulations, orders and standards, as detailed below.
- agreed to comply with a number of design standards for its electrical equipment, as stated in CPUC General Order 95. In extreme fire areas, SCE must also ensure that its power lines and utility poles can withstand winds of up to 92 miles per hour. Further, SCE must follow several standards to protect the public from the consequences of vegetation and/or trees from coming into contact with its power lines and other electrical equipment. Pursuant to Public Resources Code § 4292, SCE is required to "maintain around adjacent to any pole or tower which supports a switch, fuse, transformer, lighting arrester, line junction, or dead end or comer pole, a firebreak which consists of clearing not less than 10 feet in each direction from the outer circumference of such pole or tower." Also, Public Resources Code § 4293 mandates SCE maintain clearances of 4 to 10 feet for all of its power lines, depending upon their voltage. In addition, "[d]ead trees, old decadent or rotten trees, trees weakened by decay or disease and trees or portions thereof that are leaning toward the line which may contact the line from the side or may fall on the line shall be felled, cut, or trimmed so as to remove such hazard."
- 38. Further, pursuant to CPUC General Order 165, SCE is also required to inspect its distribution facilities to maintain a safe and reliable electric system. Specifically, SCE must conduct "patrol" inspections of all of its overhead facilities annually in Extreme or High Fire

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areas, which includes Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.¹ SCE is also required to inspect wooden utility poles once the poles have been in service for 15 years, with intrusive inspections of the poles themselves within ten years.²

39. SCE knew or should have known that such standards and regulations were minimum standards and that SCE has a duty to identify vegetation and trees which posed a foreseeable hazard to overhead power lines and/or other electrical equipment, and to manage the growth of vegetation near its utility poles and power lines so as to prevent the foreseeable danger of contact between the vegetation and/or trees and power lines starting a fire.

SCE's Overloaded Utility Poles

- 40. SCE knew about the significant risk of wildfires caused by its aging and overoaded utility poles years before the Woolsey Fire began:
 - (a) The 2007 Fire Siege in Southern California: In October 2007, strong Santa Ana winds swept across Southern California and caused dozens of wildfires. Several of the worst wildfires were reportedly caused by downed power lines. One of these fires was the Malibu Canyon Fire, which started on October 21, 2007 at approximately 4:30 a.m. A subsequent investigation by the PUC's Safety and Enforcement Division ("SED") determined that the fire was caused when three wooden utility poles broke and fell to the ground as a result of strong Santa Ana winds in Malibu Canyon, Los Angeles County. The resulting fire burned 3,846 acres, destroyed 14 structures and 36 vehicles and caused damaged to 19 other structures. Those utility poles and overhead supply and communications facilities were owned and operated by SCE, Verizon Wireless, AT&T Mobility, LLC, Spring Communications Company, LP, and NextG Networks of California.

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¹ PUC GO 165, Table 1, http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/gos/GO165/GO 165 table.html

² A Brief Introduction To Utility Poles, PUC, at p. 10, http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/uploadedFiles/CPUC_Public_Website/Content/About_Us/Organization/Divisions/Policy and Planning/PPD_Work/PPDUtilityPole.pdf

The SED investigated the incident and found SCE and the communications companies which owned the three poles in violation of PUC General Order 95 ("GO 95"). Specifically, SED found that the wind at the time of the fire was approximately 50 miles per hour. According to GO 95, Rule 44, the type of poles involved were required to be designed and constructed with a safety factor of 4.0, and able to withstand winds up to 92.4 miles per hour. The SED found SCE and the other owners and operators of the poles and attached facilities to be in violation of Rules 12, 31, 43 and 44 in GO 95 for failing to properly inspect and maintain their poles and facilities to prevent the safety factors from falling below the minimum requirements. SCE agreed to a settlement with the PUC and a \$37 million fine and agreed to conduct a safety audit and remediation of its utility poles in the Malibu area.

- (b) <u>The 2011 Windstorm:</u> On November 30, 2011 and December 1, 2011, Santa Ana winds swept through SCE's territory, knocking down utility facilities, uprooting trees, and causing prolonged power outages. Two-hundred forty-eight (248) wood utility poles and 1,064 overhead electrical lines were affected. A total of 440,168 customers lost power during this wind event. SED performed an investigation and concluded that SCE and communication providers who jointly owned utility poles violated GO 95 because at least 21 poles and 17 guy wires were overloaded in violation of the safety factor requirements codified in GO 95, Rule 44.1.
- (c) <u>SCE Pole Loading Study</u>: As part of SCE's 2012 General Rate Case, the PUC ordered SCE to conduct a statistically-valid sampling of SCE-owned and jointly-owned utility poles to determine whether the pole loading complied with current legal standards. SCE's study, released on July 31, 2013, found that 22.3% of the 5,006 poles tested failed to meet current design standards. In November 2013, the SED sent a letter to the PUC Commissioners discussing SCE's study and recommended the following changes in policy:
 - (1) SCE should conduct a wind analysis in its service territory, incorporating actual wind standards into its internal pole loading standards;

- (2) SCE should conduct a pole loading analysis of every pole carrying SCE facilities, employing a risk management approach, considering, at a minimum, fire risk, the presence of communications facilities and the number of overloaded poles in the area; and
- (3) SCE should commence pole mitigation measures as soon as possible, and not wait for the pole loading analysis to be completed.
- (d) SCE's Pole Loading Program: In its 2015 General Rate Case, SCE proposed a Pole Loading Program ("PLP") to identify and remediate overloaded poles and prevent poles on the 1.4 million utility poles its service territory from becoming overloaded in the future. SCE claims it started its PLP in 2014, but will not complete its assessment in high fire areas until 2017 and will not complete pole remediation of overloaded poles until 2025. SCE claims that under the PLP, a pole will be replaced between 72 hours and 59 months depending upon the safety factor and its location relative to high fire areas. In its 2015 General Rate Case, SCE forecast it would perform assessment of 205,754 poles in 2015. However, SCE only actually performed assessments of 142,382 poles in 2015, or 63,372 (30%) fewer than SCE claimed it would conduct, and as a result, SCE repaired 14,310 fewer overloaded poles than it forecast in 2015. However, SCE's PLP has experienced substantial delays due to problems with the software program it used to calculate the pole loading safety factors for its poles. In its 2015 General Rate Case, SCE estimated that 22% of its utility poles were overloaded. However, in its 2018 General Rate Case, SCE disclosed that it modified its software used to calculate pole loading safety factors and that these revisions reduced the percentage of poles needing remediation to just 9%. Additionally, SCE disclosed in its 2018 General Rate Case that it had failed to meet its 2015 projections to assess and repair overloaded poles. Specifically, SCE admitted that it had only conducted 142,519 out of the projected 205,000 pole assessments in 2015. As a result, SCE announced in its 2018 General Rate Case that it was changing the duration of its PLP from 7 years to 10 years to allow for fewer pole assessments each year. Additionally, SCE disclosed in the 2018 General Rate Case that out of the 142,519 poles it

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assessed in 2015, it only constructed repairs on 569 under the PLP. SCE claims "repairs may be completed one or two years after the assessment, depending on whether the pole is in a high fire or non-fire area."

Foreseeable And Expected Santa Ana Winds and Red Flag Fire Warning

- 41. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants were aware that the State of California had been in a multi-year period of drought. Defendants were also aware that Ventura County and western Los Angeles County frequently experience "Santa Ana" wind conditions, which are highly conducive to the rapid spread of wildfires and extreme fire behavior. The Santa Ana winds are not abnormal or unforeseeable, and everyone who lives and works in Southern California is familiar with this type of extreme wind event.
- 42. On January 17, 2014, the Governor issued an Executive Order proclaiming a State of Emergency throughout the State of California due to severe drought conditions which had existed for four years. On November 13, 2015, the Governor issued Executive Order B-36-15, which proclaimed "[t]hat conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property continue to exist in California due to water shortage, drought conditions and wildfires...."

 Although the Governor issued an Executive Order in April 2017 ending the Drought State of Emergency in all counties except Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Tuolumne, the declaration directed state agencies "to continue response activities that may be needed to manage the lingering drought impacts to people and wildlife."
- 43. According to records maintained by Cal Fire, electrical equipment was tied as the third leading cause of wildfires in California during 2014, the latest year such statistics have been

³ 2018 General Rate Case, SCE, Transmission & Distribution Volume 9, Poles. 9/1/16.

⁴ Exec. Order B-36-15, Office of Gov. Edmund Brown, Jr. (Nov. 13, 2015).

⁵ Exec. Order B-040-17 at 3, Office of Gov. Edmund Brown, Jr. (April 7, 2017).

published.⁶ Thus, SCE knew of the foreseeable danger of wildfire when its power lines came into contact with vegetation.

- 44. In May 2016, the CPUC adopted Fire Map 1, which is a map that "depicts areas of California where there in an elevated hazard for ignition and rapid spread of power line fires due to strong winds, abundant dry vegetation, and other environmental conditions." Ventura County is designated on this map as an "Extreme" and "Very High" fire threat.
- 45. SCE was put on notice by the publication of this Fire Map in May 2016, and therefore knew well in advance of the Woolsey Fire of the elevated fire risk in Ventura County for "ignition and rapid spread of power line fires due to strong winds, abundant dry vegetation, and/or other environmental conditions."
- 46. On November 8, 2017, the CPUC published its "Proposed Decision Of Commissioner Picker", which adopted the "Decision Adopting Regulations To Enhance Fire Safety In The High Fire-Threat District". This Decision adopted new regulations by the CPUC to enhance fire safety of overhead electrical power lines and communications lines located in high fire-threat areas following the devastating Northern California fires.
- 47. On November 6, 2018, the National Weather Service issued a "Red Flag Warning" for Ventura County and Los Angeles Counties.
- 48. The CPUC has authorized SCE and other utilities to temporarily shut down power grids in high fire-threat areas to prevent wildfire. On November 6, 2018, SCE activated its Emergency Operations Center and began its 48-hour notification program to government officials, emergency management agencies, fire chiefs and customers in Agoura Hills, Agoura, Chatsworth, Malibu, Simi Valley and other areas that "due to meteorological forecasts of dangerous high winds in designated Red Flag high risk fire areas, SCE has now determined" that approximately "27,000"

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⁶ Historical Wildfire Activity Statistics (Redbooks), Cal Fire, available at http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire protection/fire protection fire info redbooks 2014

⁷ See, PUC Fire Map Depicts Areas of Elevated Hazards In State: First Step in Creation of Tools to Help Manage Resources, Cal Pub. Utils. Comm'n (May 26, 2016), available at http://frap.fire.ca.gov/data/frapgismaps/pdfs/fthreat_map.pdf

customers are being notified today of possible power shut-offs in portions of these communities." However, despite knowledge of the risk, SCE failed to shut off circuits, including its Big Rock 16kV circuit, on November 8, 2018 which resulted in the ignition of the Woolsey Fire.

49. On December 4, 2017, the Thomas Fire burned approximately 281,893 acres and destroyed 1, 063 structures in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. SCE has admitted that its electrical equipment was associated with at least one of the two points of origin of the Thomas Fire. Thus, SCE knew of the catastrophic damage which could occur when its electrical equipment sparked a wildfire in a high fire risk area during Santa Ana wind conditions. Despite this knowledge, SCE failed to take adequate precautions to prevent its equipment from sparking the Woolsey Fire.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

By All Plaintiffs For Negligence Against SCE Defendants and DOES 1-20

- 50. Plaintiffs incorporate and re-allege each of the paragraphs above as though fully set forth herein.
- 51. Defendants SCE has a non-delegable, non-transferable duty to apply a level of care commensurate with and proportionate to the danger of designing, constructing, operating and maintaining electrical infrastructure, in addition to performing adequate vegetation clearance around such facilities and to remediate overloaded utility poles.
- 52. Defendants have a non-transferable, non-delegable duty of vigilant oversight in the construction, maintenance, use, operation, repair and inspection of their electrical infrastructure that are appropriate to the geographical and weather conditions affecting such equipment.
- 53. Defendants have special knowledge and expertise far above that of a layperson regarding their requirements to design, engineer, construct, use, operate, maintain and inspect these electrical facilities, including tree trimming, removal of vegetation and remediating overloaded utility poles such that their electrical equipment will not cause wildfires like the Woolsey Fire.
 - 54. Defendants have negligently breached those duties by, among other things:

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- a) Failing to conduct reasonably prompt, proper and frequent inspections of their overhead electric and communications facilities;
- b) Failing to design, construct, monitor, operate and maintain their overhead electric and communications facilities to withstand foreseeable Santa Ana wind events and avoid igniting and/or spreading wildfires;
- c) Failing to clear vegetation within a 10 foot radius around the perimeter of all utility poles and towers which supports a switch, fuse, transformer, lighting arrester, line junction, or dead end or comer pole as required by Public Resource Code § 4292;
- d) Failure to perform inspections of all overhead electric facilities as required by PUC General Order 165;
- e) Failing to de-energize overhead electric facilities during foreseeable and expected Red Flag Warnings in fire-prone areas;
- f) Failing to de-energize overhead electric facilities after the initial ignition of the Woolsey Fire;
- g) Failing to properly investigate, screen, train and supervise employees and agents responsible for maintenance and inspection of the overhead electric and communications facilities, including tree trimming and vegetation removal around such facilities.
- 55. The Woolsey Fire was the direct, legal and proximate result of Defendants' negligence. As a direct, proximate, and legal result of said negligence, Plaintiffs suffered damages as alleged herein.
- 56. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants failed to properly inspect and maintain electrical infrastructure and equipment which they knew, given the then existing Santa Ana wind and Red Flag Warning conditions, posed a risk of harm to the Plaintiffs, and to their real and personal property. Defendants were aware that if their electrical equipment came in contact with vegetation a fire would likely result and spread rapidly. Defendants also knew that, given the then

 economic loss, personal injury, and/or death to the general public, including Plaintiffs.

The property damage and economic losses caused by the Woolsey Fire

57. The property damage and economic losses caused by the Woolsey Fire is the result of the ongoing custom and practice of SCE of consciously disregarding the safety of the public and not following statutes, regulations, standards, and rules regarding the safe operation, use and maintenance of their overhead electric facilities.

existing weather conditions, said fire was likely to pose a risk of catastrophic property damage,

- 58. On information and belief, these Defendants failed to properly inspect and maintain their electric facilities in order to cut costs, with the full knowledge that any incident was likely to result in a wildfire that would burn and destroy real and personal property, displace homeowners from their homes and disrupt businesses in the Fire Area.
- 59. The actions of Defendants did in fact result in damages to the Plaintiffs. Defendants failed to operate their 16kV Big Rock circuit in a safe manner, and/or failed to properly trim and/or remove vegetation around their overhead electric facilities as required by statute, and/or failed to remediate overloaded utility poles which were at risk of collapse in Santa Ana winds.
- 60. The negligence of Defendants was a substantial factor in causing the Plaintiffs' damages.
- 61. Defendants' failure to comply with their duties of care proximately caused damage to Plaintiffs.
- 62. As a further direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiffs suffered damages including, but not limited to real property damage, loss of personal property, economic loss, loss of quiet use and enjoyment of their property, and costs to evacuate and relocate.
- 63. Defendants were and are in a special relationship to Plaintiffs. As a supplier of electrical power to the Plaintiffs, SCE's operation of its electrical equipment was intended to and did directly affect the Plaintiffs. SCE is the sole electric public utility which provides electric power to the Plaintiffs in Ventura and Los Angeles County. As a result, it was foreseeable that a massive wildfire would destroy personal and real property, force residents in the fire area to

evacuate, and prevent customers of businesses located within the fire area from patronizing those businesses.

- 64. The Plaintiffs suffered injuries which were clearly and certainly caused by the Woolsey Fire, resulting in evacuations and relocations, and the cost to repair and replace their damaged and/or destroyed real and personal property.
- 65. Public policy supports finding a duty of care in this circumstance due to Defendants' violation of California *Civil Code* §§ 3479, 34890, Public Utilities Code § 2106 and Health & Safety Code § 13007.
- 66. Further, the conduct alleged herein was despicable and subjected Plaintiffs to cruel and unjust hardship in conscious disregard of their rights, constituting oppression, for which Defendants must be punished by punitive and exemplary damages in an amount according to proof. Defendants' conduct evidences a conscious disregard for the safety of others, including Plaintiffs. Defendants' conduct was and is despicable conduct and constitutes malice and defined by *Civil Code* § 3294. An officer, director, or managing agent of Defendants personally committed, authorized, and/or ratified the despicable conduct alleged herein. Plaintiffs are entitled to an award of punitive damages sufficient to punish and make an example of these Defendants.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

By All Plaintiffs For Inverse Condemnation Against SCE Defendants and DOES 21-50

- 67. Plaintiffs incorporate and re-allege each of the paragraphs above as though fully set forth herein.
- 68. On or about November 8, 2018, Plaintiffs were owners of real property located within the County of Los Angeles and/or Ventura County.
- 69. Prior to November 8, 2018, Defendant SCE installed, constructed, owned, operated, used, controlled, and/or maintained electrical infrastructure and facilities in Ventura County.
- 70. On or about November 8, 2018, as a direct, necessary and legal result of SCE's installation, construction, ownership, operation, use, control, and/or maintenance for a public use of electric infrastructure, Defendants' electrical equipment ignited vegetation beneath their 16kV

transmission power lines on their Big Rock circuit, which caused the Woolsey Fire. The fire damaged and/or destroyed Plaintiffs' personal and real property.

- 71. The damage to Plaintiffs' properties was proximately and substantially caused by Defendants' actions in that the Defendants' installation, ownership, operation, use, and/or control for a public use of electrical infrastructure and water delivery systems caused the damage and/or destruction of the Plaintiffs' properties during the Woolsey Fire.
- 72. Plaintiffs have not received adequate compensation for the damage to and/or destruction of their property, thus constituting a taking or damaging of Plaintiffs' properties by Defendants without just compensation.
- 73. As a direct and legal result of the above-described damages to Plaintiffs' properties, including loss of use and interference with access, enjoyment and marketability of real property, and damage/destruction of personal property, Plaintiffs have been damaged in amounts according to proof at trial.
- 74. Plaintiffs have incurred and will continue to incur attorney's, appraisal, and engineering fees and costs because of Defendants' conduct, in an amount that cannot yet be ascertained, but which are recoverable in this action pursuant to *Code of Civil Procedure* § 1036.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

By All Plaintiffs For Trespass Against SCE Defendants and DOES 1-20

- 75. Plaintiffs incorporate and re-allege each of the paragraphs above as though fully set forth herein at length.
- 76. At all times relevant herein, Plaintiffs were the owners and lawful occupants of real property damaged by the Woolsey Fire.
- 77. Defendants had a duty to use reasonable care not to enter, intrude on, or invade Plaintiffs' real properties. Defendants negligently allowed the Woolsey Fire to ignite and/or spread out of control, causing injury to Plaintiffs. The spread of a negligently caused fire to wrongfully occupy land of another constitutes a trespass.
- 78. Plaintiffs did not grant permission for Defendants to cause the Woolsey Fire to enter their properties.

- 79. As a direct, proximate and substantial cause of the trespass, Plaintiffs have suffered and will continue to suffer damages, including but not limited to damage to property, discomfort, annoyance, and emotional distress in an amount to be proven at trial.
- 80. As a further direct and proximate result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiffs have hired and retained counsel to recover compensation for loss and damage and are entitled to recover all attorney's fees, expert fees, consultant fees, and litigation costs and expenses, as allowed under California *Code of Civil Procedure* § 1029.1.
- 81. As a further direct and proximate result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiffs seek treble or double damages for wrongful injuries to timber, trees, or underwood on their properties, as allowed by *Civil Code* § 3346.
- 82. As a further direct and proximate result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiffs seek the reasonable cost of repair or restoration of their property to its original condition and/or loss of use damages, as allowed by *Civil Code* § 3334.
- 83. Defendants' conduct was willful and wanton, and with a conscious disregard for the disastrous consequences that Defendants knew would occur as a result of their dangerous conduct. Accordingly, Defendants acted with malice towards Plaintiffs, which is an appropriate predicate fact for an award of exemplary damages in an amount according to proof.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

By All Plaintiffs For Private Nuisance Against SCE Defendants and DOES 1-20

- 84. Plaintiffs incorporate and re-allege by this reference each of the paragraphs set forth as though fully set forth herein.
- 85. Plaintiffs own and/or occupy real property in the fire area. At all times relevant herein, Plaintiffs had a right to occupy, enjoy, and/or use their property without interference by Defendants.
- 86. Defendants' actions, conduct, omissions, negligence, trespass, and failure to act resulted in a fire and foreseeable obstruction to the free use of Plaintiffs' property, invaded the right of Plaintiffs to use their property, and interfered with Plaintiffs' enjoyment of their property,

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causing Plaintiffs unreasonable harm and substantial actual damages constituting a nuisance pursuant to Civil Code § 3479.

- 87. As a direct and proximate result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiffs seek the reasonable cost of repair or restoration of their property to its original condition and/or loss-of-use damages, as allowed under *Civil Code* § 3334.
- 88. Defendants' conduct was willful and wanton, and with a conscious disregard for the safety of others. Accordingly, Defendants acted with malice towards Plaintiffs, which is an appropriate predicate fact for an award of exemplary/punitive damages in an amount to be proven at trial.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

By All Plaintiffs For Public Nuisance Against SCE Defendants and DOES 1-20

- 89. Defendants owed a non-transferable, non-delegable duty to the public, including Plaintiffs, to conduct their business, in particular the maintenance and operation of electrical infrastructure and facilities, and adjacent vegetation in proximity to their electrical equipment in Ventura County, in a manner that did not cause harm to the public welfare.
- 90. Defendants, by acting and/or failing to act, as alleged herein above, created a condition that was harmful to the health of the public, including Plaintiffs, and created a fire which damaged and interfered with the quite use and enjoyment of their property. This interference is both substantial and unreasonable.
- 91. Plaintiffs did not consent, expressly or impliedly, to the wrongful conduct of Defendants.
- 92. The Woolsey Fire which was created by Defendants affected a substantial number of people at the same time within the general public, including Plaintiffs, and constituted a public nuisance under *Civil Code* §§ 3479 and 3480 and Public Resources Code §§ 4170 and 4171.
- 93. The damaging effects of Defendants' creation of a fire hazard and the resulting Woolsey Fire are ongoing and affect the public at large.
- 94. As a direct and legal result of the Defendants' conduct, Plaintiffs have suffered harm that is different from the type of harm suffered by the general public. Specifically, Plaintiffs

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have lost the occupancy, possession, use, and/or enjoyment of their land, real, and/or personal property, including, but not limited to a diminution of value of their real property; an impairment of the ability to sell their property; property exposed to chemical retardant agents dropped from airborne firefighting aircraft; and lingering smell of smoke, soot, ash and dust in the air.

- 95. As a further direct and legal result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiffs have suffered, and will continue to suffer, discomfort, anxiety, fear, worry, annoyance, and/or stress attendant to the interference with the occupancy, possession, use and/or enjoyment of their property.
- 96. A reasonable, ordinary person would be annoyed or disturbed by the conditions caused by Defendants, and the resulting Woolsey Fire.
- 97. Defendants' conduct is unreasonable and the seriousness of the harm to the public, including Plaintiffs, outweighs the social utility of Defendants' conduct. There is little to no social utility associated with causing wildfires to destroy the property of the Plaintiffs.
- 98. The individual and/or collective conduct of Defendants SCE set forth above resulting in the Woolsey Fire is not an isolated incident, but is ongoing and/or a repeated course of conduct, and SCE's prior conduct and/or failures have resulted in the 2007 Malibu Canyon Fire, the 2017 Thomas Fire and other wildfires and damage to the public.
- 99. The unreasonable conduct of Defendants is a direct and legal cause of the harm, injury, and/or damage to the public, including Plaintiffs.
- 100. Defendants have failed to conduct reasonable and timely inspections of their electrical infrastructure and facilities, trim and/or remove vegetation in close proximity to such facilities, and/or remediate overloaded utility poles, and Defendants' failure to do so exposed every member of the public to a foreseeable danger of personal injury, death, and/or a loss or destruction of real and personal property.
- 101. Defendants' conduct set forth above constitutes a public nuisance within the meaning of Civil Code §§ 3479 and 3480, Public Resources Code §§ 4104 and 4170, and Code of Civil Procedure § 731. Under Civil Code § 3493, Plaintiffs have standing to maintain an action for public nuisance because the nuisance is especially injurious to Plaintiffs, because, as described

1	above, it is injurious and/or offensive to the senses of the Plaintiffs, unreasonably interferes with				
2	their comfortable enjoyment of their properties, and/or unlawfully obstructs the free use, in the				
3	customary manner, of their properties.				
4	102. For these reasons, Plaintiffs seek a permanent injunction ordering Defendants to				
5	stop continued violation of Public Resource Code §§ 4292 and 4293 and PUC General Order 95.				
6	Plaintiffs also seek an order directing Defendants to abate the existing and continuing nuisance				
7	described above.				
8	SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION				
9	By All Plaintiffs For Premises Liability Against SCE Defendants and DOES 1-20				
10	103. Plaintiffs incorporate and re-allege by this reference, each of the paragraphs set				
11	forth as though fully set forth herein.				
12	104. Defendants were the owners of an easement and/or real property in the area of the				
13	origin of the Woolsey Fire, and/or were the owners of electrical infrastructure upon said easement				
14	and/or right of way.				
15	105. Defendants acted wantonly, unlawfully, carelessly, recklessly, and/or negligently in				
16	failing to properly inspect, manage, maintain, and/or control the vegetation near their electrical				
17	infrastructure along the real property and easement, allowing an unsafe condition presenting a				
18	foreseeable risk of fire danger to exist in said area.				
19	106. As a direct and legal result of the wrongful acts and/or omissions of Defendants,				
20	Plaintiffs suffered, and continue to suffer, the injuries and damages as set forth above.				
21	107. As a further direct and legal result of the wrongful acts and/or omissions of				
22	Defendants, Plaintiffs seek the recovery of punitive and exemplary damages against Defendants as				
23	set forth above.				
24	SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION				
25	By All Plaintiffs For Violation of Public Utilities Code § 2106 Against				
26	SCE Defendants and DOES 1-20				

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forth herein.

108.

Plaintiffs incorporate and re-allege each of the paragraphs above as though fully set

109.	As a public utility,	Defendants ar	e legally	required	to comply	with	the	rules	and
orders promul	gated by the CPUC r	oursuant to Pub	lic Utiliti	es Code §	§ 702.				

- 110. Public utilities whose failure to perform or inadequate performance of duties required by the California Constitution, a law of the State, or a regulation or order of the CPUC, leads to loss or injury, are liable for that loss or injury, pursuant to Public Utilities Code § 2106.
- 111. As public utilities, Defendants are required to provide and maintain service, equipment and facilities in a manner adequate to maintain the safety, health, and convenience of their customers and the public, pursuant to Public Utilities Code § 451.
- 112. Defendants are required to design, engineer, construct, operate, and maintain electrical infrastructure in a manner consonant with their use, taking into consideration local geographic and weather conditions and other circumstances, so as to provide safe and adequate electric service, pursuant to CPUC General Order 95 and Order 165.
- 113. Defendants are required to maintain vegetation in compliance with California Public Resources Code §§ 4293, 4294, 4435 and Health & Safety Code § 13001.
- 114. Through their conduct alleged herein, Defendants violated Public Utilities Code §§ 702, 451 and/or CPUC General Order 95, thereby making them liable for losses, damages, and injuries sustained by Plaintiffs pursuant to Public Utilities Code § 2106.

EIGHT CAUSE OF ACTION

By All Plaintiffs For Violation Of Health & Safety Code § 13007 Against SCE DEFENDANTS and DOES 1-20

- 115. Plaintiffs hereby re-allege and incorporate by reference each and every allegation contained above as though fully set forth herein.
- 116. By engaging in the acts and/or omissions alleged in this Complaint, Defendants willfully, negligently, and in violation of law, allowed fire to ignite or spread to the property of another in violation of California Health & Safety Code § 13007.
- 117. As a legal result of Defendants' violation, Plaintiffs suffered recoverable damages to property under California Health & Safety Code § 13008 and 13009.1.

1	10. For such other and further 1	relief	as the Court shall deem appropriate, all according
2	to proof.		
3	Dated: November 15, 2018		ROBERTSON & ASSOCIATES, LLP
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5		By:	1 lles A
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28 COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Plaintiffs hereby demand a jury trial on all causes of action for which a jury is available under the law.

Dated: November 15, 2018

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COMPLAINT