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Kalra, Ash  
Papan, Diane  
Rogers, Chris  
Schiavo, Pilar  
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# California State Assembly

## UTILITIES AND ENERGY



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Vanessa Gonzales

**State Capitol, P.O. Box**  
942849  
**(916) 319-2083**  
**FAX: (916) 319-2183**

## PANELIST INFORMATION

Thursday, May 13, 2026  
1:30pm  
1021 O Street, Room 1100

## OVERSIGHT HEARING

### *Improving the Utility-Caused Wildfire Recovery System for Survivors, Ratepayers, Other Stakeholders*



**William B. Abrams, UWSC Organizing Advocate, Public Policy Consultant and Wildfire Survivor**

Will Abrams is a wildfire survivor and Organizing Advocate with the Utility Wildfire Survivor Coalition (UWSC), a grassroots organization representing thousands of wildfire survivors across California. After his family narrowly survived the 2017 PG&E Tubbs Fire, he reoriented his career toward advancing local and statewide strategies that align utility, insurance, and broader public policy with wildfire safety, climate adaptation, and just outcomes for survivors. He brings leadership experience across nonprofit, government, and private sectors and has served as CEO of organizations focused on public-private partnerships. His experience includes serving as Assistant Commissioner of the Small Business Administration for the City of New York and as a lead strategy consultant working with Fortune 100 companies. Mr. Abrams has intervened in numerous California Public Utilities Commission proceedings and has been an active party across federal and state courts advocating for wildfire survivors and broader public interests. He holds a bachelor's degree from Indiana University and a Master of Business Administration from the University of San Francisco.



**Joy Chen, Executive Director, Every Fire Survivor's Network**

Joy Chen is Executive Director of the Every Fire Survivor's Network (EFSN), the nation's largest survivor recovery hub, connecting more than 10,000 Eaton and Palisades fire survivors and allies. Through survivor leadership and coordination, EFSN works to remove barriers and unlock resources so that every family has a real shot at getting home. A former Deputy Major of Los Angeles, Joy led economic and workforce development in one of the world's most diverse cities, focusing on expanding access to opportunity in communities historically excluded from capital and decision-making. After public service, she recruited Fortune 500 CEOs and board directors globally at Heidrick & Struggles. Her leadership writing later reached millions in China and led to two bestselling books on career and life agency for women. Today, Joy is a leading national voice on disaster recovery, insurance accountability, and community-led rebuilding.



**Tom Welsh, Chief Executive Officer, California Earthquake Authority**

Tom Welsh joined the California Earthquake Authority in 2019, initially as General Counsel, quickly taking on additional roles as Chief Operating Officer and Chief Legal & Compliance Officer. Tom was appointed Chief Executive Officer in 2024. As CEO, Tom oversees both the operation of California's largest privately funded residential earthquake insurance business, which protects around one million California homes against the peril of earthquake damage, and CEA's activities as the appointed Administrator of the California Wildfire Fund. The Wildfire Fund, created in 2019 under AB 1054, insures California's three largest investor-owned electric utility companies for liabilities arising from utility-caused wildfires. Prior to joining CEA, Tom was a partner at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP. His insurance regulatory practice focused on providing compliance advice and solutions to a wide array of clients, including emerging technology companies bringing innovative solutions to the insurance marketplace. He also worked for financial sector clients on public finance transactions, insurance related investments, the insurance components of complex securitization transactions, as well as autonomous vehicle development and regulation. For nearly 30 years, Tom served as the primary outside counsel to the California Insurance Commissioner's Conservation & Liquidation Office, leading efforts to protect consumers when California insurance companies are financially impaired or fail.

**Lloyd Dixon, Director, RAND Feinberg Center for Catastrophic Risk Management and Compensation; Senior Economist; Professor of Policy Analysis; RAND School of Public Policy**



Lloyd Dixon is a Senior Economist at the RAND Corporation and Director of RAND's Kenneth R. Feinberg Center for Catastrophic Risk Management and Compensation, as well as a professor of policy analysis at the RAND School of Public Policy. He has expertise in insurance, compensation, and liability issues, with a particular focus on catastrophic risk. For California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, he investigated the impact of changing wildfire risk on California's residential insurance market, and he has more recently contributed to research on the implications of the Los Angeles wildfires for risk mitigation, compensation, and the insurance market. His broader research has examined flood insurance, terrorism risk insurance, cyber insurance, and options for federal reinsurance programs. Since 2020, Dixon has served as the California State Senate's designee to the governing board of the California Earthquake Authority.



**Tyson Smith, Vice President, Law, Strategy and Policy, Pacific Gas and Electric Company**

Tyson Smith is Vice President, Law, Strategy and Policy at Pacific Gas and Electric Company. He leads a team of attorneys and others focused on critical issues facing California and PG&E, including clean energy supply and climate policy, government funding, state and federal regulatory matters, and legislative and corporate initiatives. Since joining PG&E in 2018, Smith served as Senior Counsel and then Managing Counsel in the Law, Strategy, and Policy team. Prior to joining PG&E, Smith was a partner at Winston and Strawn LLP in the firm's energy practice, where he advised utilities, energy companies and governments on federal and international regulation, including licensing pioneering energy projects in the U.S. and abroad. Smith began his career as an attorney in the Honor Law Graduate Program at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Smith received a J.D. from Lewis and Clark Law School, and holds civil and environmental engineering degrees from Stanford University and Vanderbilt University. He is a member of the Bar of the State of California.



**Fernando Valero, Executive Director of Strategic Issues, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power**

Fernando Valero is the Executive Director of Strategic Issues for LADWP, and oversees the development, implementation, and management of enterprise strategy functions and activities. Fernando has more than 20 years of experience in business strategy, business development, deal structuring, and regulatory and legal affairs. Prior to joining LADWP, he served as Senior Director of Advanced Clean Technologies for San Diego Gas & Electric, along with other roles in energy supply and legal. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Arkansas, a Juris Doctor from the Thomas Jefferson School of Law, and an MBA from San Diego State University.



**John Fiske, Attorney Member, Consumer Attorneys of California**

John Fiske is a Shareholder Attorney with Baron & Budd, focusing his practice on investor-owned utility-caused wildfires for over a decade. As a CAOC member, Mr. Fiske has represented thousands of individuals and businesses. He has also represented over 130 public entities as plaintiffs in utility-caused wildfire cases since 2017. Named the 2020 California Lawyer Attorney of the Year in Environmental Litigation for his work in complex wildfire cases, Mr. Fiske created a first-of-its-kind reimbursement program with FEMA and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services so that communities can comply with federal Stafford Act responsibilities in the aftermath of investor-owned utility wildfires. Mr. Fiske actively supported legislative efforts and inquiries regarding SB 901 in 2018 and AB 1054 in 2019, and he testified at multiple wildfire-related hearings during those legislative sessions.



**Dr. Nathaniel (Nat) Skinner, Deputy Director of Energy and Administration, Public Advocates Office**

Nathaniel Skinner was appointed Deputy Director of Energy and Administration at the Public Advocates Office in May 2025. In this role, he oversees the Energy Planning and Policy Branch, the Safety Branch, and the office's Administrative Section. He joined the CPUC in 2008, and the Public Advocates Office in 2013. During his time with the CPUC and the Public Advocates Office, Nat has worked and testified on a range of issues including: wildfire investigations and cost recovery, pipeline safety investigations, public safety power shutoffs, safety culture, risk assessment, executive compensation, general rate cases, and integrating procurement with demand forecast models. Nat graduated from the University of Washington with degrees in Scandinavian Studies and Political Science and has a Masters of Arts in International Policy Studies from the Monterey Institute of International Studies. He earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy and Administration from Walden University.



**Andy Neal, FSA, Senior Managing Director, Reinsurance Solutions, Aon (technical resource, no presentation)**

As part of Aon Reinsurance Solutions, Andy leads efforts in three areas: public sector, flood, and physical climate / natural catastrophe analytics and risk transfer in non-insurance contexts. Before joining Aon, Andy was Chief Actuary of FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program. He led the team that established the NFIP's reinsurance and ILS program and led the development of "Risk Rating 2.0", a transformation of the NFIP's rating to incorporate the latest in catastrophe models and actuarial science. He participated in various legislative and administrative reform initiatives of the program throughout his career in FEMA.