

# FACTSHEET: NEWSOM'S LICENSE TO BURN

In 2019, when PG&E filed for bankruptcy over costs from wildfires caused by their dilapidated infrastructure, Governor Newsom pushed through a law that would allow utilities to continue burning down our communities without facing financial consequences.[1] The keystone of this law is the annual "Safety Certificate" that gives PG&E a rubber stamp to stay in business at the expense of ratepayers. We know PG&E is anything but safe, and we call on Governor Newsom to reject PG&E's Safety Certificate in 2022.

## What's a Safety Certificate? A License to Burn!

The Safety Certificate is really a **License to Burn**. In order to get this License to Burn, PG&E doesn't actually have to provide safe or reliable electricity. All the utility has to do is get approval for its Wildfire Mitigation Plan and agree to implement safety improvements. Governor Newsom created the brand new Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety to move this process under his control and shield it from public accountability.[2] PG&E's last Wildfire Mitigation Plan was found to have nearly 60 serious flaws, but it was still approved by Governor Newsom's appointees.[3]

As long as PG&E has an approved License to Burn, any wildfire related costs it passes down to ratepayers are considered "reasonable." While customers' bills skyrocket, tens of thousands of wildfire survivors are still waiting to be reimbursed for their lost homes and belongings. With License to Burn in hand, PG&E can use a state Wildfire Fund to pay themselves back for these damage claims. The \$21 billion Wildfire Fund was created using ratepayer money and protects PG&E's hedge fund shareholders from bearing any of the consequences of its actions.

## Ratepayers & Wildfire Survivors Demand Newsom Reject PG&E's License to Burn

No matter how many plans, agreements, and claims PG&E executives make, their actions prove to be deadly. The utility has been found guilty of starting devastating fires every year since 2017. It continually fails to make upgrades to its grid that prioritize safety and resilience. Without a Safety Certificate, PG&E could be put in Step 3 of a 6-step accountability process at the California Public Utilities Commission, which could end with its business license being revoked. PG&E's executives would face the financial consequences of their own failures.

Governor Newsom allows PG&E to continue committing arson and murder while it passes down the costs of its shoddy plans onto ratepayers. With License to Burn in hand, the utility has no incentive to invest in local clean energy to reduce the impacts of climate change on frontline communities. PG&E is not safe, regardless of how many flawed documents they acquire to "prove" it. We're calling on Governor Newsom:

## REJECT PG&E'S LICENSE TO BURN

To get involved contact: [pete@localcleanenergy.org](mailto:pete@localcleanenergy.org)

Sources:

[1] [ABC 10 Investigation: Newsom's office crafted law protecting PG&E after company's crimes killed 84 people](#)

[2] [Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety's Final 2021 Safety Certification Guidance](#)

[3] [Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety Approves 2021 Wildfire Mitigation Plan for Pacific Gas & Electric Company](#)

