



# Memorandum

TO: Rules Committee

FROM: Vice-Mayor Cindy Chavez  
and Councilmember Campos

SUBJECT: **Special Meeting to Discuss Heat  
Wave and Power Outage Plans**

DATE: August 25, 2006

APPROVED:

*for Cindy Chavez DD for NC Campos*

DATE:

*08/25/06*

## RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council convene a special hearing on Tuesday, October 10, 2006 from 6-9 pm in order to determine what lessons can be learned in order to better prepare for the next heat storm/power outage. The hearing would incorporate:

- A review and testimonials of best practices in other cities;
- A presentation from PG&E on their future and interim strategies in heat wave and/or power outage conditions;
- An outline of transportation plans so vulnerable populations have access to cooling centers;
- San Jose Office of Emergency Services (OES) would present current heat wave and power outage plans with recommendations; and
- Public testimony from residents and community organizations.

## BACKGROUND

California experienced extreme hot weather conditions, also referred to as a "heat storm," from July 15 through July 29, 2006. This was the state's worst heat storm in 57 years, and 164 fatalities were reported in California during this period. On July 24, the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) reported system peak demand of nearly 51,000 megawatts, the highest peak in CAISO's history. Electricity system loads were especially high because both Northern and Southern California experienced record temperatures at the same time. While there were no system wide blackouts, there were thousands of local power interruptions. According to some reports, transformer failures left 25,000 people in the South Bay without power including 17,000 in San Jose, leaving our most vulnerable populations at risk.

As California residents, we are used to developing plans for disasters such as fires and earthquakes, however, according to the National Weather Service, heat and solar radiation on average kill more U.S. residents each year than lightning, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods or earthquakes. Between 1936 and 1975, about 20,000 U.S. residents died of heat.

While the City took some steps to alleviate the effects of the heat by extending community center hours and creating temporary cooling stations, more can and should be done to explore available options to provide relief during these extreme weather conditions.

CC: Les White, Interim City Manager