

Power and Emergencies

What keeps pumps, alerts, and essential facilities working during a power outage?

Christopher Knorr · Independent community briefing · Edited October 16, 2026

What this publication is—and is not. A public-document briefing with bounded conclusions and unanswered questions; not a technical water or fire-safety inspection, Tribal statement, or confirmation of current facility readiness. Checked primary records Oct 16, 2026 · other sources dated in the notes. Source-status notes matter.

The question

What must keep working when electric power is lost—and who can establish whether it will? A water system may need electricity to pump, treat, distribute, monitor, and restore water service. Whether an outage interrupts delivery at a particular site depends on storage, system layout, controls, and available backup. None of the inspected records establishes the exact backup configuration at XL or Montgomery Creek. [P1; P2]

The Pit River Tribe's 2020 strategic-plan draft identifies **Public Safety Power Shutoffs** among potential threats. The question is operational: what can continue during an outage; for how long; what alerts reach members; and what agency is responsible for each part of the response? [P2]

This edition describes the documented regional risk and provides a question card. It **does not report that any Pit River pump, emergency center, or alert system has failed**, and does not certify the current emergency readiness of any facility.

Why power is a water question

An outage can affect more than lights. Where electric pumps are necessary, it can affect pressure and replenishment. It may also affect radio repeaters, phones, digital communications, charging, emergency coordination, refrigeration, and facilities used for shelter. **Backup power** is useful only when it is sized, connected, maintained, fueled or charged, and regularly tested for the actual load it must serve.

For community planning, the chain is **power supplier** → **pump or facility** → **backup and fuel/storage** → **operator** → **notification** → **restoration**. A weak connection can interrupt service, but a chain is a way of organizing questions—not evidence of a specific weak link. A full answer must cover duration, staffing, and handoffs, not just the existence of a generator.

What is established by the public record

- 1. **Shutoffs are a documented regional risk.** Shasta County explains the Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) process and identifies PG&E as serving most of the county outside Redding. This does not by itself identify every individual meter or Tribal facility. [P3]
- 2. **A 2026 shutoff affected multiple counties.** PG&E reported de-energizing **4,583 customers across 15 counties** during its May 17–18, 2026 event; its report counted **two tribes affected** , without establishing that Pit River was one of them. This is a regional example, **not a recorded Pit River outage** . [P4]
- 3. **Modoc County has separate electricity and notification arrangements.** The county's 2024 Utilities Disruption Annex describes electric-service providers, emergency alerts, and disruption planning. Service territory at an individual Pit River site needs confirmation with the actual provider. [P5]
- 4. **The Tribe has an Office of Emergency Services.** The Tribe's public OES page describes emergency coordination and lists preparedness resources and a contact route. It does not establish that every member receives alerts or that an emergency facility has particular backup capacity. [P6]
- 5. **The Tribe has initiated energy-resilience planning.** An August 2024 Tribal request for proposals sought a feasibility study of solar panels, battery storage and island-mode operation at XL Ranch and Burney trust lands; a 2025 Tribal energy survey gathered members' priorities. An RFP or survey is not proof that the study was completed, a project awarded, or a working microgrid installed. [P7; P8]
- 6. **The public record discusses emergency facilities and proposals.** A 2025 Tribal newsletter described the Emergency Operations Center project; the August 2026 newsletter invited the community to a September 1 ribbon cutting at XL. That same 2026 newsletter called greenhouse-resilience and community-resilience-center efforts **proposals not yet funded or confirmed** . A ceremony invitation is not proof of continuing operations, and neither proposal is a grant award. [P9; P10]

Power, place, and dependency

Use this table to find the correct question and the right authority. It does **not** map individual Tribal meters or assert that a particular backup system exists.

System or service	Potential dependency	Needed evidence	Responsible route
XL and Montgomery Creek drinking water	Pumping, treatment, controls, telemetry and replenishment may require electricity.	Site-specific critical load list, tested backup and run-time assumptions.	Water Department and OES.
Emergency operations facility	Communications, lighting, dispatch coordination, climate control and information systems.	Whether the center is operating; primary/backup power plan; exercises and staffing.	OES / Tribal administration.
Public alerts	Cell service, landlines, internet, power to devices, and contact lists.	Current official alert services; sign-up route; offline alternatives.	OES; relevant county alert providers.
Shelters / resilience-center concept	Heating/cooling, water, sanitation, charging, staffing, transport and accessibility.	Facility operating plan; funding award; public availability conditions.	Project owner / administration / OES.
Utility restoration	Grid location and supplier-specific decisions.	Who serves the site; outage contacts; estimated restoration process.	Actual utility provider.

What remains unknown

Open question	What would resolve it	Who to ask
Which electric utility supplies each community system and emergency facility?	Utility account/service territory confirmation by site.	Water Department / facilities; utilities.
Can each pumping system continue safely without grid power?	Operating plan, storage/backup specification and completed test record.	Water Department.
How long will essential facilities operate during a prolonged shutoff?	A dated load-and-run-time plan, fuel/charging arrangements and staff coverage.	OES / facility operators.
Which alerts reach a member with no cell coverage, power or internet?	Current notification channels and an offline backup plan.	OES / counties / Tribal communications.
What is the actual status of the Emergency Operations Center?	Completion/opening record, authorized operations plan and responsible office.	OES / administration.
Were the resilience-center or greenhouse proposals funded?	A funding decision or award, project scope and recipient confirmation.	Tribal administration / grant program.

The public timeline, without assuming outcomes

Date	Recorded step	What it does not tell us
2020; posted 2021	Strategic Plan draft lists PSPS among threats. [P2]	Which response improvements were later implemented.
August 2024–2025	The Tribe issued an energy-feasibility RFP for solar/battery systems and published an Energy Plan survey. [P7; P8]	Whether the work was contracted, completed, funded for construction or installed.
May 17–18, 2026	PG&E carried out a PSPS affecting 4,583 customers in 15 counties. [P4]	That a Pit River facility lost power.
2025–2026	The Tribe reported emergency-facility project milestones and invited members to a September 1 ribbon cutting; the August newsletter labeled two resilience projects unfunded proposals. [P9; P10]	That those facilities are operating or funded today.
October 16, 2026	This independent edition separates verified regional records from unverified site-level readiness.	No agency response to the question card is implied.

Who is responsible

The relevant power company maintains its grid and communicates outages for the customers it actually serves. **The Water Department** can establish pump and water-service continuity. **OES** can explain emergency coordination and alert routes. **Tribal Council/administration** can speak to adopted plans, construction decisions, and operating allocations. **State regulators** govern some utilities under state law, but their powers vary by utility type. Do not infer the regulation or notification obligations of all providers from PG&E alone.

Questions members can use

- 1. Which utility serves each Tribal water system and emergency facility, and who receives that utility's outage notices?
- 2. What critical water equipment can run during a shutoff, and what tested backup duration is planned?
- 3. Who checks generators/batteries, who provides fuel or charging, and how are failures reported?
- 4. What current alert system and no-phone/no-internet alternatives does OES recommend to members?
- 5. Is the Emergency Operations Center operating? What services does it provide to members during an outage?
- 6. Which proposed resilience investments received awards, and who will pay for their operation and upkeep?

Ask the responsible office to identify **the decision-maker, current status, dated evidence, next action and responsible contact** . Do not request protected facility schematics, passwords, privately identifying contact lists, or detailed vulnerability information. A public summary of procedures is enough to answer the civic question.

What can change this briefing

A dated Water Department response about pump backup, OES publication of an operating/alert plan, a confirmed project award, or a utility-rule change would require a new version. The original research plan proposed sequencing this part after the October 17 membership meeting. **This public edition is limited to the documented questions; it neither reports nor presumes any meeting answer.**

Sources and evidence limits

The sources below mix **local primary pages, current regulatory/event documents, and historical announcements** . An electricity supplier's regional footprint cannot prove a specific site's service. A state/federal energy grant document is evidence of planning, not completed generation. The Tribe's August 2026 newsletter was rechecked against its official newsletter index and distinguishes proposed work from funded construction. Its ceremony invitation is not independent evidence that a facility opened or operates today.

Source	Supports	Limitation
[P1] Pit River Tribe — Water Department	Named public drinking-water systems and operational role.	No backup-power inventory or run-time figures.
[P2] Pit River Tribe — Strategic Plan 2020 (draft)	Historical risk recognition.	Not a current adopted emergency operations plan.
[P3] Shasta County — Public Safety Power Shutoff	Broad PG&E service region and shutoff basics.	Does not establish any specific service meter.
[P4] PG&E — May 17–18, 2026 PSPS post-event report (PDF)	Event total, affected counties and tribes.	The report does not identify Pit River as affected.
[P5] Modoc County — Utilities Disruption Annex (2024 PDF)	Modoc emergency and provider context.	Requires validation for current site-specific territory.
[P6] Pit River Tribe — Office of Emergency Services	Office mission, public contact and preparedness information.	Does not certify comprehensive alert reach.

Source	Supports	Limitation
[P7] Pit River Tribe — Energy Plan Survey Results (2025, PDF)	Members’ stated energy priorities and out-age concerns among survey respondents.	Responses are not a representative census or an adopted or installed project.
[P8] Pit River Tribe — Energy Feasibility Study RFP (August 2024 PDF)	Proposed technical/economic study of PV, battery storage and critical-facility backup at XL Ranch and Burney trust lands.	A request for proposals does not prove a vendor award, completed study or installed system.
[P9] Pit River Tribe — Q3 2025 newsletter (PDF)	Emergency Operations Center project award/ bid and target timeline.	2025 construction announcement does not demonstrate current operations.
[P10] Pit River Tribe — Q3 August 2026 newsletter (PDF)	September 1 EOC ribbon-cutting invitation; greenhouse solar/water concept and \$10m community resilience-center concept explicitly not funded or confirmed.	No verified ribbon-cutting outcome, current operating status, or later grant decision.

Corrections and further sources: [Sources & Corrections](#) or [email the editor](#). Please send an inspectable public source rather than protected emergency plans.