Public Comment Toolkit

for the
Colorado Public Utilities Commission
Rulemaking Session Regarding

PUBLIC SAFETY
POWER SHUTOFFS (PSPS)
& WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLANS (WMP)

November 2026

GOLDEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

WHY A TOOLKIT?

This toolkit is designed to help local businesses, the City of Golden, community organizations, and residents understand the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) rulemaking on wildfire mitigation and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)— and participate in public comment with a clear, consistent message.

Three goals

- Understand the rulemaking process without needing to be a utility-regulation expert.
- Help community members make their own comments while reinforcing a shared set of priorities.
- Facilitate the logistics of public comment to make it easier for anyone to participate.

Who does what?

- PUC: sets and enforces regulatory requirements.
- Utilities: develop plans and carry out shutoffs, communication, mitigation, and restoration.
- City and emergency responders: coordinate public safety, emergency information, and community response.
- Businesses, residents, and organizations: describe real-world impacts and recommend improvements.

GOLDEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: OUR SHARED MESSAGE

We support wildfire prevention and public safety. We ask the PUC to establish clear, measurable requirements that reduce the need for power shutoffs, improve communication and coordination when shutoffs are necessary, restore service safely and efficiently, and ensure that lessons from affected communities inform future decisions.

1. THE RULEMAKING OVERVIEW

What is the PUC deciding?

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission regulates investor-owned electric utilities, including Xcel Energy and Black Hills Energy. In this particular rulemaking, the Commission is considering statewide requirements for wildfire mitigation planning and the use of Public Safety Power Shutoffs.

What is a PSPS?

A Public Safety Power Shutoff is a deliberate, preventive power shutoff intended to reduce the risk that electrical equipment could start a wildfire during dangerous conditions. It is different from an ordinary outage caused by equipment failure.

The challenge is balancing wildfire safety with the real consequences of losing electricity. The Golden Chamber of Commerce is not asking utilities to ignore dangerous conditions. We are asking for strong prevention, clear information, coordination, safe restoration, and accountability when shutoffs are necessary.

What is a rulemaking?

A rulemaking is the process for establishing requirements utilities must follow. The PUC proposes rules, receives comments from affected people and organizations, considers the record, and ultimately adopts final rules.

Two main areas in the upcoming PUC Rulemaking Session:

- **WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLANS (WMPs):** What utilities should do before an emergency: assess wildfire risks, prioritize preventive investments, inspect and improve equipment, use monitoring and other risk-reduction tools, and measure progress.
- **PSPS PLANS AND PROCEDURES:** What utilities should do when a shutoff is being considered, during the event, and after it ends: decide when a shutoff is justified, notify affected people, coordinate with local partners, communicate restoration information, safely restore service, and review what happened.

2. WHY GOLDEN'S EXPERIENCE MATTERS

The Golden Chamber of Commerce surveyed businesses after the December 2025 multi-day PSPS event and convened a January 21, 2026, roundtable with local businesses and representatives from Xcel Energy, the Public Utility Commission, the City of Golden, and other partners.

- **99 unique businesses represented in 108 survey submissions**
- **$1,749,305.50 in estimated losses reported; approximately $17,670 per unique business on average**
- **89% of the businesses surveyed were without power for more than 24 hours**
- **85% of the businesses surveyed were forced to close**

These figures are self-reported estimates, not audited losses. Duplicate submissions and differing estimates within some organizations were reconciled by averaging. The survey did not use a standardized percentage-of-revenue measure.

What businesses told us:

- Unclear or conflicting information made it difficult to know which locations would lose power and when it would be restored.
- Businesses struggled to plan staffing, payroll, customer communication, supply chains, appointments, and reopening.
- Closures, lost sales, spoiled products, and other operating disruptions created financial impacts not only on businesses, but on employees and customers.
- Incorrect restoration estimates and changing information caused difficulties in making sound business decisions.
- Businesses want long-term infrastructure improvements, better coordination, clearer accountability, and consideration of appropriate support or relief.

The takeaway

The issue is not simply that the outage caused harm. It is that better planning and more accurate information during the event could reduce harmful impacts the next time a PSPS is necessary.

3. SHARED PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The proposed rules already address some of these topics. Comments are most useful when they identify where requirements should be clearer, more measurable, or more effective in practice.

A. Reliable, timely, actionable communication

People need to know whether their specific location is affected, what is happening, when the next update will arrive, and what is known about restoration. (The proposed rulemaking supports this in Rule 3641, Section D.)

B. Investments that reduce the need for shutoffs

PSPS should not become a substitute for long-term risk reduction. Ask utilities to demonstrate measurable progress in reducing wildfire risk and limiting the scale, frequency, and duration of outages through appropriate infrastructure upgrades, inspections, monitoring, and other effective mitigation. (The WMP rulemaking addresses this)

C. Safe, efficient, transparent and timely restoration

When conditions allow power to return, people need realistic estimates and clear explanations of delays. Inaccurate restoration information results in bad business decisions with negative overall impact. Ask for transparent restoration procedures, timely updates, public reporting of actual restoration performance, and reviews of ways to restore service safely and efficiently. (Rule 3642, Section C needs better enforcement.)

D. Accountability and recognition of economic impacts

Post-event reviews should document impacts on businesses and communities, including closures, lost inventory, interrupted operations, and staffing costs. We request that economic impact be added to the post-event reporting, scale, and scope (Rule 3643). In addition, ask the PUC to require utilities to learn from community feedback, publish meaningful performance measures, and evaluate appropriate assistance and relief mechanisms within the Commission's authority.

4. A SIMPLE TEMPLATE FOR BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

A specific firsthand example can make a public comment especially useful. You do not need to address every topic. Choose one or two priorities and explain what happened, why it mattered, and what change would help.

> My name is [name], and I represent [business or organization] in [community] concerning Proceeding No. 26R-0355E;
>
> During the December 2025 power shutoff, we experienced [specific impact]. The most difficult challenge was [unclear information / outage duration / staffing / lost revenue / another issue].
>
> If we had received [specific information or support] sooner or more reliably, we would have been better able to [explain what would have changed].
>
> I ask the PUC to strengthen its rules by requiring [one or two specific improvements].
>
> I recognize the importance of wildfire prevention and public safety. I want the Commission's rules to protect our community while reducing avoidable disruption and helping businesses and residents prepare, respond, and recover.

6. HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC COMMENT

Before you comment

- Read the official PUC notice and confirm the current deadline, hearing date, registration process, and filing instructions.
- There is an online form to submit public comments, but an easier way is to simply email dora_puc_comments@state.co.us.
- Identify the proceeding number in your comment. The rulemaking is identified by the Chamber as Proceeding No. 26R-0355E; verify this against the current official notice before filing.
- Choose one or two priorities and include a concrete example or practical recommendation.
- Submit written comments as well as oral testimony if possible. Written comments can explain specific requests; oral testimony brings community experience directly to decision-makers.

Dates noted by the Chamber

November 2, 2026 — Initial written comments requested. Written comments are accepted until the hearing date, but sooner is better. The easiest way to submit is to email dora_puc_comments@state.co.us.

November 23, 2026 — First public comment hearing starting at 9am. Register in advance.

Dates and procedures can change. Confirm them in the official PUC notice and docket before relying on this toolkit.

Useful links

PUC wildfire mitigation and PSPS rulemaking
https://puc.colorado.gov/energy-wildfire-mitigation-psps-rulemaking-proceedings

Golden Chamber advocacy page and source materials
https://goldenchamber.org/advocacy/

Golden Chamber PSPS business impact survey executive summary
https://goldenchamber.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/PSPS-Business-Impact-Survey-Executive-Summary-1.21.26.pdf

PUC rulemaking process overview
https://puc.colorado.gov/pucrulemaking

As a final reminder:

Use the same shared priorities, but speak in your own voice. The goal is not identical testimony— it is a clear, consistent community message supported by different firsthand experiences. Together, we can make a difference for the Greater Golden community and the state of Colorado.

Thank you for your participation in helping the community we all want to protect together!