

Southern California Joint Pole Committee

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July 16, 2025

A meeting of the **ad hoc Authorized Cost Elements Committee** took place on the above date, at 11:25 a.m. via teleconference. Those in attendance were:

Mr. Nick Van Stryk	City of Vernon (Petrelli Electric)
Ms. Silvana Ray	Southern California Edison
Ms. April DeBarge	Southern California Edison
Mr. Kristoffer Scheetz	Southern California Edison
Ms. Carla Stephen	Southern California Edison
Ms. Shelby Mulvehill	Southern California Edison
Ms. Marisol Bailey	Southern California Edison
Mr. Micheal Pearson	Southern California Edison
Mr. Samuel Picazo	Southern California Edison
Ms. Aarize Dizon	Crown Castle NG West Inc.
Ms. Jacqueline Costa	Crown Castle NG West Inc.
Mr. Jeremy Effinger	Crown Castle NG West Inc.
Mr. John Bacon	City of Los Angeles
Mr. Lex Treepaisan	Frontier Communications
Mr. Todd Dailey	AT&T California
Ms. Kay Black	AT&T California
Mr. Aaron Cochran	AT&T California
Mr. Alvin Robielos	AT&T California
Ms. Joy Young	AT&T California
Mr. Alex Parra	City of Riverside
Ms. Maria Ortiz	MCI Metro ATS/MCI Telecommunications/XO Communications
Mr. Michael Truong	City of Burbank
Ms. Yesenia Delgado	Time-Warner Cable
Mr. Ben Coffey	City of Banning
Ms. Alicia Smith	Sprint Nextel/Sprint Communications
Ms. Linda McLean	Extenet Systems
Ms. Heidi Seropian	Extenet Systems
Ms. Angela Pranata	Committee Staff
Ms. Kathleen Allen	Committee Staff

Mr. Van Stryk called the meeting to order at **11:25 a.m.**

Agenda Item 1 – Review of prior month’s minutes

Mr. Van Stryk opened the meeting by asking if there were any questions or concerns regarding the previous month’s meeting minutes. No members commented or expressed any concerns.

Agenda Item 2 – Item 1800: Approved Maintenance Program Review (K. Black, AT&T California – 2/19/2025)

Mr. Van Stryk noted that the committee had previously reviewed portions of this item in an earlier meeting, specifically regarding authorized cost edits and inspections. He asked whether there was anything further to discuss. Ms. Black responded that if there were no questions, they would proceed with making edits and send the updated version back out.

Mr. Van Stryk expressed a concern regarding the classification of pole marking as an inspection, stating that he did not believe it should be considered as such.

Ms. Black explained that pole markings and tagging activities were part of the maintenance program. Members who had approved the program wanted to be able to submit data via spreadsheet and include it on Form 44. This was the reason these activities were grouped under the maintenance program item. Mr. Van Stryk responded that pole marking itself should not be considered a maintenance item. Ms. Black clarified that the marking occurred during maintenance work, such as when a tag had fallen off.

Mr. Van Stryk stated that if members wanted to pay for such activities, they should seek approval. He shared an example where incorrect pole tagging had occurred, requiring a return visit to retag the correct pole. He explained that pole tagging errors had led to administrative complications, especially when communication members attempted to attach to poles that no longer existed. He emphasized that inspection programs often lacked details about pole tag changes, which created additional administrative burdens. Despite these issues, he reiterated that while tagging might occur during inspections, it should not be classified as an inspection itself.

There were no more comments from members.

Agenda Item 3 – Item 1801: Review of Pole Price Calculations (K. Black, AT&T California - 2/19/2025)

Ms. Black reported that she sent AT&T California's recommendation for a Simplified Definitions of Pole Price Elements to be used in pole price calculations (included in the packet). Ms. Black explained that the proposal included only four elements and aimed to simplify the process by focusing on pole loading and pole set procedures as the mutual benefit components of pole pricing. Ms. Black stated that loaded overhead items previously included were being removed, as they were not considered mutually beneficial. Ms. Black asked for feedback from the members.

Mr. Van Stryk raised a question about Item 1, subsection (c), specifically regarding the *job title for engineering and planning worker*. Ms. Black explained that the proposal included a validation process. Members would be asked to provide the job title and pay range for the personnel performing the work. This would allow for the calculation of a direct hourly labor rate. The representative noted that employees may have a wide pay range, and to maintain consistency, an average rate would be used. For example, if the range was from \$50 to \$150 per hour, the average of \$100 would be applied.

Mr. Van Stryk pointed out that the new definitions omitted the inclusion of benefits. He questioned whether benefits should be retained in the calculation. Ms. Black responded by asking how benefits would fall under mutual benefit, noting that each utility already had its own overhead structure. Mr. Van Stryk responded that the cost should include not only their hourly rate but also the cost for them to be at work.

Mr. Dailey acknowledged Mr. Van Stryk's point and noted that the lack of transparency in how members calculated prices could lead to confusion and that members are completing the pole prices differently. He emphasized the importance of understanding the basis for pricing and suggested that increased visibility could help establish a fair average.

Ms. DeBarge asked whether AT&T California was seeking an average across all companies or if each company was expected to provide its own average based on its employee data. Ms. Black clarified that each utility should present its own average, as originally intended. For example, if a utility had a pay range of \$200 to \$350 per hour, the average of \$300 would be used.

Ms. DeBarge responded that this approach aligned with current practices, where companies submit their own averages. She asked whether AT&T California wanted to see the individual pay rates of employees used to calculate the average. Ms. Black explained that the committee can discuss how they can get the verification, and the intent was not requesting full payroll data but rather the hiring range provided by human resources departments. This would serve as a basis for validation and ensure that the submitted data was accurate and understandable. Ms. Black added that how the committee is going to do the validation is up for discussion.

Mr. Van Stryk added that in larger companies, different individuals might be responsible for site surveys, pole loading, and JPA document preparation. He questioned whether AT&T California wanted to see these roles separated or combined in the calculation. Ms. Black acknowledged that both approaches had merit and suggested that companies could perform internal averaging and provide a single figure, supported by documentation that explained the calculation.

Ms. Ray asked whether examples of the proposed format were available. Ms. Black responded that examples were not yet available but that they would be willing to provide them. AT&T California expressed a willingness to present verification formats if the committee could agree on the process and elements to be included. Mr. Van Stryk requested clarification or examples on how AT&T California wanted that calculation to look like. Ms. Black responded that she and her team will attempt to provide that documentation.

Ms. Black continued to the fourth item, which is the cost of the pole. It could be as simple as a screenshot from the database that shows the pole price. For example, a 50-foot pole costs x amount of money. A member can take a screenshot and put it on a Word document and include it in the pole prices submission.

Ms. Black then presented the *2026 SCJPC Pole Price Matrix Worksheet*, illustrating the format of the simplified process.

Mr. Van Stryk noted that some of the requested data might not be available from certain municipalities, such as the City of Vernon, but that some information was publicly accessible. He also pointed out that the current format lacked the

inclusiveness of benefit and vacation time. He suggested that the term “labor rate” could be defined to include direct pay, benefits, etc.

Ms. Black responded that benefits were intentionally excluded from the proposal and reiterated the need for further dialogue on whether overhead costs (benefits) should be considered part of mutual benefit, given that each company already manages its own overhead.

Mr. Treepaisan explained that Frontier uses what is referred to as a loaded labor rate. This rate is higher than the direct hourly wage paid to employees and includes overhead costs. These loaded rates are built into work orders and represent the actual cost impact of a job for Frontier.

Mr. Van Stryk asked whether AT&T California includes such overhead costs when performing customer work. He inquired whether AT&T California charges only the direct hourly rate or if the rate varies depending on whether contractors are used. Ms. Black responded that they were unsure and would need to verify that information.

Mr. Van Stryk stated that he believed most companies use a form of loaded labor rate, particularly from a contractor’s perspective. He emphasized that even if direct labor is used in calculations, the final cost typically ends up being loaded. Ms. Black acknowledged this point and noted that if loaded labor rates are already embedded in a utility’s database, it would be difficult not to use those figures for verification. Ms. Black commented that if other utilities confirmed similar practices, the committee should consider eliminating direct labor rates and instead adopt loaded labor rates. Ms. Black reiterated that the goal was to start the conversation to simplify the process and focus on mutual benefit, ensuring that all members had confidence in the fairness of the pricing.

Mr. Treepaisan added that their calculation methodology involves multiplying the loaded labor rate by the time spent and the number of personnel involved in completing a task. He offered to share their simplified version with the group. Mr. Dailey commented that such transparency would help explain the significant discrepancies observed in pricing over the years and would promote better understanding.

Mr. Van Stryk noted that contractors might be reluctant to share their rates, as doing so could expose them to competitive disadvantages. He explained that if SCJPC were to publish pole prices that included contractor rates, competitors could use that information to underbid. He shared that a similar situation had occurred in the past, outside the SCJPC, where publicly available data was used to undercut pricing, which caused concern among leadership. The leadership may not want to share their pay ranges.

Ms. Ray commented that Southern California Edison would likely have similar reservations. Ms. Ortiz added that her organization would also be unable to provide such detailed rate information. Ms. Black acknowledged these concerns and concluded that the idea of submitting pay ranges was no longer viable. She proposed retaining the use of average rates, as originally instructed, and suggested exploring alternative methods for verification. Ms. Black suggested one idea, that perhaps members submit their data privately to Ms. Pranata for verification, without public

disclosure. Ms. Black invited other members to reach out with ideas for alternative verification methods.

Ms. Black stated that they would revise the documentation accordingly and asked members to review the four items proposed for inclusion in the mutual benefit portion of the pole price calculation. They requested that any additional items be emailed to the membership for consideration. If no further items were proposed, Ms. Black suggested that limiting the calculation to the four identified elements would simplify the process for all members when determining new pole prices.

Agenda Item 4 – Item 1802: Review of Authorized Cost Calculations

Mr. Van Stryk proposed pausing this item until the committee completed discussions on pole price calculations, noting that the topics were overlapping. Ms. Black agreed and recommended finishing the pole price discussions before addressing authorized costs.

This item has been placed on hold.

Agenda Item 5 – Item 1803: Review of Authorized Tree Trimming Costs for Jointly Owned Space

Mr. Van Stryk reported that he had created some cost estimates but found them impractical. He explained that using linemen for tasks such as cutting in the communication space resulted in high costs, and that such tasks could likely be performed by standard tree trimmers. He noted that the only classification available for such work was linemen, although alternatives such as groundmen could be considered. Mr. Van Stryk asked whether anyone wished to continue discussing this item and noted that there was not a lot of push to create these items.

Mr. Van Stryk suggested that the item be closed for now. He proposed that if the topic became relevant again in the future, a new item number could be created for further discussion. No objections were raised.

This item has been closed.

Agenda Items 6 - Review of Pole Prices (Yearly – Standing Agenda/Placeholder)

The committee will reopen this item in September 2025.

Agenda Item 7 - Review of Authorized Costs (Every two years – Standing Agenda/Placeholder)

The committee will reopen this item in September 2026.

Agenda Item 8 – Miscellaneous / New Item Numbers

Mr. Van Stryk asked if there were any other miscellaneous items. There were no questions or comments.

Agenda Item 9 – Review of Action Items

- Item 1800: Ms. Black to make edits based on feedback from another committee meeting.
- Item 1801: Ms. Black and her team to make additional edits and circle back.
- Item 1802: Placed on hold until further discussions on pole prices are completed.
- Item 1803: Closed until further interest is expressed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for August 20, 2025.

Transcribed by Angela Pranata – Committee Staff

Item 1800 - Maintenance Authorized Cost Items

Edits are red –

12. Pole **Intrusive** Inspections and Treatment

- (a) Reserved for future use
- (b) Partial Dig. – on poles over 15 years..... 261
- (c) Sound and Bore - on poles over 15 years 261
- (d) Full Treatment - on poles over 15 years 261
- (e) Reject - on poles over 15 years261

~~Note: May only be billed once every 5 years (Effective May 2011).~~

- (f) Partial Dig. – on poles with pass results 20 year ago.....xxx
- (g) Sound and Bore - on poles with pass results 20 year ago xxx
- (h) Full Treatment - on poles with pass results 20 year ago xxx
- (i) Reject - on poles with pass results 20 year ago.....xxx

- (~~f~~) Re-inspection of reinforced poles (may only be billed once every 10 years, effective 06/01/2011)417

15. Pole Marking – Maintenance items only (Revised 11/17/2021)

- (a) Re-Tagging....only once per year, unless special agreement..... 161
- (b) Replacing Visibility Strips only once per year, unless special agreement..... 163

Item 1801-

Simplified Definitions of Pole Price Elements

1. Engineering and Planning Time –

- a. The AVERAGE amount of time (in hours and/or quarter-hour increments) directly related to doing a site survey, pole loading calculation and JPA document preparation for set/replacement of a jointly owned pole. (When calculating the amount of time, only include the portion of time that is directly related to design of just the joint pole replacement and not the part of the design which benefits just one owner.) Show in hours /or in 15 min increments.
- b. Engineering and Planning Hourly Direct Labor Rate (Loaded) Range in US dollars. - The hourly rate “range” paid to a field worker (or title) directly related to doing a site survey, pole loading calculation and JPA document preparation for set/replacement of a jointly owned pole. Listed “range” in US dollars to US dollars.
- c. Job title for the Engineering and Planning worker who will do site survey, pole loading and JPA document preparation? List job title.

2. Transport & Handling Time –

- a. The AVERAGE amount of time (in hours and/or quarter-hour increments) directly related to workers loading a pole onto a pole dolly, transporting the pole to the job site and returning to the yard. (Do not include the time to place the pole in the ground or to do any other work on the pole.) Show in hours /or in 15 min increments under each pole height.

3. Digging and Erecting Time-

- a. The AVERAGE amount of man-hours to excavate the pole hole, erect the pole, plumb the pole, backfill and compaction tamp the pole in place. This is the only portion of a new AVERAGE pole placement considered for mutual benefit. There should not be time included for work that is for the sole benefit of any member on record. (Does not include poles that require “additional” work due to terrain, soil type or actual pole location. Those poles would have Authorized Cost Item numbers added to the JPA to cover the additional costs.) Show in hours /or in 15 min increments under each pole height.
- b. Number of workers - The AVERAGE number of workers needed to perform the work involved with digging and erecting an AVERAGE placement of each specific pole height. Show the number of workers for each pole height.
- c. Hourly Direct Labor Rate (Loaded) Range in US dollars. - The hourly rate “range” paid to a field worker (or title) directly involved in digging and erecting the pole. List your Company's salary range in US dollars to US dollars.
- d. What is the job title for the field worker involved in digging and erecting a pole? List job title.

Authorized Cost – Item 1801 – K. Black-AT&T CA

4. Pole Material Cost (F.O.B.) –

- a. When a Utility sets only one pole class per pole height, use the actual cost from Supplier, in US dollars including sales tax and transportation costs from supplier) of a pole delivered to the first destination point (usually a purchaser's construction yard). If multiple pole classes are set for the same pole height, list the data for each class. The SCJPC will then "average" all the costs, for the prices used. Show in US dollars under each pole class and pole size.