

[MUSIC PLAYING]

There's no better solution for the right high fire threat areas than underground.

This is going to make us fire safe. It's going to make us more resilient to any kind of winter storms and to have less shut offs. It's a great example of seeing the things that we pay for come to life.

We're just southeast of Auburn. This is a high fire threat district. This is a series of three different projects. It totals 5.3 miles. You can see over here we're using the rock wheel.

Rock wheels produce about five times the footage per day as our normal standard excavation. It also is a much narrower trench, so the restoration is less expensive.

Using these types of equipment reduces our cost significantly.

The other thing we're able to do on jobs like this, especially in these rural communities, is to give away the dirt. So the dirt that comes out of the trench, we don't have to take it to an off-haul plant. We can give it away to local customers that want the dirt. And so we're able to do that for the vast majority of this job, which saves us money and gives customers what they want.

The faster we can underground these lines and be out of these neighborhoods, the happier our customers are and the more quickly we reduce the wildfire risk. Not only does undergrounding reduce wildfire risk by 98%, it also allows us to have a more reliable, more resilient system.

Reliability-- if you think storms, right? So storms come in. Trees come down. They knock power out, sometimes for multiple days for customers. As we underground those lines, the risk to outages is severely reduced.

This underground work is part of our four-year work plan that we filed with the California Public Utilities Commission. The general rate case is funding this work. And we're doing everything that we can to really drive the cost of undergrounding down. Over the life of the asset, the underground asset, we see a lot of cost savings, not just from storm repairs, but also when it comes to vegetation management. That doesn't have to be done because the lines are underground.

I grew up in a small town, and I remember seeing fires, plumes, over the hills of where I grew up in Mariposa County. And I currently live in Placer County, so I live in fire country. I feel fire country. Getting to be involved with making our community safe and actually changing California for the better is really just a dream come true for me. I love it. I mean it. I feel it.