Electronically FILED by Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles 1/13/2025 9:30 AM Todd Logan (SBN 305912) Brandt Silver-Korn (SBN 323530) Ali Moghaddas (SBN 305654) David W. Slayton, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court, Lauren Blazing (SBN 354287) By D. Gallegos, Deputy Clerk 3 Max Hantel (SBN 351543) **EDELSON PC** 4 150 California Street, 18th Floor San Francisco, CA 94111 5 (415) 212-9300 Attorneys for Plaintiff 6 7 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA 8 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES—NORTHEAST DISTRICT 9 10 Case No. 25NNCV00200 EVANGELINE IGLESIAS. 11 Plaintiff, **COMPLAINT FOR:** 12 (1) NEGLIGENCE; v. 13 (2) INVERSE CONDEMNATION; SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON (3) TRESPASS; 14 COMPANY, a California corporation, and (4) PRIVATE NUISANCE; EDISON INTERNATIONAL, a California (5) PUBLIC NUISANCE; 15 corporation, (6) PREMISES LIABILITY; (7) VIOLATIONS OF PUBLIC 16 Defendants. **UTILITIES CODE § 2106: and** (8) VIOLATIONS OF HEALTH & 17 SAFETY CODE § 13007. 18 DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL 19 20 Plaintiff Evangeline Iglesias brings this Complaint and Demand for Jury Trial against 21 Defendants Southern California Edison Company and Edison International for the harm they caused 22 Plaintiff as a result of the Eaton Fire. Plaintiff alleges as follows upon personal knowledge as to 23 herself and her own acts and experiences, and upon information and belief as to all other matters. 24 INTRODUCTION 1. 25 On January 7, 2025, the Eaton Fire ignited in the Eaton Canyon located in Los 26 Angeles County, California. The fire rapidly spread through Altadena and quickly decimated 27 thousands of acres of land. As the fire continues to burn nearly a week later, it has already become

COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES

one of the most devastating fires in California history. It has killed at least eight people, destroyed thousands of homes, and forced the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of residents.

- 2. There is clear evidence from video footage, photographs, and witness accounts that the fire was caused by electrical equipment operated by Defendants Edison International and Southern California Edison (collectively "SCE").
- 3. SCE had a duty to properly maintain and operate its electrical infrastructure, yet it failed to do so.
- 4. SCE had a duty to ensure that flammable vegetation surrounding its infrastructure was trimmed, to utilize public safety power shutoffs when weather conditions made it unsafe to keep its electrical equipment energized, and to otherwise ensure that its electrical equipment was prepared to handle high-risk weather events. But SCE neglected this duty.
- 5. For days leading up to January 7, 2025, the National Weather Service had issued strong warnings about an upcoming windstorm in the Los Angeles area, and alerted the public to a "FIRE WEATHER WATCH" that covered portions of Los Angeles County, including the Eaton Canyon. This included a specific warning of "rapid fire growth" and a "Dangerous Fire Weather situation." The National Weather Service also made clear that this weather event was expected to peak beginning on January 7, 2025.
- 6. Sure enough, at approximately 10 a.m. on the morning of January 7, 2025, the National Weather Service formally issued a Red Flag Warning, forecasting wind gusts as high as 100 mph, and an extreme risk of fire.
- 7. Despite these repeated and clear warnings, and thought it appears that SCE deenergized certain electrical equipment in and around Eaton Canyon, SCE failed to de-energize all of its electrical equipment in the area that day. Specifically, in the hours preceding the first report of a fire in the Eaton Canyon at approximately 6:15 p.m., data shows that there were *more than 300 faults* on SCE's lines in the vicinity of the fire's origin.

8. Several eyewitness accounts, videos, and photographs from Eaton Canyon show fire emerging from the base of power transmission towers owned and operated to SCE, including a photo taken just six minutes after the reported ignition. *See* Figure 1.



(**Figure 1**, taken at 6:21 p.m. shortly after the Eaton Fire ignited at 6:15 p.m.)

- 9. What's more, after the first reports of the fire in the Eaton Canyon, SCE rushed to release a public statement the very next day—which was picked up by multiple local and national news outlets—that its *distribution* lines to the *west* of Eaton Canyon were de-energized "well before the reported start time of the fire." This statement appears to have been intended to mislead the public about its negligent operation of the equipment in the Eaton Canyon, all while hundreds of homes were burning, and the Altadena community was not only evacuating but also desperately searching for answers.
- 10. SCE's history of causing catastrophic damage in Southern California is well-documented. In just the last decade, SCE's electrical equipment was responsible for the 2017 Thomas Fire and the 2018 Woolsey Fire, both of which destroyed thousands of homes, caused billions of dollars in damage, and displaced thousands of families.
- 11. Like in those previous fires, SCE had choices here. It again chose the path that put Californians at risk—and again, caused untold destruction to Californians' homes and cost lives.

12. As detailed below, Plaintiff is a victim of the Eaton Fire. Plaintiff worked hard in a decades-long career with FedEx to buy and maintain a single family home, which has now—along with a lifetime of possessions—been destroyed in the fire. She now brings this Complaint and Demand for Jury Trial against SCE to seek damages for the harm it caused and hold SCE accountable. Because of SCE's egregious conduct, Plaintiff seeks punitive damages in addition to compensatory damages.

PARTIES

- 13. Plaintiff Evangeline Iglesias is a natural person and resident of the State of California.
- 14. Defendant Southern California Edison Company is a corporation organized and existing in the State of California with its principal place of business located at 2244 Walnut Grove, Avenue, Rosemead, California 91770.
- 15. Defendant Edison International is a corporation organized and existing in the State of California with its principal place of business located at 2244 Walnut Grove, Avenue, Rosemead, California 91770. Edison International is a parent company of Southern California Edison Company.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 16. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure § 395(a) because, at all times relevant, Defendants have resided in, been incorporated in, and conducted significant business in the State of California. The amount in controversy exceeds the jurisdictional minimum of this Court.
- 17. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendants because they are headquartered in this State, and the conduct alleged in this Complaint occurred in, and/or emanated from, this State.
- 18. Venue is proper in this County pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure § 395.5 because Defendants reside in this County, their principal place of business is located in this County, and the conduct at issue occurred in, and/or emanated from, this County.

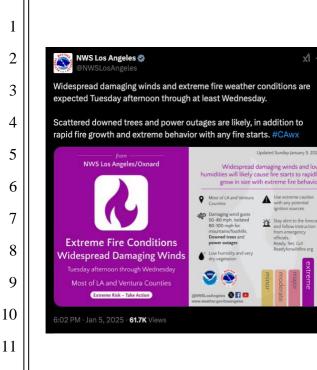
FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- I. Southern California Edison Had a Duty to Safely Design, Operate, and Maintain Its Infrastructure.
- 19. SCE is an electric power company in the western United States that supplies power throughout California. In order to supply electricity to the community, SCE installs, constructs, builds, maintains, and operates overhead power lines, supporting poles and infrastructure, and transformers located at and around the origin points of the Eaton Fire.
- 20. Electrical infrastructure is dangerous and hazardous, and Defendants know these dangers. The transmission and distribution of electricity requires SCE to exercise an increased level of care to protect the public and the communities where their power lines run.
- 21. At all relevant times, SCE had a duty to properly and safely construct, inspect, repair, maintain, manage, and/or operate its power lines and/or other electrical equipment. This duty includes implementing policies and safeguards to protect the public from the risk of fire—particularly during adverse weather conditions—and taking action when such conditions arise, such as through a public safety power shutoff.
 - II. Southern California Edison Knew of Elevated Fire Risks on January 7, 2025.
- 22. Prior to the Eaton Fire, weather conditions in Southern California put the area at a high risk of fire.
- 23. Southern California experienced a dry season in 2024 with minimal precipitation leading up to the Eaton Fire. According to the *New York Times*, "[m]ost locations south of Ventura County have recorded about a quarter-inch of rain or less in the past eight months, while the Los Angeles area has received only sprinklings of rain since April." These weather conditions made Southern California bone dry, leaving vegetation primed to burn.
- 24. Furthermore, the dry Santa Ana winds swept through Los Angeles County in early January. The National Weather Service ("NWS") in Los Angeles had been warning the public about the impeding high wind conditions on its social media pages for several days leading up to January 7, 2025. As early as January 3, 2025, the NWS posted "A Fire Weather Watch is in effect Tuesday-



(Figure 2)

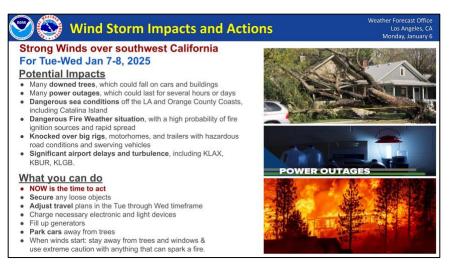
25. On January 5, 2025, the NWS warned the public that "[w]idespread damaging winds and extreme fire weather conditions are expected Tuesday afternoon through at least Wednesday." The NWS also warned of "rapid fire growth." *See Figure 3.* A day later, the NWS again warned of a "A LIFE-THREATENING, DESTRUCTIVE, Widespread Windstorm" threatening Los Angeles County and specifically highlighted Altadena as a location of greatest concern. *See Figure 4.*





 $(\underline{Figure 3}) \qquad (\underline{Figure 4})$

26. On January 6, 2025, the NWS continued its campaign and, once again, warned the public of a "Dangerous Fire Weather situation, with a high probability of fire ignition sources and rapid spread." *See* Figure 5.



(<u>Figure 5</u>)

27. And on January 7, 2025, the NWS issued a Red Flag Warning for Los Angeles County starting January 7, 2025 at 10 a.m. The warning "signifies an increased risk of extreme

winds and fire hazards across the region." At the time, the NWS forecast wind gusts as high as 100 mph.

III. SCE'S Electrical Equipment Ignited Nearby Vegetation.

- 28. SCE knows what weather conditions and other factors contribute to high fire risk and the steps needed to mitigate the risk of, and prevent, fire from igniting. Yet SCE failed to take appropriate actions to prevent the Eaton Fire.
- 29. In light of the increasing number of wildfires in the western United States, SCE implemented new policies in its updated 2023-2025 Wildfire Mitigation Plan intended to "reduce the number of wildfires in California." That wildfire mitigation plan "outlines actions we're taking to lower the risk of wildfires associated with our electrical system in high fire risk areas."
- 30. To mitigate wildfire risks, various utility companies in the West, including SCE, utilize so-called public safety power shutoffs ("PSPS") during high wildfire risk conditions. This strategy involves preemptively shutting off power, or de-energizing, power lines in an at-risk region for a period of time. Because no electricity flows through the de-energized equipment, that equipment cannot spark and ignite a fire—even if high winds or trees knock down power lines or cause power lines to contact each other.
- 31. According to SCE's Wildfire Mitigation Plan ("WMP"), SCE touted the effectiveness of using PSPS stating "PSPS is a necessary mitigation to protect public safety under extreme conditions." SCE's WMP contemplates using wind speed as a threshold for implementing a PSPS and acknowledges that "during severe conditions, there is heightened risk of ignitions at higher windspeeds primarily due to the possibility of infrastructure damage which can cause wind-driven foreign objects or airborne vegetation coming into contact with and damaging SCE's equipment." As such, the WMP recognizes that higher wind thresholds on certain circuits "may not sufficiently mitigate wildfire and public safety risk, and PSPS is necessary as a last resort mitigation measure to prevent ignitions that may lead to significant wildfires."
- 32. Indeed, SCE claims it "utilizes real-time weather station data and, if available, information from SCE field observers on the ground for enhanced situational awareness to forecast

and monitor prevailing environmental conditions (e.g., wind gusts) that can lead to potential damage to equipment or the potential for airborne vegetation or flying debris to contact and damage equipment, to inform de-energization decisions."

- 33. SCE knows that shutting off power during severe weather conditions reduces fire risks and SCE was also aware that the weather conditions leading up to, and on January 7, 2025, warranted a PSPS in and around the affected areas by the Eaton Fire.
- 34. Nevertheless, SCE did not implement a PSPS in the affected areas throughout January 7, 2025, even though historically high winds swept through areas that had suffered a prolonged period of drought.
- 35. The high winds on January 7, 2025, ultimately (and predictably) caused SCE's electrical equipment to spark in the Eaton Canyon, lighting vegetation around it. According to witness accounts, electrical equipment in Eaton Canyon was seen sparking and arcing amid high winds, moments before the fire broke out at 6:15 p.m. Witnesses reported seeing sparks and a small fire at the base of a nearby power tower operated by SCE. A photo obtained by KABC-TV taken at 6:21 p.m.—shortly after the Eaton Fire erupted—demonstrates the origin of the Eaton Fire. *See* Figure 1.
- 36. According to ABC7, various eyewitnesses reported a fire emerging from under power lines in Eaton Canyon:
 - "Brendan Thorn, who lives in a house that backs up to Eaton Canyon, says his power flickered around 6:10 p.m. And a few minutes later, a neighbor called to say there was a fire under the power lines."
 - "Harry Kertenian also witnessed the early stages of the Eaton Fire from Kinneloa Mesa on the other side of the canyon He rushed to his property overlooking Eaton Canyon when his mother told him she saw the power lines sparking."
- 37. An electrical monitoring company that tracks faults along the Los Angeles power grid has reported a dramatic increase in grid faults in areas surrounding the Eaton Fire. Bob

Marshall, the CEO of Whisker Labs, told Fox News Digital that the company recorded a significant spike in faults in the hours leading up to the fire.

- 38. Marshall explained that Whisker Labs operates a network of around 14,000 "ting" sensors throughout Los Angeles, which are designed to detect and identify faults caused by electrical arcs. This extensive sensor network allows Whisker Labs to monitor the electrical grid with remarkable precision and accuracy. Marshall further clarified, "[f]aults are caused by tree limbs touching wires or wires blowing in the wind and touching. That creates a spark in a fault, and we detect all of those things."
- 39. According to Whisker Labs, its sensors recorded an alarming number of faults before the fire ignited. Marshall explained, "[i]n the case of the Eaton Fire near Altadena, there's 317 grid faults that occurred in the hours preceding the ignition."
- 40. Had SCE de-energized its power lines, implemented a PSPS, or taken other necessary steps to prevent a power line ignition before or as high winds whipped through the region, the devastation caused by the Eaton Fire would have been prevented.
 - IV. Plaintiff's Experience in the Fire.
 - 41. Plaintiff owns a single-family home at 3657 Fair Oaks Ave., Altadena, CA 91001.
- 42. At approximately 3:30 a.m. on January 8, 2025, just hours after the Eaton Fire ignited, Plaintiff was forced to evacuate as the fire rapidly approached her home.
- 43. Within hours, Plaintiff's home was completely destroyed by the Eaton Fire. She lost a lifetime of possessions, including cherished and irreplaceable heirlooms from her mother. She is currently displaced.
- 44. Plaintiff's losses and harms include but are not limited to destroyed real property, loss of personal property, including cherished and irreplaceable possessions, out-of-pocket expenses, alternative living expenses, personal injury, and emotional distress.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION Negligence

- 45. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 46. Defendants have a non-transferable, non-delegable duty to apply a level of care commensurate with and proportionate to the danger of designing, engineering, constructing, operating, and maintaining electrical transmission and distribution systems, including vegetation clearance.
- 47. Defendants have a non-transferable, non-delegable duty of vigilant oversight in the maintenance, use, operation, repair, and inspection appropriate to the changing conditions and circumstances of their electrical transmission and distribution systems.
- 48. Defendants have special knowledge and expertise far above that of a layperson that they were required to apply to the design, engineering, construction, use, operation, inspection, repair, and maintenance of electrical lines, infrastructure, equipment, and vegetation in order to assure safety under all the local conditions in their service area, including but not limited to, those conditions identified herein.
 - 49. Defendants negligently breached those duties by, among other things:
 - Failing to conduct reasonably prompt, proper, and frequent inspections of the electrical transmission lines, wires, and associated equipment;
 - Failing to design, construct, monitor, and maintain high voltage transmission and distribution lines in a manner that would avoid igniting and/or spreading fire during foreseeable and expected long, dry seasons;
 - Failing to design, construct, operate, and maintain high voltage transmission and distribution lines and equipment to withstand foreseeable conditions and avoid igniting and/or spreading fires
 - d. Failing to maintain and monitor high voltage transmission and distribution lines in known fire-prone areas to avoid igniting and/or spreading fires;
 - e. Failing to keep equipment in a safe condition at all times to prevent fires;

- f. Failing to inspect vegetation within proximity to energized transmission and distribution lines and maintain at a safe distance to avoid igniting and/or spreading fires;
- g. Failing to de-energize power lines during foreseeable and expected fire-prone conditions;
- h. Failing to de-energize power lines after the fire's ignition;
- Failing to properly investigate, vet, hire, train, and supervise employees and agents responsible for maintenance and inspection of the distribution lines and proximate vegetation;
- j. Failing to implement and follow regulations and reasonably prudent practices to avoid igniting and/or spreading fire; and
- k. Failing to properly investigate, monitor, and maintain vegetation sufficient to mitigate the risk of fire.
- 50. Eaton Fire was a direct, legal, and proximate result of Defendants' negligence. As a direct, proximate, and legal result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff suffered damages as alleged herein.
- 51. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants failed to properly inspect and maintain electrical infrastructure and equipment which they knew, given the then existing and known weather, climate, and fire-risk conditions, posed a risk of harm to Plaintiff, and to their real and/or personal property. Defendants were aware that if the subject electrical infrastructure came in contact with vegetation that a fire would likely result. Defendants also knew that, given the existing and known weather, climate, and fire-risk conditions, said fire was likely to pose a risk of property damage, economic loss, personal injury, and/or death to the general public, including to Plaintiff.
- 52. Over the past decade, Defendants have been subject to fines and penalties as a result of their ongoing failures to abide by safety rules and regulations.
- 53. The property damage and economic losses caused by Eaton Fire is the result of the ongoing custom and practice of Defendants of consciously disregarding the safety of the public and

not following statutes, regulations, standards, and rules regarding their business operations. Despite having caused death and injury to numerous people, extensive property damage, and economic loss, Defendants have continued to act in conscious disregard for the safety of others, and have ratified the unsafe conduct of their employees. Upon information and belief, no employee has been disciplined or discharged as a result of failing and/or refusing to comply with the regulations and/or as a result of the deaths of members of the public.

- 54. Defendants, in order to cut costs, failed to properly inspect and maintain the subject electrical infrastructure with full knowledge that any incident was likely to result in a fire that would burn and/or kill people, damage or destroy property, and/or cause harm to the general public, including Plaintiff.
- 55. Defendants' actions did in fact result in damages to Plaintiff. Defendants failed to make the proper inspections, failed to properly maintain the lines, failed to properly trim vegetation, failed to properly and timely remove vegetation, and failed to safely operate their electrical infrastructure, in order to save money.
 - 56. Defendants' negligence was a substantial factor in causing Plaintiff's damages.
- 57. Defendants' failure to comply with their duties of care proximately caused damage to Plaintiff.
- 58. As a further direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, Plaintiff suffered damages including, but not limited to, property damage, loss of cherished possessions, economic loss, business loss, emotional distress, annoyance, disturbance, inconvenience, mental anguish, loss of quiet enjoyment of their property, and costs related to evacuation and/or relocation.
- 59. Defendants were and are in a special relationship to Plaintiff. As a supplier of electrical power to Plaintiff, Defendants' operation of their electrical equipment was intended to and did directly affect Plaintiff.
- 60. Defendants operated their electrical infrastructure in close geographic proximity to Plaintiff, and with knowledge of the homes and businesses in close proximity to those wires. As a result, Defendants' operation of their wires was plainly intended to affect Plaintiff.

- 61. Due to the geographic proximity between the electrical infrastructure and Plaintiff, and the fact that the Defendants supply energy to Plaintiff, the harm to them from massive wildfires was clearly foreseeable. Specifically, it was foreseeable that massive wildfires would destroy the personal and real property of the Plaintiff, while forcing residents in the region to evacuate. It was also foreseeable that massive wildfires would destroy property owned by Plaintiff, and deter those who would have visited the area, resulting in fewer customers to patronize area businesses and fewer economic opportunities for the Plaintiff.
- 62. The Plaintiff suffered injuries which were clearly and certainly caused by the Eaton Fire, resulting evacuation and/or relocation, and the remedial measures they are forced to take to restore their properties.
- 63. There is moral blame attached to Defendants as a result of the terrible injuries their misconduct caused, including the incalculable damage to the environment.
- 64. Public policy supports finding a duty of care in this circumstance due to Defendants violation of California Civil Code §§ 3479, 3480, California Public Utilities Code § 2106, and California Health & Safety Code § 13007.
- 65. Further, the conduct alleged against Defendants was despicable and subjected Plaintiff to cruel and unjust hardship in a conscious disregard of their rights, constituting oppression, for which Defendants must be punished by punitive and exemplary damages in an amount according to proof. Defendants' conduct evidences a conscious disregard for the safety of others. Defendants' conduct was and is despicable conduct and constitutes malice as defined by California Civil Code § 3294. An officer, director, or managing agent of SCE personally committed, authorized, and/or ratified the despicable and wrongful conduct alleged in this complaint. Plaintiff is entitled to an award of punitive damages sufficient to punish and make an example of these Defendants.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION Inverse Condemnation

66. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.

- 67. On or about January 7, 2025, Plaintiff was the owner of real property and personal property located within Southern California.
- 68. Prior to and on January 7, 2025, Defendants installed, owned, operated, used, controlled, and/or maintained electrical distribution infrastructure in Southern California.
- 69. On or about January 7, 2025, as a direct, necessary, and legal result of Defendants' installation, ownership, operation, use, control, and/or maintenance for a public use of power lines and electrical equipment, Defendants' electrical lines and/or equipment came in contact with vegetation and caused the Eaton Fire, burning property owned or occupied by Plaintiff. The fire damaged and/or destroyed Plaintiff's real and/or personal property.
- 70. The damage to Plaintiff's property was proximately and substantially caused by Defendants' actions in that Defendants' installation, ownership, operation, use, control, and/or maintenance for a public use of power lines and equipment was negligent and caused Eaton Fire.
- 71. Plaintiff has not received adequate compensation for the damage to and/or destruction of their property, thus constituting a taking or damaging of Plaintiff's property by Defendants without just compensation.
- 72. As a direct and legal result of the above-described damages to Plaintiff's property, including loss of use and interference with access, enjoyment and marketability of real property, and damage/destruction of personal property, Plaintiff has been damaged in amounts according to proof at trial.
- 73. Plaintiff has incurred and will continue to incur attorney's, appraisal, and engineering fees and costs because of Defendants' conduct, in amounts that cannot yet be ascertained, but which are recoverable in this action under Code of Civil Procedure § 1036.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION Trespass

- 74. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 75. During the relevant time, Plaintiff was the owner and lawful occupier of real property damaged by Eaton Fire.

- 76. Defendants had a duty to use reasonable care not to enter, intrude on, or invade Plaintiff's real property. Defendants negligently allowed the Eaton Fire to ignite and/or spread out of control, causing injury to Plaintiff. The spread of a negligently caused fire wrongfully occupying the land of another constitutes a trespass.
- 77. Plaintiff did not grant permission for Defendants to cause the Eaton Fire to enter their properties.
- 78. As a direct, proximate, and substantial cause of the trespass, Plaintiff has suffered and will continue to suffer damages, including but not limited to damage to property, discomfort, annoyance, and emotional distress in an amount to be proved at the time of trial.
- 79. As a further direct and proximate result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiff has hired and retained counsel to recover compensation for loss and damage and are entitled to recover all attorney's fees, expert fees, consultant fees, and litigation costs and expenses, as allowed under California Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.9.
- 80. As a further direct and proximate result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiff seeks treble or double damages for wrongful injuries to timber, trees, or underwood on their property, as allowed under California Civil Code § 3346.
- 81. As a further direct and proximate result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiff seeks the reasonable cost of repair or restoration of the property to its original condition and/or loss-of-use damages, as allowed under California Civil Code § 3334.
- 82. Defendants' conduct was willful and wanton, and with a conscious contempt and disdain for the disastrous consequences that Defendants knew could occur as a result of their dangerous conduct. Accordingly, Defendants acted with malice towards Plaintiff, which is an appropriate predicate fact for an award of exemplary/punitive damages in a sum according to proof.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION Private Nuisance

83. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.

- 84. Plaintiff owns and/or occupies property at or near the site of Eaton Fire. At all relevant times herein, Plaintiff had a right to occupy, enjoy, and/or use their property without interference by Defendants.
- 85. Defendants' actions, conduct, omissions, negligence, trespass, and failure to act resulted in a fire hazard and a foreseeable obstruction to the free use of Plaintiff's property, invaded the right of Plaintiff to use their property, and interfered with Plaintiff's enjoyment of their property, causing Plaintiff unreasonable harm and substantial actual damages constituting a nuisance pursuant to California Civil Code § 3479.
- 86. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' conduct, Plaintiff sustained loss and damage, including but not limited to damage to property, discomfort, annoyance, and emotional distress, the amount of which will be proven at trial.
- 87. As a further direct and proximate result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiff seeks the reasonable cost of repair or restoration of the property to its original condition and/or loss-of-use damages, as allowed under California Civil Code § 3334.
- 88. Defendants' conduct was willful and wanton, and with a conscious contempt and disdain for the disastrous consequences that Defendants knew could occur as a result of their dangerous conduct. Accordingly, Defendants acted with malice towards Plaintiff, which is an appropriate predicate fact for an award of exemplary/punitive damages in a sum according to proof.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION Public Nuisance

- 89. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 90. Defendants owed a non-transferable, non-delegable duty to the public, including Plaintiff, to conduct their business, in particular the maintenance and/or operation of power lines, power poles, and/or electrical equipment on power poles, and adjacent vegetation in proximity to their electrical infrastructure in Southern California, in a manner that did not threaten harm or injury to the public welfare.

- 91. Defendants, by acting and/or failing to act, as alleged hereinabove, created a condition that was harmful to the health of the public, including Plaintiff, and created a fire hazard and other potentially dangerous conditions to Plaintiff's property, which interfered with the comfortable occupancy, use, and/or enjoyment of Plaintiff's property. This interference is both substantial and unreasonable.
- 92. Plaintiff did not consent, expressly or impliedly, to the wrongful conduct of Defendants.
- 93. The hazardous condition which was created by and/or permitted to exist by Defendants affected a substantial number of people at the same time within the general public, including Plaintiff, and constituted a public nuisance under California Civil Code §§ 3479 and 3480 and California Public Resources Code § 4171. Further, the ensuing Eaton Fire constituted a public nuisance under California Public Resources Code § 4170.
- 94. The damaging effects of Defendants' creation of a fire hazard and the ensuing Eaton Fire is ongoing and affects the public at large. As a result of the Eaton Fire location, temperature, and/or duration, extensive areas of hydrophobic soils developed within the burned areas. This further caused significant post-fire runoff hazards to occur, including hillside erosion, debris flow hazards, sediment-laden flow hazards, and hillside erosion. As a result, large quantities of ash and sediment will be deposited in perennial and ephemeral watercourses.
- 95. As a direct and legal result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiff suffered harm that is different from the type of harm suffered by the general public. Specifically, Plaintiff has lost the occupancy, possession, use, and/or enjoyment of their land, real, and/or personal property, including, but not limited to: a reasonable and rational fear that the area is still dangerous; a diminution in the fair market value of their property; an impairment of the ability to sell their property; soils that have become hydrophobic; exposure to an array of toxic substances on their land; the presence of "special waste" on their property that requires special management and disposal; and a lingering smell of smoke, and/or soot, ash, and/or dust in the air.

- 96. As a further direct and legal result of the conduct of Defendants, Plaintiff has suffered, and will continue to suffer, discomfort, anxiety, fear, worries, annoyance, and/or stress attendant to the interference with Plaintiff's occupancy, possession, use and/or enjoyment of their property.
- 97. A reasonable, ordinary person would be annoyed or disturbed by the condition created by Defendants, and the resulting Eaton Fire.
- 98. Defendants' conduct is unreasonable and the seriousness of the harm to the public, including Plaintiff, outweighs the social utility of Defendants' conduct. There is little or no social utility associated with causing wildfires to destroy one of the most beautiful and beloved regions of Southern California.
- 99. The individual and/or collective conduct of Defendants set forth above resulting in the Eaton Fire is not an isolated incident but is ongoing and/or a repeated course of conduct, and Defendants' prior conduct and/or failures have resulted in other fires and damage to the public.
- 100. The unreasonable conduct of Defendants is a direct and legal cause of the harm, injury, and/or damage to the public, including Plaintiff.
- 101. Defendants have individually and/or collectively failed to and refused to conduct proper inspections and to properly trim, prune, and/or cut vegetation in order to ensure the safe delivery of electricity to residents and businesses through the operation of power lines in the affected area, and Defendants' individual and/or collective failure to do so exposed every member of the public to a foreseeable danger of personal injury, death, and/or a loss of or destruction real and personal property.
- 102. Defendants' conduct set forth above constitutes a public nuisance within the meaning of Civil Code §§ 3479 and 3480, California Public Resources Code §§ 4104 and 4170, and California Code of Civil Procedure § 731. Under California Civil Code § 3493, Plaintiff has standing to maintain an action for public nuisance because the nuisance is especially injurious to Plaintiff because, as described above, it is injurious and/or offensive to the senses of Plaintiff,

unreasonably interferes with the comfortable enjoyment of their properties, and/or unlawfully obstructs the free use, in the customary manner, of their properties.

103. For these reasons, Plaintiff seeks a permanent injunction ordering that Defendants stop continued violation of California Public Resources Code §§ 4292 and 4293 and CPUC General Order 95. Plaintiff also seeks an order directing Defendants to abate the existing and continuing nuisance described above.

SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION Premises Liability

- 104. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 105. Defendants were the owners of an easement and/or real property in the area of origin of the Eaton Fire, and/or were the owners of the electrical infrastructure upon said easement and/or right of way.
- 106. Defendants acted wantonly, unlawfully, carelessly, recklessly, and/or negligently in failing to properly inspect, manage, maintain, and/or control the vegetation near their electrical infrastructure along the real property and easement, allowing an unsafe condition presenting a foreseeable risk of fire danger to exist in said areas.
- 107. As a direct and legal result of the wrongful acts and/or omissions of Defendants, Plaintiff suffered, and continues to suffer, the injuries and damages as set forth above.
- 108. As a further direct and legal result of the wrongful acts and/or omissions of Defendants, Plaintiff seeks the recovery of punitive and exemplary damages against Defendants as set forth above

SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION Violation of California Public Utilities Code § 2106

- 109. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 110. As Public Utilities, Defendants are legally required to comply with the rules and orders promulgated by the CPUC pursuant to California Public Utilities Code § 702.
- 111. Public Utilities whose failure to perform or inadequate performance of duties required by the California Constitution, a law of the State, or a regulation or order of the Public

Utilities Commission, leads to loss or injury, are liable for that loss or injury, pursuant to California Public Utilities Code § 2106.

- 112. As Public Utilities, Defendants are required to provide and maintain service, equipment, and facilities in a manner adequate to maintain the safety, health, and convenience of their customers and the public, pursuant to California Public Utilities Code § 451.
- 113. Defendants are required to design, engineer, construct, operate, and maintain electrical supply lines and associated equipment in a manner consonant with their use, taking into consideration local conditions and other circumstances, so as to provide safe and adequate electric service, pursuant to CPUC General Order 95, and CPUC General Order 165.
- 114. Defendants are required to maintain vegetation in compliance with California Public Resources Code §§ 4293, 4294, 4435 and California Health & Safety Code § 13001.
- 115. Through their conduct alleged herein, Defendants violated California Public Utilities Code §§ 702, 451 and/or CPUC General Order 95, thereby making them liable for losses, damages, and injuries sustained by Plaintiff pursuant to California Public Utilities Code § 2106.

EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION Violation of Health & Safety Code § 13007

- 116. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 117. By engaging in the acts and omissions alleged in this Complaint, Defendants willfully, negligently, and in violation of law, allowed fire to ignite on or spread to the property of another in violation of California Health & Safety Code § 13007.
- 118. As a legal result of Defendants' violation of California Health & Safety Code § 13007, Plaintiff suffered recoverable damages to property under California Health & Safety Code §§ 13008 and 13009.1.
- 119. As a further legal result of the violation of California Health & Safety Code § 13007 by Defendants, Plaintiff is entitled to reasonable attorney's fees under California Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.9 for the prosecution of this cause of action.

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury for all issues so triable.

COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES

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Respectfully submitted, **EVANGELINE IGLESIAS,** Dated: January 13, 2025 By: <u>/s/</u> One of Plaintiff's Attorneys Todd Logan (SBN 305912) Brandt Silver-Korn (SBN 323530) Ali Moghaddas (SBN 305654) Lauren Blazing (SBN 354287) Max Hantel (SBN 351543) **EDELSON PC** 150 California Street, 18th Floor San Francisco, CA 94111 (415) 212-9300 Attorneys for Plaintiff