

# California copes with energy crisis

By Jennifer Coleman  
The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The Assembly took several steps Thursday to cope with California's energy crisis, passing bills that would regulate power plant outages and expand utility programs that cut rates for big power users who turn off electricity when needed.

A measure by Assemblywoman Carole Migden would give the overseer of the state power grid authority to coordinate plant outages to prevent too many from going offline for maintenance at any one time.

If a power plant seemed to have too many outages or was shut down for a suspicious length of time, the grid keeper, the Independent System Operator, could investigate and the state Electricity Oversight Board could order fines.

"We have suspected that in some instances these generators have shut down and this has not been in the public interest," said Migden, D-San Francisco, adding that she was not accusing anyone of wrongdoing. "What we're trying to do is create an audit and accountability system."

The bill largely puts into state law an executive order issued last month by Gov. Gray Davis and goes further by giving the Electricity Oversight Board the power to issue fines. The fines would be based on the cost of power the ISO had to buy as a result of a plant's shutdown.

Senate leader John Burton on Wednesday announced a Senate committee will investigate whether electricity wholesalers illegally withheld power to drive up prices.

He cited plant outages for scheduled and unscheduled maintenance that have contributed to the state's strapped power supply and forced the ISO to scramble for power at premium prices to fill gaps in the grid.

Duke, Dynege, Mirant and Reliant will be among major providers included in the Senate inquiry, said Committee Chairman Joe Dunn.

Jan Smutny-Jones, executive director of the Independent Energy Producers industry group, said wholesalers will cooperate, but warned that if it becomes a "witch hunt" it could discourage them from building plants in California.

A similar Assembly panel has been formed to look into natural gas prices. The probes could lead to action by the state attorney general.

The Federal Regulatory Energy

Commission on Wednesday ordered Williams Energy Marketing & Trading and AES Southland to show why they should not be forced to refund \$10.8 million to California utilities for taking generating units in Long Beach and Huntington Beach offline last April and May.

That follows a FERC order last week directing wholesalers to give back \$69 million in overcharges for California electricity. FERC, a strong supporter of deregulation, has given the companies until March 23 to appeal that decision.

The Assembly approved Migden's plant outage bill 57-5 and sent it to the Senate.

The Assembly also sent the Senate two measures on investor-owned utilities' interruptible-service programs, which give non-residential utility customers discounted rates if they agree to shut down during periods of tight power supplies. Both votes were 67-0.

The programs are considered key tools for avoiding rolling blackouts this summer, when air conditioning and other power use is expected to further strap the state's electricity supply.

The Assembly approved a bill by Assemblyman Rod Wright, D-Los Angeles, that would extend the programs until the end of 2002 and require investor-owned utilities to offer customers more ways to participate.

It also passed a measure by Assemblywoman Lynn Daucher, R-Brea, that would let those in such programs for at least a year that have been barred by the state Public Utilities Commission from getting out of them opt out without penalty.

Southern California Edison and Pacific Gas and Electric Co. customers found themselves shut down frequently in January. Several schools and businesses asked to be let out of the programs, saying they couldn't function due to the frequent outages.

The PUC on Thursday was expected to discuss a new plan for interruptible-service programs.

Meanwhile, federal regulators said they will make several changes in oversight to expand the West's power supply.

The state has been struggling with a tight electricity supply since summer due in part to high natural gas prices and power plant outages for scheduled and unplanned maintenance.

California remained free from power alerts Thursday morning, with reserves above 7 percent.

**A C E**  
ACTORS CABARET OF EUGENE  
PRESENTS

*Limited Student Tix!!*  
LTD Station across the street!!

## COWGIRL HEAVEN

Book & Lyrics by Dorothy Velasco  
Music by Karl Mansfield  
Directed by Reva Kaufman

There was a time when cowgirls rode bulls & wild broncs and competed with men in the leading rodeos. This World Premiere Musical is the lively, colorful story of those amazing daredevils!

March 9,10,16,17,23,24,30 & 31  
April 6,7,13 & 14, 2001 at 8:00 PM  
Sunday Brunch Matinees  
2:00 PM March 11 & 18, 2001  
Dinner, Dessert & Beverages Available  
Actors Cabaret, 996 Willamette

---

## LITTLE MURDERS

by Jules Feiffer  
Directed by Michael P. Watkins

March 9,10,16,17,23 & 24, 2001  
"Devastatingly lethal in some of its coldly savage comic assaults." - N.Y. POST

For Tickets & Information  
**Call 683-4368**

music poetry spoken word

Women's open mic

chicks with picks

friday, march 16  
6:00-9:00 p.m.  
ben linder room, EMU

sponsored by the ASUO Women's Center  
Childcare scholarships are available. Please contact the below number 72 hours prior to the event.  
This event is wheelchair accessible. If any other accommodations are needed due to a disability, please contact the below number at least 48 hours prior to the event.

prices starting

# Luck of the Irish at \$320

...Experience It

## NOW LEASING!

### CALL 338.4000

or stop by our Leasing Office at  
90 Commons Drive (Open 7 days a week)

**Furnished 1,2 & 4 Bedroom Apartments**

90 Commons Drive

- Washer/dryer in each apartment
- On bus route to campus
- Electronic alarm systems
- Fully equipped kitchen
- 10 & 12 month leases

- Private bedrooms/ Individual leases
- Computer lab, copier and fax availability
- Heated swimming pool
- Basketball and volleyball courts
- Superior workout facilities
- Starting at \$320
- Roommate matching service.
- 10 & 12 mo. leases

**www.capstone-dev.com**

**UNIVERSITY COMMONS**

APARTMENTS  
Property address: 90 Commons Drive

### Don't Get Trapped In A Small Apartment

- Free Month Rent
- 1 & 2 Bedrooms
- Quiet & Large
- Gas Fireplace

- Air Conditioning
- Laundry Hookups
- Free Cable
- Balcony/Deck

Now Taking Reservation Deposits for Fall!

**McKenna Estates**  
342-5735 near Autzen Stadium  
www.mckennaestates.com

**10,000 Daily Circulation**

Pick up an *Emerald* at **120** campus & community locations.