

Attorneys (including CPM): PG&E has long failed to handle wildfire risk

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The risk of catastrophic wildfires in Pacific Gas and Electric Co.'s service territory existed long before the disasters in Northern California in the past few years, and the company did not do enough to prevent them, lawyers representing fire victims told a federal judge Friday.

Attorneys Frank Pitre and Steven Campora made the claims as they responded to PG&E's defense against the two attorneys' claims that the company's internal failures greatly increased the risk of its equipment igniting wildfires.

PG&E had said to U.S. District Judge William Alsup, who is overseeing the company's probation stemming from the 2010 San Bruno pipeline blast, that the risk of wildfires across the 70,000 square miles it serves had greatly increased over the last several years due to climate change.

But Pitre and Campora told the judge that if PG&E bears responsibility for much of the 2017 and 2018 wildfires, then the inherent risk in its system did not increase – rather, the company “simply amplified the risk that already existed.”

The attorneys used a car metaphor to illustrate their point, noting that all autos have “a fundamental risk of breaking down” that can be worsened due to weather or wear and tear.

“However, the owner can also amplify that risk by failing to change the oil and failing to bring the vehicle in for repairs when dashboard lights go on,” Pitre and Campora said. “PG&E should have been changing the oil and repairing the car.”

Alsup asked for the filing from Pitre and Campora as he continues to weigh imposing his own aggressive fire-prevention requirements on PG&E because of its role in recent disasters. He has already found the company guilty of violating its probation for failing to properly report

Attorneys

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that it was found responsible for a 2017 Butte County fire... *(To read the entire article, please click **HERE**)*