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SAN FRANCISCO — From extreme weather to rising tides, cities and counties across California are facing the emerging threat of damage and disruption from climate change. To assist local governments in meeting this challenge, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E;) is launching the Better Together Resilient Communities grant program.

The shareholder-funded initiative will invest \$1 million over five years – or \$200,000 per year – to support local planning efforts to help better prepare for, withstand, and recover from extreme events and other risks related to climate change, such as sea level rise, flooding, land subsidence, heat waves, drought and wildfires.

Beginning in 2017, PG&E; will award two grants of \$100,000 through a competitive process. A panel of community and sustainability leaders, including members of PG&E;'s Sustainability Advisory Council, will select the winning applications from across Northern and Central California.

"At PG&E;, our focus on sustainability has grown to encompass the need to adapt to the effects of climate change and make our systems more resilient," said Tony Earley, chairman, CEO and president of PG&E; Corporation.

He added: "We're developing robust emergency response plans and procedures, and conducting a multi-year assessment to evaluate the risks from storms and sea level rise, as well as heat waves and land subsidence. But we can't do it alone – energy companies and cities need to band together and prepare, while also engaging at the state and federal level."

Strategies and solutions resulting from the grants will be made publicly available to help all communities, and encourage local and regional partnerships.

"PG&E;'s initiative will help foster much-needed collaboration that can help communities in California and elsewhere identify their needs and next steps to become climate resilient," said Bob Perciasepe, president of the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions.

"Extreme weather and a changing climate are not just felt in places like Antarctica or Alaska. Instead, people across California—in cities big and small—experience it every day. Drought. Floods. Wildfire. Extreme heat. These are real life occurrences and they disrupt real lives—particularly the lives of our most vulnerable citizens. The League of Cities welcomes the launch of the Resilient Communities grant program," said Chris McKenzie, executive director for the League of California Cities.

Grant criteria and eligibility

Grant proposals will be assessed according to the following criteria:

"Dozens of cities and counties in PG&E;'s service area are developing vulnerability assessments and identifying ways to work with stakeholders to address climate risks. These grants will help to

build the necessary partnerships and foster a process that serves the needs of all communities, regardless of influence or income,” said PG&E Sustainability Advisory Council member Rob Fong, former vice mayor and councilmember for Sacramento’s 4th Council District and principal, RKF Consulting.

To be eligible, applicants must be a governmental organization, educational institution or 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. All applicants must have a local government within PG&E’s service area as a partner.

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“Exposure to climate change is an increasing concern across many sectors of the U.S. economy. Combatting the forces behind that change is a global problem, but addressing its potential effects is intensely local. PG&E’s Better Together Resilient Communities grant program will encourage the regional solutions and strategies required for a holistic approach,” said PG&E Sustainability Advisory Council member Heather Zichal, President of Zichal, Inc., a domestic and international energy advisory consultancy, and former climate advisor to President Obama.