

Fires spark underground power line discussions

By David R. Baker, San Francisco Chronicle

Underground power lines don't sway in the wind. Tree branches blown sideways by a gale can't hit them. They don't sit on wooden poles that can fall down.

They would, in other words, seem to be an ideal way to prevent wildfires in a place like California, which has a history of big blazes sparked by overhead power lines tangling with trees. Investigators are now trying to determine whether that combination triggered the wildfires that tore through the Wine Country this month.

Unfortunately, underground power lines are also very expensive.

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