

# Union, lawyers spar over wildfire 'shadow lobbying'

By Taryn Luna, Sacramento Bee

A high-stakes battle over wildfire liability is turning ugly between interests at the California Capitol.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1245, which represents PG&E employees, is working with PG&E on a controversial pitch asking state lawmakers to reduce property damage liability for utility companies in the aftermath of the devastating 2017 fire season. The insurance industry, consumer attorneys and other groups are pushing hard against changes to existing state law.

There's big money for special interests and financial consequences for consumers on all sides. The current system in California could leave PG&E on the hook for as much as \$15 billion for the fires last year. Changes could put more of the responsibility on insurance companies and, as some argue, make it harder for homeowners to recoup losses.

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