



BGAUpdate
FALL 2018

Bridgford Gleason & Artinian



From left to right:
Bridgford, Gleason & Artinian
Partners John Gleason, Richard
Bridgford and Michael Artinian in
their Newport Beach office

We Appreciate Your Referrals

Please contact us if you know
of anyone who was affected
by the Woolsey Fires.



Lawsuit Filed Against Southern California Edison Company for Victims of Woolsey Wildfire

Bridgford, Gleason & Artinian

along with trial law firms

McNicholas & McNicholas, LLP

and Frantz Law Group, APLC have

filed several lawsuits on behalf of

renters and property owners in

Ventura and Los Angeles Counties

against Southern California

Edison Company (Edison) for the

devastating Woolsey Fire that

started on November 8, 2018,

destroying 100,000 acres of land,

including 75,000 homes and displaced an estimated 265,000 people. Filed on

behalf of Wendell Philips, Mary Dee Rickards, as an individual and trustee for the

Trust of Dale O. and Carrie L Rickards, and Spunky's Rescue Ranch, the lawsuit



THIS ISSUE

01 Lawsuit Filed Against
Southern California Edison
Company for Victims of
Woolsey Wildfire

04 Woolsey Wilfire Media
Coverage Links

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Lawsuit Filed Against Southern California Edison Company for Victims of Woolsey Wildfire *CONTINUED..*

alleges that Edison negligently operated, repaired and maintained electrical equipment, as well as failed to adhere to electrical and fire safety practices, which resulted in the start of the Woolsey Fire.

Ongoing investigations named Edison as a party at fault after the California utility company issued an alert on November 8, 2018 that there was a disturbance on the circuit near the Woolsey Fire origin.



“Edison failed to take reasonable precautions to protect residents from a clearly foreseeable risk, and their conscious disregard for safety caused widespread devastation,” added [Richard Bridgford](#), Partner at Bridgford, Gleason & Artinian.



“Had Southern California Edison Company followed the standard of care in inspecting, maintaining and repairing its overhead lines, properly maintaining its electrical equipment, and trimming away vegetation from its wires as is required by law and industry standards, the catastrophic Woolsey Fire could have been avoided,” said [Patrick McNicholas](#), Partner at McNicholas & McNicholas, LLP.

“Southern California Edison has a duty to ensure that its overhead lines, poles and equipment are kept safe and free from dangers associated with the operation, management and control of high-powered electrical hardware,” said [James Frantz](#), Owner and CEO of Frantz Law Group. “Especially in areas that are categorized as ‘High Fire Hazard Severity Zones,’ such as Ventura and Los Angeles Counties.”



Lawsuit Filed Against Southern California Edison Company for Victims of Woolsey Wildfire *CONTINUED...*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On November 8, 2018, at approximately 2:22 p.m., Southern California Edison Company reported a disturbance on the Big Rock 16 kV circuit at its Chatsworth Substation near the origin of the Woolsey Fire. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) estimates that the Woolsey Fire ignited at approximately 2:24 p.m. The Woolsey Fire has burned nearly 100,000 acres of land, more than 1,500 structures as well as created an estimated \$6.8 billion in insurance losses. The Woolsey Fire affected communities throughout Southern California, including: Agoura Hills, Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Woodland Hills, Malibu, Topanga, Calabasas, West Hills and many more. An estimated 265,000 people were forced to leave their homes resulting in them working to secure essential and basic necessities, such as food, shelter and clothing.



According to the lawsuit, preliminary investigations indicate that the Woolsey Fire's ignition originated with negligently operated, repaired and maintained electrical equipment as well as poor electrical and fire safety practices, including sub-standard repair practices, maintenance practices, vegetation management practices and others. Negligently maintained equipment and sub-standard practices result in numerous fire risks, especially in fire-prone areas such as Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. Without following legal and industry-standard practices, negligently maintained high-voltage wires can become entangled in, or fall on, dry vegetation, resulting in electrical sparks and arcs which lead to catastrophic fires.





Lawsuit Filed Against Southern California Edison Company for Victims of Woolsey Wildfire *CONTINUED...*

According to the lawsuit, had Edison followed the standard of care in inspecting, maintaining and repairing its overhead lines, properly maintaining its electrical equipment, and trimming away vegetation from its wires as is required by law and industry standards, the catastrophic Woolsey Fire could have been avoided. Instead, it is alleged that Edison knowingly and/or negligently fell below those standards and created the perfect storm for disaster when combined with the known presence of dry vegetation which fuels this type of fire.



Current and ongoing investigations, including those by CAL FIRE and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, name Edison as a party at fault for the Woolsey Fire.

Media Coverage

KABC Channel 7 Los Angeles

<https://abc7.com/lawsuit-filed-against-socal-edison-on-behalf-of-woolsey-fire-victims/4754820/>

KNBC Channel 4

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Woolsey-Fire-lawsuits-blame-SoCal-Edison-501166822.html>

Ventura County Star

<https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/2018/11/21/new-lawsuit-claims-energy-utility-responsible-woolsey-fire-southern-california-edison/2083003002>

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