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Early-stage input on EPIC 2026-2030 robotic live-line maintenance for wildfire mitigation

To the California Energy Commission,

We are an early-stage clean-energy startup building drone-deployed robots that inspect and maintain energized high-voltage lines - vegetation clearance, hardware repair, and inspection - without de-energizing the line or placing crews on the wire. We offer the following input on the next EPIC Investment Plan:

Technology gaps. California has funded line inspection and ignition detection well, but far less of the R&D needed to physically act on what's detected. The largest unmet need in High Fire-Threat District zones is execution - performing maintenance and vegetation work on live lines so utilities can reduce both ignition risk and reliance on Public Safety Power Shutoffs.

Funding structures. For early-stage hardware, the most useful programs are milestone-based, non-dilutive grants tied to field validation with a utility partner. The hardest gap to cross is the stretch between a working prototype and a utility's multi-year procurement cycle; bridge funding for energized field pilots is where public dollars have outsized impact.

Barriers. Access to energized testing environments is the single largest barrier we face - live-line robotics cannot be validated on a bench. CEC-funded, utility-partnered testbeds for energized field conditions would meaningfully accelerate technologies that make the grid both safer and more reliable.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Mustafa Kemal Isen

Founder & CEO, Lineer Robotics

Field-test video: https://youtu.be/svzhEecr-jc?si=J8D4qXo7Kw0dtoe_

Book a call: <https://calendar.app.google/zCRwT3pZTRb3xncJ9>

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