

BUTTE FIRE: CHS alum may sue PG&E for causing Butte Fire

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Company said tree on a power line may have sparked blaze

Attorney Steve Campora, a Calaveras High School graduate, says he is considering filing a lawsuit against Pacific Gas and Electric Co. over the Butte Fire.

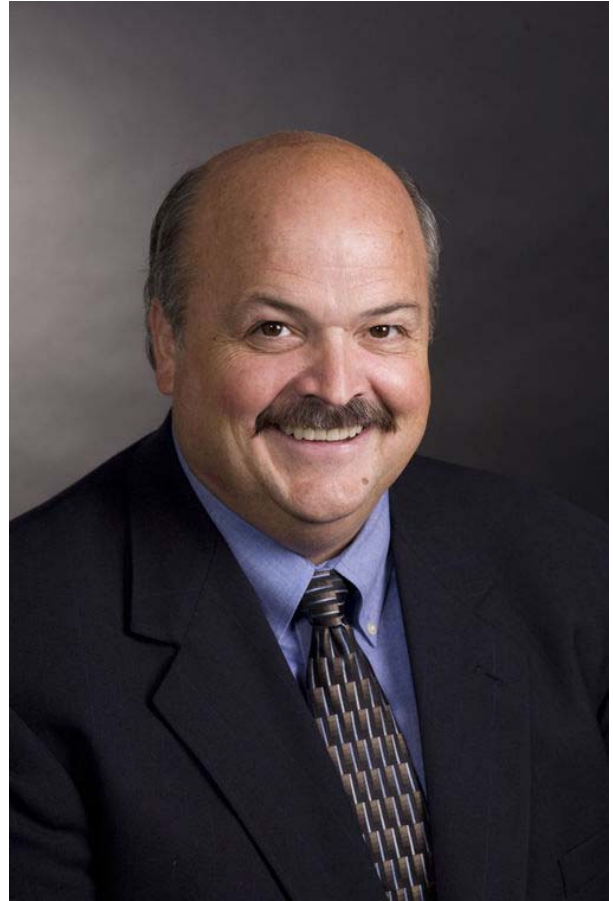
Campora is an attorney with the law offices of Dreyer, Babich, Buccola, Wood and Campora. He said in a telephone interview that he has been getting calls from those displaced by the Butte Fire and that many of them have been implicating Pacific Gas and Electric Co.'s negligence as a possible cause of the fire.

PG&E officials said in a media release Wednesday that the fire may have been sparked when a tree came into contact with one of the company's power lines near Butte Mountain Road east of Jackson. PG&E officials also reportedly said that the area with the tree in question had been inspected numerous times and that they are cooperating with an investigation led by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection into the cause of the fire.

Campora, however, said he wants to know more details about the inspections.

"They have been, in the past, fined and cited for improperly trimming their trees," Campora said. "They have 970 citations for negligence for fires. They have a history of this."

PG&E media representative Lynsey Paulo declined to comment on any possible lawsuit, but said that PG&E's top priority is cooperating with Cal Fire in the investigation and returning power to the 850 customers who remained without electricity on Monday.



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Attorney Steve Campora is considering filing a class-action suit against Pacific Gas and Electric Co. over the cause of the Butte Fire.

Campora is a 1971 graduate of Calaveras High School. He has history going toe-to-toe with PG&E in the past. In 2010 he won a settlement for plaintiffs filing a suit over a PG&E gas transmission line explosion in which eight residents were killed and dozens were injured or lost their homes. The suit settlement required the utility to put in place a fracture control plan designed to prevent future accidents.

Campora said it could take him a month before Campora to put together enough evidence for a class-action lawsuit.

“Given the history of their conduct and their past, I think it’s likely that they did something wrong in this case,” Campora said. “We want to get to the bottom of that.”