

1 **2 - SUMMARY:**

2 On October 21, 2007 at approximately 12:29 PM Air Tanker Pilot Mike VENABLE
3 reported a vegetation fire in the area of State Highway 78 and Santa Ysabel. At
4 approximately 12:35 PM same date units from the California Department of Forestry
5 and Fire Protection were dispatched to a vegetation fire located near Highway 78
6 and Santa Ysabel, San Diego County. The fire was identified as the Witch Fire.
7 Between the Witch Fire and the Guejito Fire (which merged with the Witch Fire)
8 approximately 197,990 acres burned. During the Witch Fire two civilian fatalities
9 occurred and approximately forty fire fighters were injured. Approximately 1,141
10 homes, 509 outbuildings and 239 vehicles were destroyed during the fire.
11 Additionally seventy-seven homes and twenty-five outbuildings were damaged.

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13 During my investigation into the origin and cause of the Witch Fire I eliminated all
14 other causes for the fire, determining the cause to be power lines. During my
15 investigation I observed areas on Tie Line #637 between Pole #416675 and
16 #416676 where it appeared arcing had occurred. While at the origin, I observed the
17 lines coming in contact with each other in the wind. I also interviewed the tanker
18 pilot who reported the Witch Fire and saw bluish arcing coming from the lines.

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20 I also learned Tie Line #637 had faulted four times on the day of October 21, 2007.
21 These faults were determined to have occurred in the area where the fire's origin
22 was located. I believe hot particles were created when the lines faulted and landed
23 in the light grassy fuels in the Specific Origin Area. These fuels ignited, and the fire
24 spread with the wind in a westerly direction.