



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

April 6, 2020

The Honorable Marc Levine
Member, California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 5135
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2178 – SUPPORT
As Introduced February 11, 2020**

Dear Assembly Member Levine:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for your Assembly Bill 2178, concerning the California Emergency Services Act (CESA). RCRC is an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from those member counties.

RCRC member counties have suffered the lion's share of destruction caused by catastrophic wildfires over the past decade and experienced most of the state's public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events. We do not underestimate the risk of wildfire danger and appreciate the role that expertly-informed, tailored PSPS events play in avoiding catastrophic wildfires like the one that devastated the Town of Paradise. We remain deeply concerned that the current notification and execution of PSPS events and subsequent restoration of power unnecessarily endangers lives and property and the operation of critical infrastructure. PSPS events can have debilitating economic consequences in many of our communities, where local governments are often least able to shoulder the additional costs and lost revenues.

AB 2178 clarifies that deenergization events (also known as PSPS events) qualify as events for which a state of emergency or local emergency can be declared under the CESA. RCRC believes that this clarification is helpful to provide greater flexibility to local agencies to respond to PSPS events and to seek financial assistance from the state to recover costs associated with those activities. Local governments often have limited resources and last year's PSPS events imposed significant unexpected costs in terms of labor overtime, setting up resource centers, checking on medically sensitive residents, and procuring backup generators to ensure that critical facilities remain operational throughout the event.

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For these reasons, we support your AB 2178. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jkennedy@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "J" and "K".

JOHN KENNEDY
Legislative Advocate

cc: Members of the Assembly Governmental Organization Committee
Eric Johnson, Chief Consultant, Assembly Governmental Organization
Committee
Julia King, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus