



March 18, 2021

The Honorable Jim Patterson
Member, California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 3132
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 1078 - SUPPORT
As Introduced February 18, 2021**

Dear Assembly Member Patterson:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am pleased to support your Assembly Bill 1078, which exempts post-fire residential rebuilding of homes destroyed in last year's unprecedented fires from the recently-adopted California Energy Commission (CEC) solar energy installation mandates. RCRC is an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county.

RCRC member counties contain much of California's forested lands and have suffered the vast majority of the state's most catastrophic wildfire events in the last decade. Many of these fires also occurred in some of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of the state where economic resources to mitigate the impacts of such disasters and aid residents with recovery are extremely limited.

The CEC recently required all new residential buildings built after January 1, 2020 to be equipped with solar photovoltaic systems. Since post-fire rebuilding is considered "new construction" and must adhere to the current building standards at the time of rebuilding, this new mandate could add significant cost to the price of rebuilding for homeowners who already lack the resources to rebuild their homes.

In 2019, Assembly Bill 178 (Chapter 259, 2019) provided similar relief for those whose homes were damaged or destroyed in the Camp Fire (Butte County) and Tubbs Fire; however, that relief does not apply to homes that were destroyed in the horrendous fires of 2020 that burned 4 million acres and damaged or destroyed thousands of structures. AB 1078 provides much-needed relief for the repair, restoration, or replacement of residential structures damaged or destroyed in 2020 by a disaster in an area for which the Governor declared a state of emergency.

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As these communities begin rebuilding, many insured homeowners are finding themselves underinsured. Rebuilding is even more difficult for uninsured homeowners. This is becoming an even larger problem because many insurers are canceling policies for those who live in high-fire risk areas and homeowners are finding that they cannot afford replacement policies.

While it is admittedly less expensive to install solar panels on a newly-constructed home, even those reduced costs add up and make rebuilding harder and more expensive for those who have already lost everything and may not have the resources necessary to rebuild the life they once had.

For the above reasons, RCRC is proud to support your AB 1078. Please do not hesitate to contact me at jkennedy@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and the last name "Kennedy" clearly legible.

JOHN KENNEDY
Legislative Advocate

cc: Members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Elizabeth MacMillan, Chief Consultant, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Kirstin Kolpitcke, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus