



April 6, 2021

The Honorable Henry Stern
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5080
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 533 – SUPPORT
As Amended March 5, 2021**

Dear Senator Stern:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for your Senate Bill 533 regarding public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events and microgrids. 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 have suffered the lion's share of destruction caused by catastrophic wildfires over the past decade and experienced most of the state's PSPS events. PSPS events can pose challenges for local governments to operate critical facilities and infrastructure and can also have debilitating economic consequences. Many of those communities impacted are least able to shoulder the additional costs and lost revenues. Worse yet, PSPS events can endanger the lives of medically sensitive residents unless appropriately mitigated.

SB 533 makes several changes to mitigate the impacts of PSPS events on those communities and residents at greatest risk. First and most importantly, SB 533 requires utilities to improve their electrical systems and focus their efforts on those areas and assets that have been deenergized the greatest number of times. PSPS events were envisioned as a last-ditch effort to reduce the risk of utility-caused wildfires after all other prevention efforts fail. Furthermore, PSPS events were intended to be necessary as an interim solution while utilities performed the work necessary to reduce wildfire risk and improve system resiliency. Our overarching goal is that utilities will soon no longer need to call PSPS events. SB 533's required system upgrades make great strides toward this goal.

1215 K Street, Suite 1650, Sacramento, CA 95814 | www.rcrcnet.org | 916.447.4806 | Fax: 916.448.3154

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SB 533 also facilitates the deployment of microgrids to provide local energy resilience. RCRC believes that microgrids are an important component of a portfolio approach to reducing the impact of PSPS events, which also includes vegetation management, infrastructure hardening, circuit segmentation, and undergrounding.

Finally, *we suggest a minor amendment* to delete Proposed Public Utilities Code Section 8373(a)(3)(B) that allows utilities to require a nondisclosure agreement (NDA) before providing information to local agencies. We believe that confidentiality can be maintained through a mechanism that does not require an NDA. Local governments have had a frustrating experience with overly restrictive utility-required NDAs in the PSPS context and suggest affording greater flexibility so that local governments and utilities can avoid repeating those experiences.

For these reasons, we support your SB 533. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jkennedy@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,



JOHN KENNEDY
Legislative Advocate

cc: Members of the Senate Energy, Utilities & Communications Committee
Nidia Bautista, Chief Consultant, Senate Energy, Utilities & Communication
Committee



April 27, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 533 – SUPPORT
As Amended April 26, 2021**

Dear Senator Portantino:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 533, authored by Senator Henry Stern, regarding public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events and microgrids. 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 have suffered the lion's share of destruction caused by catastrophic wildfires over the past decade and experienced most of the state's PSPS events. PSPS events can pose challenges for local governments to operate critical facilities and infrastructure and can also have debilitating economic consequences. Many of those communities impacted are least able to shoulder the additional costs and lost revenues. Worse yet, PSPS events can endanger the lives of medically sensitive residents unless appropriately mitigated.

SB 533 makes several changes to mitigate the impacts of PSPS events on those communities and residents at greatest risk. First and most importantly, SB 533 requires utilities to discuss in their Wildfire Mitigation Plans efforts to improve their electrical systems focused on those areas and assets that have been deenergized the greatest number of times. PSPS events were envisioned as a last-ditch effort to reduce the risk of utility-caused wildfires after all other prevention efforts fail. Furthermore, PSPS events were intended to be necessary as an interim solution while utilities performed the work necessary to reduce wildfire risk and improve system resiliency. Our overarching goal is that utilities will soon no longer need to call PSPS events. SB 533's will help achieve this goal by reducing the risk of repeated deenergizations on the same circuit.

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SB 533 also facilitates the deployment of microgrids to provide local energy resilience. RCRC believes that microgrids are an important component of a portfolio approach to reducing the impact of PSPS events, which also includes vegetation management, infrastructure hardening, circuit segmentation, and undergrounding.

Finally, *we suggest a minor amendment* to delete Proposed Public Utilities Code Section 8373(a)(3)(B) that allows utilities to require a nondisclosure agreement (NDA) before providing information to local agencies. We believe that confidentiality can be maintained through a mechanism that does not require an NDA. Local governments have had a frustrating experience with overly restrictive utility-required NDAs in the PSPS context and suggest affording greater flexibility so that local governments and utilities can avoid repeating those experiences.

For the above reasons, RCRC respectfully requests your 'Aye' vote when this measure is heard before your Committee. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jkennedy@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,



JOHN KENNEDY
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Henry Stern, California State Senate
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee



April 30, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 533 – SUPPORT
As Amended April 29, 2021**

Dear Senator Portantino:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 533, authored by Senator Henry Stern, regarding public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events and microgrids. 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 have suffered the lion's share of destruction caused by catastrophic wildfires over the past decade and experienced most of the state's PSPS events. PSPS events can pose challenges for local governments to operate critical facilities and infrastructure and can also have debilitating economic consequences. Many of those communities impacted are least able to shoulder the additional costs and lost revenues. Worse yet, PSPS events can endanger the lives of medically sensitive residents unless appropriately mitigated.

SB 533 makes several changes to mitigate the impacts of PSPS events on those communities and residents at greatest risk. First and most importantly, SB 533 requires utilities to discuss in their Wildfire Mitigation Plans efforts to improve their electrical systems focused on those areas and assets that have been deenergized the greatest number of times. PSPS events were envisioned as a last-ditch effort to reduce the risk of utility-caused wildfires after all other prevention efforts fail. Furthermore, PSPS events were intended to be necessary as an interim solution while utilities performed the work necessary to reduce wildfire risk and improve system resiliency. Our overarching goal is that utilities will soon no longer need to call PSPS events. SB 533's will help achieve this goal by reducing the risk of repeated deenergizations on the same circuit.

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SB 533 also facilitates the deployment of microgrids to provide local energy resilience. RCRC believes that microgrids are an important component of a portfolio approach to reducing the impact of PSPS events, which also includes vegetation management, infrastructure hardening, circuit segmentation, and undergrounding.

For the above reasons, RCRC respectfully requests your 'Aye' vote when this measure is heard before your Committee. 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: The Honorable Henry Stern, California State Senate
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee



June 22, 2021

The Honorable Chris Holden
Chair, Assembly Utilities & Energy Committee
State Capitol, Room 5132
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 533 – SUPPORT
As Amended May 20, 2021**

Dear Assembly Member Holden:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 533, authored by Senator Henry Stern, regarding public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events and microgrids. 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 have suffered the lion's share of destruction caused by catastrophic wildfires over the past decade and experienced most of the state's PSPS events. PSPS events can pose challenges for local governments to operate critical facilities and infrastructure and can also have debilitating economic consequences. Many of those communities impacted are least able to shoulder the additional costs and lost revenues. Worse yet, PSPS events can endanger the lives of medically sensitive residents unless appropriately mitigated.

SB 533 makes several changes to mitigate the impacts of PSPS events on those communities and residents at greatest risk. First and most importantly, SB 533 requires utilities to discuss in their Wildfire Mitigation Plans efforts to improve their electrical systems focused on those areas and assets that have been deenergized the greatest number of times. PSPS events were envisioned as a last-ditch effort to reduce the risk of utility-caused wildfires after all other prevention efforts fail. Furthermore, PSPS events were intended to be necessary as an interim solution while utilities performed the work necessary to reduce wildfire risk and improve system resiliency. Our overarching goal is that utilities will soon no longer need to call PSPS events. SB 533's will help achieve this goal by reducing the risk of repeated deenergizations on the same circuit.

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The Honorable Chris Holden
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SB 533 also facilitates the deployment of microgrids to provide local energy resilience. RCRC believes that microgrids are an important component of a portfolio approach to reducing the impact of PSPS events, which also includes vegetation management, infrastructure hardening, circuit segmentation, and undergrounding.

For the above reasons, RCRC respectfully requests your 'Aye' vote when this measure is heard before your Committee. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jkennedy@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,



JOHN KENNEDY
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Henry Stern, Member of the State Senate
Members of the Assembly Utilities & Energy Committee
Consultant, Assembly Utilities & Energy Committee
Members of the Assembly Judiciary Committee
Consultant, Assembly Judiciary Committee
Gregory Melkonian, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Daryl Thomas, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



June 22, 2021

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 533 – SUPPORT
As Amended July 1, 2021**

Dear Assembly Member Gonzalez:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 533, authored by Senator Henry Stern, regarding public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events. 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 have suffered the lion's share of destruction caused by catastrophic wildfires over the past decade and experienced most of the state's PSPS events. PSPS events can pose challenges for local governments to operate critical facilities and infrastructure and can also have debilitating economic consequences. Many of those communities impacted are least able to shoulder the additional costs and lost revenues. Worse yet, PSPS events can endanger the lives of medically sensitive residents unless appropriately mitigated.

SB 533 requires utilities to discuss in their Wildfire Mitigation Plans efforts to improve their electrical systems focused on those areas and assets that have been deenergized the greatest number of times. PSPS events were envisioned as a last-ditch effort to reduce the risk of utility-caused wildfires after all other prevention efforts fail. Furthermore, PSPS events were intended to be necessary as an interim solution while utilities performed the work necessary to reduce wildfire risk and improve system resiliency. Our overarching goal is that utilities will soon no longer need to call PSPS events. SB 533's will help achieve this goal by reducing the risk of repeated deenergizations on the same circuit.

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For the above reasons, RCRC respectfully requests your 'Aye' vote when this measure is heard before your Committee. 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: The Honorable Henry Stern, Member of the State Senate
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



September 8, 2021

The Honorable Henry Stern
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5080
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 533 – SUPPORT
As Amended September 1, 2021**

Dear Senator Stern:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our continued support for your Senate Bill 533 regarding public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events. 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 have suffered the lion's share of destruction caused by catastrophic wildfires over the past decade and experienced most of the state's PSPS events. PSPS events can pose challenges for local governments to operate critical facilities and infrastructure and can also have debilitating economic consequences. Many of those communities impacted are least able to shoulder the additional costs and lost revenues. Worse yet, PSPS events can endanger the lives of medically sensitive residents unless appropriately mitigated.

SB 533 requires utilities to discuss in their Wildfire Mitigation Plans efforts to improve their electrical systems focused on those areas and assets that have been proactively deenergized the greatest number of times. PSPS events were envisioned as a last-ditch effort to reduce the risk of utility-caused wildfires after all other prevention efforts fail. Furthermore, PSPS events were intended to be necessary as an interim solution while utilities performed the work necessary to reduce wildfire risk and improve system resiliency. Our overarching goal is that utilities will soon no longer need to call PSPS events once infrastructure upgrades are made. SB 533 will help achieve this goal by identifying repeated deenergizations on the same circuit.

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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 Utilities & Energy Committee
Consultant, Assembly Utilities & Energy Committee