



August 27, 2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 178 (Dahle) – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I respectfully request your signature on Assembly Bill 178. AB 178, authored by Senator Brian Dahle, exempts post-fire residential rebuilding from 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 of those member counties.

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.

Post-fire rebuilding can be a very long process, especially when considering the scope of destruction from the Camp Fire (18,804 structures destroyed) and the Tubbs Fire (5,636 structures destroyed). With respect to the Camp Fire, it may take another year to complete debris removal before construction can begin, making those homes subject to rebuilding after the January 1, 2020 deadline to have solar photovoltaic.

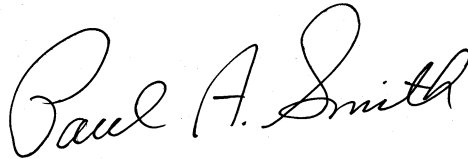
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As these communities begin rebuilding, many insured homeowners are finding themselves underinsured. Rebuilding is even more difficult for uninsured homeowners. This is becoming an even larger problem because many insurers are canceling policies for 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.

Again, RCRC respectfully requests your signature on AB 178.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul A. Smith". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

PAUL A. SMITH  
Vice President Governmental Affairs

cc: The Honorable Brian Dahle, Member of the State Senate  
The Honorable James Gallagher, Member of the State Assembly