



Our mission

Deliver rapid greenhouse gas reductions at scale, starting in California.

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April 2, 2020

Honorable Ben Hueso
Chair, Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee
State Capitol, Room 4035
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: SUPPORT – SB 947

Dear Senator Hueso,

On behalf of The Climate Center, I write in support of Senate Bill 947 as it is in alignment with The Climate Center's efforts to advance localized, clean, safe, and resilient energy systems in California.

The Climate Center is a California nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2001 with a mission to deliver rapid greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions at scale, starting in California. We represent thousands of supporters and program collaborators as well as clean energy businesses throughout California. Our combined participants and/or subscribers among our several programs and newsletters comprise nearly 10,000 individuals.

The Climate Center supports a shift to performance-based compensation, also known as performance-based ratemaking (PBR) for the State's regulated electrical corporations (utilities). If enacted as written, SB 947 will require the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to evaluate financial performance-based incentives and performance-based metric tracking to identify mechanisms that may serve to better align utility operations, expenditures, and investments with public benefit goals, including safety, reliability, emission reductions, cost efficiency, and other state goals the CPUC believes may benefit from PBR.

A compensation model as outlined in SB 947 is far superior and a long overdue reform of the business model that the utilities have enjoyed throughout most of the 20th century. The current obsolete model simply guarantees a rate of return, currently north of 10 per cent, for investments in infrastructure – mostly transmission and distribution system investments – on the part of the utilities. One problem with this is that due to advances in technology enabling clean, localized, resilient energy systems, transmission and distribution infrastructure investments other than hardening for fire resilience are no longer an investment that benefits the public.

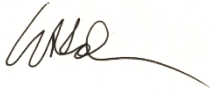
The Climate Center is based out of Sonoma County and we experienced first-hand the devastating impact of both wildfire and public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events in 2017 with the Tubbs fire, and in 2019 with the PSPS event and the Kincadee fire. In Sonoma County, a 16-acre clean power microgrid was able to keep lights on and water pumping for the entire time

the grid was down in both the Tubbs and the 2019 PSPS events. Microgrids, and community microgrids in particular, that allow “islanding” of power when the larger grid is down, are the kinds of decentralized, resilient clean energy systems that the utilities should be rewarded for facilitating.

We look forward to working with you, the members of your committee, and the bill author to enact this legislation as a significant part of the overall effort to ensure clean, safe, reliable, and affordable electricity service for every California community.

When SB 947 comes before you, we urge your vote in support of the bill.

Sincerely,



Ellie Cohen,
Chief Executive Officer,
The Climate Center

cc:

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