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August 20, 2021

The Honorable Bill Dodd
California State Senator, 3rd District
State Capitol, Room 2082
Sacramento CA 95814

RE: SB 52 (Dodd) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Dodd,

On behalf of the City of Cupertino, I write to express our support for SB 52, your measure that would clarify planned power shutoff events as a “deenergizing event” for which local governments can declare a local emergency under the California Emergency Services Act.

The seasonal threat of catastrophic wildfire has become the new normal in California. In response to anticipated destruction caused by wildfires, which can be exacerbated by weather events such as dry climate and high winds, utilities may elect to temporarily turn off power in specific areas to reduce the risk of fire caused by electricity infrastructure. This utility action is referred to as a “public safety power shutoff” (PSPS) and often significantly impacts various activities and populations within affected regions, particularly for medically and financially vulnerable residents. When critical public services are halted by PSPS events, it is often necessary to activate city and county emergency operation centers to support vulnerable residents. However, the activation of such an operation hinges on the declaration of a local emergency under the Emergency Services Act, which precludes planned events from qualifying as an emergency.

SB 52 provides much needed clarification on the activation of a local emergency amid a PSPS, by broadening the definition of a loss of electrical power as an emergency to include *planned* power shutoff events. This will allow counties to seek reimbursement for cost incurred by running costly emergency operation centers and will ensure that our most vulnerable residents are protected in the event of a PSPS, which can extend for days and is becoming all too frequent given the state’s new “fire season” phenomenon.

MAYOR DARCY PAUL
CITY OF CUPERTINO

For these reasons, the City of Cupertino supports SB 52.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darcy Paul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the word "Paul".

Darcy Paul
Mayor
City of Cupertino

cc: Senator Dave Cortese
Assemblymember Evan Low
Assemblymember Marc Berman