



September 14, 2021

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

**RE: Assembly Bill 1124 (Friedman) – REQUEST FOR VETO**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and the Urban Counties of California (UCC), respectfully urge your veto of Assembly Bill 1124, authored by Assembly Member Laura Friedman, related to solar energy system permitting.

The Legislature has enacted significant changes over the years to make installation of residential solar more accessible and less burdensome for California residents. Current law prohibits homeowner associations and other organizations from restricting the installation of solar energy systems and requires local jurisdictions to streamline the permitting process for small residential rooftop solar energy systems. Further, local governments must approve a “solar energy system” through an administrative process, with fees statutorily limited for both residential and commercial projects. AB 1124 will expand the types of projects that are subject to these current provisions, though it is unclear to what degree.

Specifically, AB 1124 expands the definition of “solar energy system” to include facilities not installed on a building or structure on multiple properties, thereby arguably making commercial or utility grade solar projects subject to only a ministerial review process by the local jurisdiction. The environmental and community impacts from a large-scale solar project are significant and should be thoroughly evaluated through a process that provides safeguards for local residents.

Our organizations continue to support efforts to achieve California’s commendable goals relative to climate change. We applaud legislators and their efforts to further these objectives; however, the language in AB 1124 creates ambiguity in both intent and process. Current law recognizes the differences in impact and complexity of rooftop solar

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Assembly Bill 1124  
September 14, 2021  
Page 2

energy systems and those systems not attached to a building by creating the streamlined process for only those systems attached to a structure. This bill's expanded definition of "solar energy system" moves beyond allowing for solar installations on carports or small ground mounts and arguably allows for large scale solar systems without appropriate environmental review.

For these reasons, we respectfully request your veto of AB 1124.

Sincerely,



TRACY RHINE  
Senior Legislative Advocate  
RCRC



KIANA VALENTINE  
Legislative Representative  
UCC



CHRISTOPHER LEE  
Legislative Representative  
CSAC

cc: The Honorable Laura Friedman, Member of the State Assembly