



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES  
OF CALIFORNIA

June 3, 2024

The Honorable Steven Bradford  
Chair, Senate Energy, Utilities, and  
Communications Committee  
1021 O Street, Room 3350  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2787 (Joe Patterson) – SUPPORT  
As Introduced February 15, 2024**

Dear Senator Bradford:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we support Assembly Bill 2787, authored by Assembly Member Joe Patterson, regarding post-wildfire home rebuilding. RCRC is an association of forty rural California counties and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each of those member counties.

RCRC member counties are home to 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 California Energy Commission (CEC) requires 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 will add significant cost to the price of rebuilding for homeowners who already lack the resources to rebuild their homes.

In 2019, Assembly Bill 178 (Chapter 259, 2019) provided similar relief for those whose homes were damaged or destroyed in the Camp Fire (Butte County) and Tubbs Fire; however, that relief expired on January 1, 2023, and did not extend to homes destroyed during an emergency proclaimed by the Governor after January 1, 2020. Even today, some of the homes destroyed by the Camp Fire have still not yet been rebuilt because of funding and construction delays. By re-codifying the now-expired relief, AB 2787 lets those residents who have not yet been able to rebuild enjoy the relief they believed would be available to them.

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AB 2787 also affords similar relief to homes that were destroyed in the brutal 2020 and 2021 fire seasons, thereby providing much-needed relief for the repair, restoration, or replacement of residential structures damaged or destroyed in a disaster in an area for which the Governor declared a state of emergency.

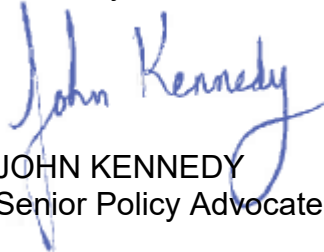
As these communities begin rebuilding, many insured homeowners are finding themselves underinsured. Rebuilding is even more difficult for uninsured homeowners. This is becoming an even larger problem because many insurers are canceling policies for those who live in high-fire risk areas and homeowners 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. Recent changes to the CPUC's solar net metering program will further extend the payback period for these types of investments.

Contrary to some claims, compliance with the CEC solar mandate will do NOTHING to increase energy reliability or resiliency for those who are rebuilding their homes and who live in areas subject to frequent energy outages. As thousands of Californians learned during the state's widespread Public Safety Power Shutoff and events and Fast Trip outages, merely having solar panels on one's home will not keep the lights on when there is a power outage. To actually achieve the resiliency benefits those claim the CEC mandate provides, homeowners will also have to install even more expensive energy storage systems that can add an extra \$10,000-\$20,000 to the cost of rebuilding.

For the above reasons, RCRC supports AB 2787. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [jkennedy@rcrcnet.org](mailto:jkennedy@rcrcnet.org).

Sincerely,



JOHN KENNEDY  
Senior Policy Advocate

cc: The Honorable Joe Patterson, California State Assembly  
The Honorable Jim Patterson, California State Assembly  
Members of the Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications Committee  
Nidia Bautista, Chief Consultant, Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications  
Committee  
Kerry Yoshida, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus