



OFFICERS

President

Chuck Washington
Riverside County

1st Vice President

Bruce Gibson
San Luis Obispo County

2nd Vice President

Jeff Griffiths
Inyo County

Past President

Ed Valenzuela
Siskiyou County



CEO

Graham Knaus

May 4, 2023

The Honorable Chris R. Holden
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 735 (Berman) Workforce development: utility careers
As Introduced February 13, 2023 - SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Holden:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, is pleased to support AB 735, which would create a High Road Utility Careers program at the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) to address the workforce needs of electric, gas, water, wastewater, and telecommunication industries. This bill would create the much-needed pipeline to guide prospective workers to obtain the training and skillsets necessary for employment.

Like many employers, California counties are facing significant workforce challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With California's unemployment rate near record lows, counties have been competing with the public and private sector for a diminishing number of qualified employees. Reports of counties experiencing 20 to 30 percent vacancy rates are common. While there are many factors that impact a reliable workforce, having a long-term, statewide program as envisioned by AB 735 will connect existing resources with individuals interested in careers in the utility sector, thereby ensuring a continued reliable workforce in California.

For these reasons, we are pleased to support AB 735 and respectfully urge your support. If you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at kdean@counties.org.

Sincerely,

Kalyn M. Dean
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Marc Berman, 23rd Assembly District
Members and Staff, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee