

May 28, 2019

The Honorable Chris Holden, Chair
Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy
State Capitol, Room 5132
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 676 (Bradford) – Electric Vehicle Programs – OPPOSE

Dear Assemblymember Holden,

The California Alliance for Community Energy writes to voice our strong opposition to SB 676, a bill that would restrict the ability of Community Choice energy programs to continue in their strong pursuit of electric vehicle (EV) programs and system integration.

The Alliance is a statewide advocacy organization that speaks to the interests of California ratepayers and communities regarding Community Choice energy programs. We work to support and defend Community Choice programs that advance local clean energy resources for the environmental, economic, and social justice benefit of our communities.

SB 676 would impinge on the autonomy and authority of Community Choice programs to act in a realm where the state most needs their action. Within the transition to a cleaner electricity system, the impact of emissions from the transportation sector remains one of the State's most significant climate frontiers.

In 2019, California has 19 operational Community Choice programs in 160 communities statewide, serving 11 million customers. These programs have demonstrated exceptional leadership in meeting the State's aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets, in demonstrating a successful decentralized alternative to the state's faltering private monopoly utilities, and in taking groundbreaking steps to decarbonize the transportation sector.

SB 676 would place this exceptional leadership at risk, in the following ways:

- **Undermines the autonomy of Community Choice programs** -- Contrary to the original Legislative intent expressed in AB 117 and reaffirmed repeatedly since then, SB 676 would supplant the planning autonomy of Community Choice agencies with that of the CPUC. Community Choice programs are governed by boards of elected officials, expressly to reflect the will and unique needs of their constituent jurisdictions, customers, and communities. SB 676 would undermine this autonomy by replacing Community Choice EV integration targets deemed in the best interests of their communities with centrally-set targets that may be suboptimal and/or not cost-effective in that region.
- **Perpetuates an outdated centralized energy model** – Addressing the climate crisis requires a sustainable energy model based on distributed energy resources. It is evident that the future relies on a decentralized model of integrated local renewable energy resources, where local development benefits communities and builds resilience and sustainability. SB 676 moves California in the opposite direction from this localized, flexible model, by doubling-down on centralized planning and cost imposition for what are locally-deployed resources.
- **Reinforces an ineffective regulatory regime** – In continuing its reliance on a centralized model of energy planning, procurement and cost-allocation, SB 676 also perpetuates rather than improves a model of government regulation that has proven unable to address public safety and meet other public needs. The existing regulatory regime, in particular the CPUC, reflects strong bias in favor of the investor-owned utilities, and as such does not serve as a fair, reliable and responsive vehicle through which to promote the best interests of our communities or the State as a whole in the climate-challenged years ahead;

In sum, Community Choice programs have been leading in the development of innovative community-based distributed energy resource programs, many of these in the transportation sector. The leadership of Community Choice programs in transportation must continue unimpeded – it is essential to sustainably meeting California’s climate goals and to securing equitable economic and social benefits for our communities.

The California Alliance for Community Energy sees SB 676 as an inappropriate and counter-productive infringement on the ability of Community Choice programs to continue their leadership in the implementation of EV programs. We urge that this measure be opposed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Weinrub". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Al Weinrub
Coordinator, California Alliance for Community Energy

Cc:

Assemblymember Chris Holden, Chair, Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy

Kellie Smith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy

Members of the Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy