



February 28, 2020

The Honorable Scott Wiener
State Capitol, Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

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RE: **HOAC Supports SB 378**

Dear Senator Wiener:

The Health Officers Association of California (HOAC), which represents the physician health officers of California's sixty-one city and county jurisdictions, supports your SB 378, related to planned electrical blackouts.

In an age of increasing wildfire risk, utilities are beginning to authorize increased numbers of planned blackouts in order to eliminate the risk that the utility's power lines and other equipment will ignite a fire. These planned blackouts can last for days on end. Used judiciously, these blackouts can be a valuable tool in preventing catastrophic wildfires; however, they also create safety risks for those who rely on a regular supply of electricity. People who rely on rechargeable oxygen tanks and other medical equipment, and infants and seniors trying to survive the summer heat—to name just a few—all need a steady supply of electricity to survive and prosper. To make matters worse, the brief notification period (often as short as 24 hours) before a planned blackout can make it difficult to prepare adequately for it.

Your bill would require reporting on the consequences of planned blackouts, including vital health impact assessments. Gathering information on the health impacts of these de-energization events will help Californians determine if they are truly in the public's best interest.

Thank you for introducing this important bill.

Sincerely,

Kat DeBurgh, MPH
Executive Director