



**LEGISLATION AND
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March 1, 2021

Honorable Bill Dodd
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 2082
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 52 (Dodd) as introduced December 7, 2020 – SPONSOR

Dear Senator Dodd:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports SB 52 (Dodd)** which would add planned de-energization events, including Public Safety Power Shutoff de-energizations (PSPS), to the list of conditions constituting a state of emergency declared by a governor or a local emergency declared by a local government.

This past year there were massive public safety power shutoffs (PSPS) in approximately 34 counties by large investor-owned electric utilities (IOUs) used as a proactive strategy to reduce the risks of igniting wildfires from the electric utility infrastructure and anticipated high winds. Those power shutoffs affected the majority of the counties in the state and resulted in mass disruption to schools, traffic, communications, business, medical providers wages, transportation and, importantly, to persons with disabilities and older adults dependent on life-sustaining electrical services and telecommunications.

While these societal disruptions and costs imposed a massive impact on the population, for those with access and functional needs such as those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, chronic conditions, frail elderly, limited English proficiency, those in institutions and

others, the shutoffs can be life-threatening. SB 52 clarifies that de-energization events qualify as events for which a state of emergency or local emergency can be declared under the California Emergency Services Act (CESA). This clarification will provide greater flexibility to local agencies in responding to PSPS events and provide them the opportunity for recovering costs which will encourage them to provide enhanced services and supports to at-risk populations, including persons with disabilities and older adults dependent on life-sustaining electrical services and telecommunications.

For these reasons, DRC is proud to co-sponsor SB 52. We respectfully request an “aye” vote on SB 52.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sawait Seyoum". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sawait Seyoum
Senior Legislative Advocate
Disability Rights California