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Rob Koslowsky Comment re 2022 Energy Code Pre-Rulemaking

To Whom It May Concern:
For Docket #: 19-BSTD-03 Project Title: 2022 Energy Code Pre-Rulemaking

The power grid is becoming less reliable due to Americaâ€™s growing dependence on wind and solar, which, on their own, canâ€™t provide power 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or even when outdoor temperatures change. Most Californians have come to realize that the loss of electric power during hot summer days or red flag warning days isnâ€™t due to poor planning, but is a result of this reliance on solar and wind energy, which disappears as the sun sets or the winds calm.

Please repeal the 2019 Building Code making all-electric residential construction a mandate. Furthermore, all-electric mandates should not be made jointly with all-electric automobile (EV) mandates in order to force nighttime charging just to maintain the stateâ€™s electric grid. Therefore, mandatory battery backup systems should not be included in the proposed 2022 Building Code.

Resiliency, choice, flexibility, and safety are best served by allowing residents to enjoy the services of natural gas, gasoline, and electric. The attached May 10, 2021 submission reflects some of the reasons to repeal the EV mandate, forestall any natural gas bans, and exclude mandates for both all-electric construction and proposed residential battery systems â€“ More Band-Aids to Cover for Failing Renewable Energy Policies_RKK_May 2021.

Thank you for your consideration,
â€¦.Rob

Rob Koslowsky, Cloverdale, California
Author of The Tubbs Fire.
Also author of The Upstart Startup & Breach of Trust

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

Assigning Blame for Those Renewable Energy Problems

"A January report by energy regulators blamed the blackouts on poor planning, an extreme heat wave that blanketed the West, and energy market practices that allowed desperately needed power to be exported out of state at the peak of the heat wave."
– Officials: Utilities to buy energy to prevent blackouts, Olga R. Rodriguez, *AP*, Feb 12, 2021

"If it's another 'West-wide heat event' that smothers multiple states, as was the case last August, then California might not be able to import enough power to get through the crunch."
– Elliot Mainzer, president of CalISO, which runs the electric grid, May 5, 2021

"Over-regulation of housing — from restrictive zoning laws to onerous building codes — is implicated in a great many of America's problems."
– *Progressives must fix housing crunch*, Ramesh Ponnuru, May 2, 2021

It took months for California's energy regulators to assign blame for the rolling blackouts that almost one million Californians experienced last summer.

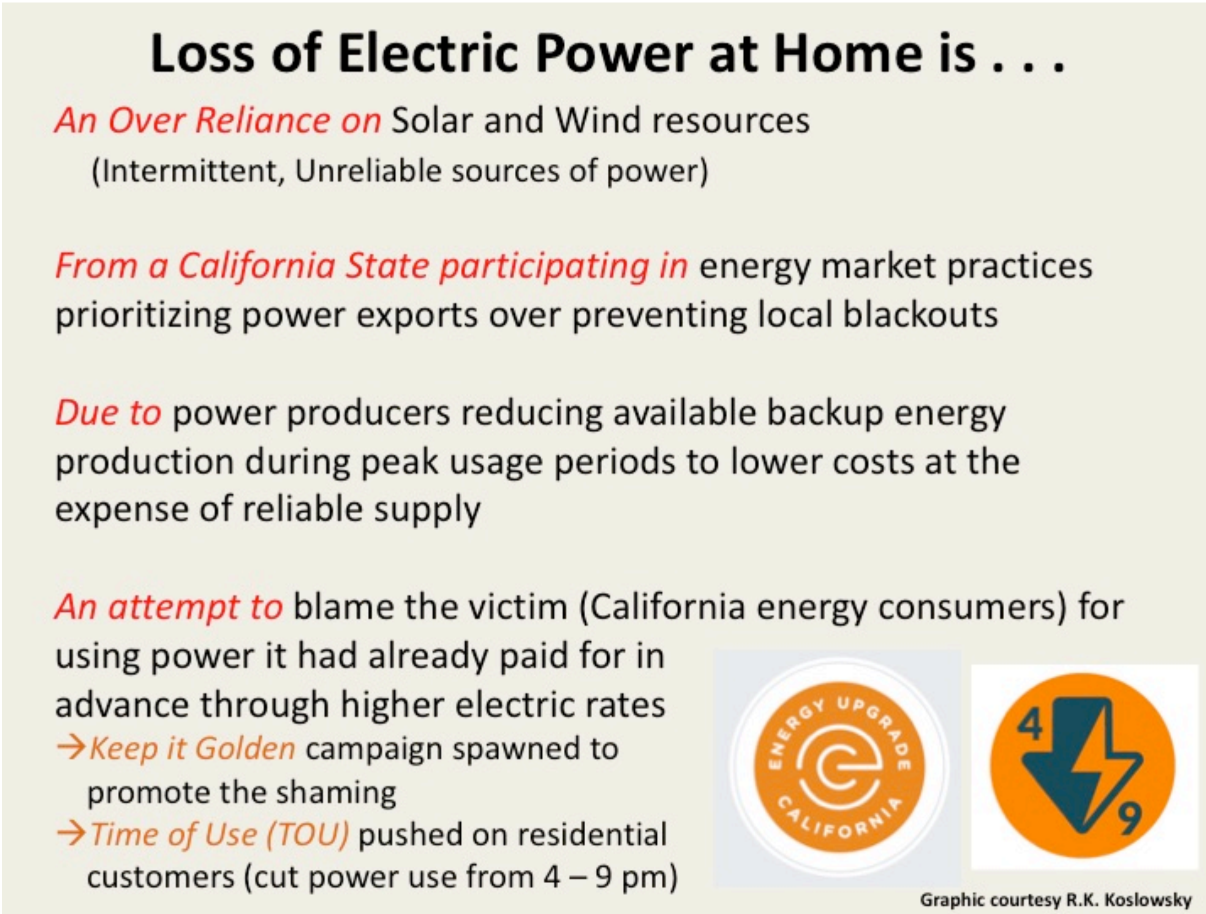
The main reason cited, at first blush, appears to violate common sense: "poor planning."

Most Californians have come to realize that the loss of electric power during hot summer days or red flag warning days isn't due to poor planning, but is a result of a reliance on solar and wind energy, which disappears as the sun sets or the winds calm. But there's more to it.

The January 2021 report, however, reveals something interesting and disturbing. The State of California is participating in energy market practices "that allowed desperately needed power to be exported out of state at the peak of the heat wave." This means that selling locally produced power to other states at premium rates makes certain parties enjoy massive profits [1].

If more money can be made exporting power outside of California, it's done; the customers in the Golden State be damned. For these regulators, investors and energy arbitragers, it's all about the money [2]. They love to line their pockets with profits and *Keep it Golden*, which is the latest state initiative seeking to shame Californians for using air conditioning when temperatures crack the 90-degree mark. Since needed power *will be exported* during peak usage periods, the State is asking consumers to use less power to prevent them from causing those power outages. Apparently, it's poor planning by the consumers of electricity that cause outages, not the export of profitable power elsewhere.

But that's not the end of the story. In an AP report on February 12, 2021, "Critics pointed out that the Public Utilities Commission has yet to clearly say why the energy consumers had paid for was not available last year and what regulators will do to keep utilities accountable."



Apparently there shouldn't have been a major outage, since the electricity expected to be needed was paid for by consumers in advance, in part, by ever-increasing electric rates. "California consumers are being asked to pay for something and the terms of what they're paying for are kept secret and then, when the contract isn't fulfilled, any penalties assessed are kept secret as well," the reporter noted. "'That seems to be fundamentally unjust,' said Thomas Popik, president of the Foundation for Resilient Societies."

It's not only unjust, but unethical, while making Californians less resilient, especially those forced to live in an all-electric home where there are no options to keep the lights on or the air-conditioning running during those hot summer evenings [3].

Maybe we can *Keep it Golden* by *Keeping the Power Generated Here for the Golden State* residents, while making it affordable once again. Fewer building code regulations would be a good place to start.

Graphic courtesy Baltimore Fishbowl

"The managers of California's electricity system can't promise they'll be able to keep the lights on this summer."

– Dale Kasler, *Sacramento Bee*, May 5, 2021

[1] Investors in electric generation don't care how utility companies manage the task of keeping people's lights on when they are faced with the problem of too much power one instant, and too little the next. This is becoming epidemic in a world relying on intermittent power generation embodied in both wind and solar production. And even where the utilities have some level of control over the stability of generation, they are losing control of almost everything else because of real-time electricity markets and the interventionist rate making by regulatory agencies that control how much customers will be charged for their electricity. If more money can be made exporting power outside of California, it's done.

[2] "The price of electricity [is] being set by traders trying to anticipate demand in certain locations, under certain conditions, and at certain times of day," Gretchen Bakke writes in her 2016 book *The Grid*. "They would buy the cheapest electricity they could find and 'wheel' (transport) it to be sold in the most lucrative market." Electricity goes to the highest bidder and not necessarily to where it's most needed, such as California consumers. Bakke adds, "Electricity [is] a real commodity – traceable, transportable, and profitable – and a real hedgible financial entity with futures markets and derivatives all its own. Electrons, from the point of view of the market, have never looked so much like pork bellies or pig iron."

[3] "Historically, utilities made money when people used electricity, the more we used the more money they made. Now they don't," Gretchen Bakke writes in her 2016 book *The Grid*. In a competitive market "utilities make money by transporting power and trading it as a commodity. While they are still charged with keeping America's power supply reliable they have a real incentive to sell electricity to whomever will pay the most for it wherever they may be." Apparently, the *reliable* part of their commitment to consumers has been lost. California is a prime market where high costs of electricity incent companies from outside the state to over-produce and sell it to the Golden State for a premium, unless they need the power for themselves, especially on very hot days or very cold ones. "Long-distance wheeling is [used] to their benefit; it is to the plant owners' benefit; it is to the energy traders' benefit . . ." But not to the energy users benefit. On many days power outages are endured by electric customers while profits are raked in by traders on the open market.