

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	18-IEPR-09
Project Title:	Decarbonizing Buildings
TN #:	224029
Document Title:	Kern County - Board of Supervisors Comments On Achieving Zero Emission Buildings
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Kern County - Board of Supervisors
Submitter Role:	Public Agency
Submission Date:	7/2/2018 9:31:49 AM
Docketed Date:	6/29/2018

Comment Received From: Kern County - Board of Supervisors
Submitted On: 7/2/2018
Docket Number: 18-IEPR-09

On Achieving Zero Emission Buildings

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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June 26, 2018

Dr. Robert B. Weisenmiller
Chair, California Energy Commission
1516 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ACHIEVING ZERO EMISSION BUILDINGS, DOCKET NUMBER 18-IEPR-09 – KERN COUNTY COMMENTS

Dr. Weisenmiller,

The Kern County Board of Supervisors is writing to submit our comments and express our strong opposition to the legislative and regulatory efforts being considered to achieve zero emissions buildings. Earlier this year, our Board opposed AB 3001 (Bonta) and AB 3232 (Friedman). As authored, AB 3001 would require new residential and nonresidential buildings to be electric-ready buildings¹ beginning in 2022 and would issue mandates to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to develop a tariff option offering residential and commercial rates that promote energy efficiency. Similarly, AB 3232 would mandate your Energy Commission, by January 1, 2020, to require all new residential and nonresidential buildings built on or after January 1, 2030, to be zero-emission buildings and develop a strategy to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases from the state's residential and nonresidential building stock to at least 50% below 1990 levels by January 1, 2030.

The vast majority of Californians currently use natural gas as their preferred energy source for cooking, space and water heating. Most families here in the Central Valley already struggle to shoulder the financial burden of cooling their homes in the summer. These legislative and regulatory efforts to achieve zero emission buildings would effectively limit consumer choice and essentially compel residential and commercial property owners to use electricity for all end-uses, regardless of what people want or the increased cost to consumers. As our county continues to grapple with high levels of poverty and a low supply of new homes, now is not the time for the Legislature or the state's regulatory agencies to promote policies that will likely add to the cost of monthly utility bills and simultaneously stifle a sluggish construction market with more unnecessary regulation.

According to the latest edition of the California Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Inventory, released by the California Air Resources Board on June 6, 2017, residential units account for only 6% of GHG emissions state-wide while commercial units account for only 5% of total GHG emissions. The changes proposed by the Legislature and state regulatory agencies on achieving zero emission buildings represent a misguided and costly effort to chase emissions reductions that, on their own, would not substantially improve California's air quality and environment.

¹ "Electric-ready buildings" means buildings containing electric infrastructure necessary to enable building occupants to use electrical equipment in lieu of natural gas-fired equipment, such as space and water heating equipment.

Furthermore, given the Legislature's current push to address rampant homelessness across California and the overall lack of affordable housing, AB 3001, AB 3232 and other proposed regulatory changes seem misguided, regressive, and heavy-handed incursions that will only serve to hamper, rather than help, the state's housing policy efforts.

For the sake of all Californians, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that you seriously consider the long-term implications of mandating zero emission buildings and find an incremental and diverse solution to reducing emissions throughout the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Maggard', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Maggard, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members of the California Energy Commission
Honorable Members of the California Public Utilities Commission
Darby Kernan, California State Association of Counties
Paul Yoder, Shaw/Yoder/Antwih