



California Wind Energy Association

March 32, 2022

The Honorable Ben Hueso, Chair
Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3350
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 887 (Becker) – Support if Amended

Dear Chairman Hueso,

The California Wind Energy Association writes in support of SB 887 (Becker), an important bill that would require the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) to act more proactively to advance transmission planning consistent with what is required to timely achieve California’s established goals of achieving 60 percent renewable energy by 2030, 100 percent of retail sales of electricity from zero-carbon resources by 2045, and economy-wide global warming emissions reductions of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. CalWEA also encourages the author to make two modifications to the bill.

CalWEA is a 22-year-old trade association. Our wind energy industry members are focused on developing wind energy resources within and directly interconnected to California and off the coast of California, as well as capturing the related economic and workforce development benefits for California.

For many years, CalWEA has encouraged the Commission to work with the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) to conduct “least regrets” transmission planning to identify backbone transmission upgrades that will be necessary under any of various possible renewable energy development scenarios, so that we can begin to build the transmission system that will be essential under any of future scenario. That has not happened and we are now just eight years from our 2030 clean-energy targets, when ten years are required to plan and build transmission.

By requiring the CPUC to request CAISO to identify the highest priority transmission facilities that are needed to enable reduced reliance on natural gas-fired generation resources in transmission-constrained urban areas by delivering renewable or other zero-carbon resources into those areas and to approve at least two of the identified transmission projects as part of the CAISO’s 2022–23 transmission planning process, SB 887 would foster progress on the least-regrets transmission upgrades that we need, while providing plenty of latitude to the Commission and the CAISO in identifying which specific upgrades are needed.

CalWEA recommends, however, that section 454.57(e)(4) be amended to refer only to reducing, and not eliminating, the need for carbon-emitting resources for reliability in locally constrained areas by 2035. Whether or not eliminating natural-gas-fired resources by 2035 is necessary or desirable in achieving our reliability and carbon goals, while maintaining electricity affordability and promoting equity, has not yet been sufficiently studied. As the primary goal of this bill is to make progress on the transmission upgrades that will be needed to achieve any of our larger goals, we are concerned that adding the goal of completely eliminating local gas resources by 2035 could jeopardize achievement of that primary objective.

For these reasons we request your support of SB 887 with the suggested amendments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Rader", written in a cursive style.

Nancy Rader
Executive Director

cc: Members of the Senate Energy Committee
Senator Josh Becker
