

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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April 22, 2026

The Honorable Sabrina Cervantes
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1359 (Stern), Gas Transition Responsibility and Electrification Act – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Cervantes,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong opposition to SB 1359 (Stern), which would significantly alter the state's natural gas distribution system and impose new restrictions that, in practice, reduce consumer choice for millions of Californians, including the hardworking families of the Central Valley.

SB 1359 goes far beyond reasonable regulatory alignment. By limiting new natural gas connections and authorizing the retirement of existing gas infrastructure, this bill effectively accelerates a forced transition away from natural gas. For our residents, that means fewer options, not more, when it comes to choosing the appliances and energy systems that best meet their household needs and budget. The long-term effect is clear: as natural gas infrastructure is phased out or becomes cost-prohibitive, consumers will be left with no practical alternative but to rely entirely on electric appliances, regardless of their preference.

The fact remains that 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 due to exorbitantly high electric bills. These incessant legislative and regulatory efforts that only focus on achieving the end goal of zero emission buildings have completely lost sight of the real-world impacts on the state's overall affordability. This particular bill effectively limits consumer choice and essentially compels residential and commercial property owners to use electricity, 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 to pile on by promoting policies that will inevitably add to the cost of monthly utility bills and simultaneously stifle a sluggish construction market with more unnecessary regulations.

SB 1359 would disproportionately burden communities like ours, where economic hardship is already widespread, energy costs are a major monthly expense, and housing production struggles under existing state mandates. The bill's impact on construction costs, paired with the reduced availability of natural gas service, risks deepening the housing shortage and slowing economic development in regions that can least afford it.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors strongly opposes this measure and respectfully urges you to vote **NO on SB 1359**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phillip Peters", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange