

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

April 30, 2026

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

RE: SB 940 (Grove), New Technology Program for geothermal wells – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Cervantes,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for SB 940 (Grove), which establishes a long-overdue regulatory framework enabling the evaluation and potential repurposing of existing oil, gas, and geothermal wells for renewable energy generation and energy-storage purposes.

Kern County is home to some of the nation's most significant energy infrastructure, both traditional and renewable. As California seeks to secure more renewable energy sources, SB 940 provides a practical, science-driven pathway to leverage existing well infrastructure for emerging technologies such as thermal energy storage, synthetic geothermal systems, and other renewable energy innovations. This forward-looking approach aligns with Kern County's commitment to supporting a resilient, affordable, and reliable energy system for all Californians.

We are particularly supportive of the bill's establishment of the New Technology Program within CalGEM, which provides a structured and transparent process for evaluating repurposed-well projects under appropriate regulatory oversight. By allowing up to 250 experimental wells statewide, the bill creates a meaningful opportunity for innovation while maintaining necessary safeguards. We also appreciate the bill's requirement for close coordination with the State Water Resources Control Board and relevant federal agencies, ensuring that water quality and environmental protections remain at the forefront of program development.

Additionally, SB 940 wisely assigns regulatory-cost responsibility to project operators, ensuring that state oversight is fully funded without shifting costs to local taxpayers. Finally, by directing CalGEM to develop clear public guidelines for transitioning wells between geothermal and oil or gas classifications, the bill provides much-needed regulatory clarity for both industry and regulators as these projects advance.

We believe this bill represents an important opportunity to modernize outdated statutes, encourage innovation, and lower long-term energy costs, all while maintaining environmental protections and ensuring responsible stewardship of our underground resources.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors strongly supports this measure and respectfully urges you to vote **YES on SB 940**.

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
Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange