July 2,2020

The Honorable Bill Dodd
Chair, Senate Government Organization Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2178 (Levine) – Emergency Services: PSPS**

 **Support**

Dear Senator Dodd:

The California Association of Public Authorities for IHSS (CAPA) is in support of AB 2178, by Assembly Member Levine, which would add Public Safety Power Shutoff de-energizations (PSPS) to the list of conditions constituting a state of emergency declared by a governor or a local emergency declared by a local government.

In the months of September through November 2019, there were massive preemptive power shutoffs in approximately 34 counties by Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE), and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). The shutoffs affected millions of Californians. While the duration and frequency of the power shutoff events varied by, and within, each utility service territory, in many of the circumstances the power was off for multiple days, in some cases over a week at a time.

The power shutoffs created serious risks for many medically fragile older adults and people with disabilities who rely on electricity for critical medical needs — everything from keeping their insulin refrigerated to running motorized wheelchairs or breathing machines. And, it’s not just people with obvious medical needs who were at risk during the outages. Low-income households faced hunger and financial crisis as the food in their refrigerators spoiled. People who rely on elevators were trapped or had to be hand-carried from upper floor apartments.

In preparation for and during the PSPS events, Public Authority staff assisted counties to contact and support In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) consumers with electrical-dependent medical devices and other issues. For example, the Sonoma Public Authority Director worked for many days out of the Sonoma Emergency Operations Center; their IHSS social workers made phone calls and some home visits to all clients identified as urgent, critical, and moderate in the affected power outage area. They also did phone calls and some home visits to about 1,400 individuals on the PG&E medical baseline program who are not IHSS consumers.

CAPA strongly support the provisions in the bill that allow the state and local governments to declare an emergency related to planned PSPS events would also help mitigate the significant community impacts of PSPS events. We respectfully request an “aye” vote on SB 862.

Sincerely,

Karen Keeslar,

CAPA Executive Director

Cc: Members and consultants, Senate Governmental Organization Committee

 Assembly Member Levine