

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS AND
KATHRYN BARGER

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Los Angeles County’s Energy Resiliency Policy & The Impact on Disadvantaged Communities

As climate change increases the number, duration, and intensity of heat storms, wildfires, and other disasters, we are currently experiencing this in real time as wildfires burn and record-breaking temperatures have engulfed Los Angeles County (County) over the weekend. The heat, fire, and smoke create dangerous conditions for the public, and all too frequently it is communities of color whose health and safety are disproportionately impacted. Utility companies such as Southern California Edison issued ~~De-energization~~ implemented rolling blackouts and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) warnings to ~~battle the extreme heat~~ address potential shortages and to prevent new and fight wildfires from erupting that continue to plague our state. As a result, thousands of County residents were left without electricity due to increased pressure on the region’s power grid.

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SOLIS _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

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HAHN _____

BARGER _____

Many months leading up to the recent heatwaves, the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) warned of a “Reliability Emergency” due to projected capacity shortages if the Resource Adequacy (RA) shortfall was not addressed. Fast forward to August 17, 2020, the CAISO Board of Governors debated the actions that led up to CAISO declaring a Stage 3 emergency preparing for rolling blackouts during one of the worst heat waves expected during recent times and during a pandemic that has most people restrained in their homes. CAISO staff responded that to support the energy demands during these emergencies effectively, we need a diversified energy portfolio that includes much more significant energy storage capacity to support the needs of the state.

On July 21, 2020, I introduced a motion directing the Department of Public Works and County Counsel for a report back on procedures and recommendations to help prevent future unplanned outages that occurred in East Los Angeles during another heatwave that exceeded 100 degrees and led to food spoilage and compromised medical supplies.

Additionally, at our August 13, 2019 board meeting, Chair Barger introduced an amendment that was approved unanimously for an analysis of the resiliency of the County’s energy supply and infrastructure against natural disasters, international turmoil, power outages, cyber-attacks, transportation disruptions, and price spikes. The Chief Sustainability Officer is now conducting a comprehensive climate vulnerability assessment that will evaluate the impacts of climate change on both physical infrastructure – such as the power grid – and on vulnerable populations, such as low-

income communities, communities of color, linguistically-isolated communities, rural communities, outdoor and essential workers, and others.

We are facing unprecedented times with COVID-19, which has hit our communities of color disproportionately with case rates and deaths, just as we know that the impacts of climate change will disproportionately affect this same community. We also know that this pandemic has further deepened the gap in unemployment for communities of color. We're also experiencing an awakening of civil advocacy as we address these historic inequities that have plagued our communities.

Data from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) shows that energy shutoffs disproportionately affect communities of color. Our diverse communities are struggling to keep the lights on while covering their rent. Although these inequalities have been exposed and are out in the open for us to finally discuss and address, this climate change driven public health crisis and the economic unraveling have widened the already deep divide between our most vulnerable communities of color and affluent parts of the County. We must address the threat of a changing climate while advancing social and economic justice to protect our most vulnerable communities and bring true long-term resiliency to our region.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in collaboration with the Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO), the Director of the Department of Public Works, the Director of Regional Planning (DRP), and the Director of the Internal Services Department (ISD), to develop and report-back in 90 days with a comprehensive

review of existing County policies, practices, and operations to ensure that there are appropriate back-up systems to support our County residents in times of emergencies. The report, at a minimum, should provide a specific focus on equity in all the following areas before County departments proceed with actuating any proposed policies that may impact and constrain our energy supplies and our resiliency:

- a. The resiliency of the County's energy supply against climate change, natural disasters, international turmoil, power outages, cyber-attacks, transportation disruptions, and price spikes and what the impact would be on the County's Energy Resiliency as if the County works to eliminate disproportionate health outcomes in communities of color and potentially eliminates one or more of our sources of local energy production;
- b. Impacts on the ability to supply the more than 10 million LA County residents dependably with food, water, medicine, transportation, building materials, and household goods during unforeseen emergencies such as catastrophic earthquakes, pandemics, extreme heat events, and extended power outages;
- c. The current status of resiliency and the impacts of proposed policies mandating ~~extended electrification~~ decarbonization, including on emergency preparedness in the event of extended power outages;
- d. Life-cycle analysis on jobs, energy affordability, and economic impacts, with a focus on communities of color and the most vulnerable

neighborhoods;

- e. Include recommendations from the r Report back in the draft LA County Climate Action Plan prior to implementation of energy transition related goals.

- 2. Expedite the Resiliency report analysis requested in the Board's August 13, 2019 Motion and include recommendations in the draft 2020 LA County Climate Action Plan.

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