

C7 Approve a letter of support for Assembly Bill 303: Battery Energy Safety & Accountability Act and a letter of opposition for Senate Bill 681: Housing.

STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE:	May 27, 2025
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CATEGORY: Consent Calendar 7

SUBJECT: Approve a letter of support for Assembly Bill 303: Battery Energy Safety & Accountability Act and a letter of opposition for Senate Bill 681: Housing.

DEPARTMENT: Board of Supervisors

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT #: All

DEPARTMENT CONTACT: Stefany Blankenship, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Board, (530) 225-5550

STAFF REPORT APPROVED BY: Stewart Buettell, Deputy County Executive Officer

<u>Vote Required?</u> Simple Majority Vote	<u>General Fund Impact?</u> No Additional General Fund Impact
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RECOMMENDATION

Approve a letter of support for Assembly Bill 303: Battery Energy Safety & Accountability Act and a letter of opposition to Senate Bill 681: Housing.

DISCUSSION

On February 4, 2025, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to bring back a letter of support for Assembly Bill (AB) 303. On May 13, 2025, the Board directed staff to bring back a letter of opposition to Senate Bill (SB) 681.

AB 303: Battery Energy Safety & Accountability Act would make several changes to Government Code and Public Utilities Code concerning battery energy storage systems (BESS), improving safety standards and restoring local oversight for BESS projects.

SB 681: Housing would make changes to several sections of the Civil Code, Government Code, Public Resources Code, and Revenue and Taxation Code, to prohibit landlords from charging tenants certain fees, limit application screening fees, and deem subordinate mortgages abandoned under certain conditions, among other provisions.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could decline to approve the letters, request revisions, provide alternative direction to staff, or defer consideration to a later date.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The Recommendation has been reviewed by the County Administrative Office.

FISCAL IMPACT

Costs associated with preparing and sending letters of support/opposition are included in the Clerk of the Board Budget (BU 103) for Fiscal Year 2024-25. There is no additional General Fund impact associated with the recommended action.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1: AB 303 Letter of Support
- 2: SB 681 Letter of Opposition

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Redding, California 96001-1673
(530) 225-5557
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KEVIN W. CRYE, DISTRICT 1
ALLEN LONG, DISTRICT 2
CORKEY HARMON, DISTRICT 3
MATT PLUMMER, DISTRICT 4
CHRIS KELSTROM, DISTRICT 5

May 27, 2025

The Honorable Dawn Addis
State Assembly, State Capitol
1021 O Street, Suite 4120
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0030

RE: Assembly Bill 303: Battery Energy Safety & Accountability Act – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Addis:

On behalf of the Shasta County Board of Supervisors, we express our strong support for Assembly Bill 303, which would improve safety standards and restore local oversight for large-scale battery energy storage system (BESS) projects, allowing local jurisdictions to restrict such facilities from being built in potentially dangerous areas while still encouraging the development of new energy systems and businesses.

Allowing the California Energy Commission (CEC) the expanded power to override local authority via its Opt-In Certification Program could not only result in BESS facilities being constructed in unsafe areas, but also has the potential for protracted legal challenges such as those faced by the CEC due to their overriding of local decisions concerning large-scale wind energy facilities, similarly provided in Assembly Bill 205 (2021-2022). This assumption of authority silences the local voices who best understand the needs and concerns of their areas and creates unnecessary risk for the individuals who live in those communities.

Rural counties like Shasta already face rising insurance costs and potential insurance cancellations due to increased fire hazard severity in our region. Additionally, Shasta County contains multiple earthquake hazard zones, regulated floodplains, and large areas of agricultural zoning, all of which are considered environmentally sensitive sites by AB 303. By allowing BESS facilities to be built near these sites, our communities would face increased insurance costs and risk of wildfire, decreased property values, less new construction, reduced housing availability in areas already confronting housing shortages, and potentially severe environmental and public health impacts that could have generational consequences.

RE: Assembly Bill 303: Battery Energy Safety & Accountability Act – SUPPORT
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For these reasons, Shasta County strongly supports AB 303 and urges its swift passage. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to a return to common-sense laws that retain local jurisdictional control over decisions with long-term impact on their communities.

Sincerely,

Kevin W. Crye, Chair
Board of Supervisors
County of Shasta

cc: Members, Assembly Utilities and Energy Committee
Members, Assembly Local Government Committee
Members, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
California State Association of Counties
Rural County Representatives of California
Shaw, Yoder, Antwih, and Lange

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May 27, 2025

The Honorable Aisha Wahab
State Assembly, State Capitol
1021 O Street, Suite 8350
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 681: Housing – Oppose

Dear Senator Wahab:

On behalf of the Shasta County Board of Supervisors, we express our strong opposition to Senate Bill (SB) 681, which would reduce transparency and increase rents for tenants by allowing landlords to fold fees and service charges into the total rent cost, as well as harm small businesses by imposing additional bureaucratic challenges to maintain compliance with the legislation.

Although SB 681 states that it would restrict fees to a combined 5% of the monthly rent and ban several common fees, landlords could simply add those fees to the total rent in order to recoup the costs that they would continue to incur. This would significantly increase rents, and finding and maintaining housing would become even more unattainable for Shasta County residents with lower incomes, who receive public assistance, or who have migratory employment.

Additionally, many mortgage companies in Shasta County are small businesses with limited staff. Imposing further bureaucratic requirements and deadlines on them would make it more difficult for them to meet those requirements and potentially lose the income that keeps them in operation. Any mistake that caused them to fall out of compliance could cause them to reduce staffing, if not permanently shutter their doors due to the increased costs of conducting business. Increasing the number of unemployed individuals in the county and reducing the number of active businesses would have severe economic effects that would be felt by all county residents.

Affordable housing is already out of reach for many lower- and middle-class families throughout the state, and particularly in rural areas like Shasta County. The rising costs of housing, coupled with stagnant wages, threaten housing stability for both renters and homeowners across all income levels. This not only has a negative impact on individuals, but it also negatively impacts our entire county as more community members become homeless due to their economic circumstances. The

RE: Senate Bill 681: Housing – Oppose

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increasing numbers of unhoused individuals places a strain on our community through the need for additional social services, security, healthcare staffing and expertise, and further legal and correctional resources.

For these reasons, Shasta County strongly opposes SB 681. We urge you to develop a more balanced approach that creates incentives to provide more affordable housing without penalizing landowners or small businesses, while allowing local jurisdictions to address these challenges in ways that best meet the needs of their communities.

Sincerely,

Kevin W. Crye, Chair
Board of Supervisors
County of Shasta

cc: Members, Senate Committee on Appropriations
California State Association of Counties
Rural County Representatives of California
Shaw, Yoder, Antwih, and Lange