



City of Santa Barbara

Office of the Mayor

SantaBarbaraCA.gov

RRowse@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

June 18, 2025

Randy Rowse
Mayor

The Honorable Sasha Renee Perez
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Room 6240
Sacramento, CA 95814

City Hall
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA
93101-1990

**RE: SB 256 (Pérez) Electricity: electrical infrastructure: wildfire mitigation.
City of Santa Barbara – Notice of Support**

Mailing Address:
PO Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA
93102-1990

Dear Senator Pérez,

On behalf of the City of Santa Barbara, I am pleased to express our strong support for Senate Bill 256, your thoughtful legislation to enhance utility accountability, strengthen wildfire mitigation planning, and promote public safety through improved infrastructure management and coordination.

Tel: (805) 564-5322
Fax: (805) 564-5475

As a coastal city with communities situated in high fire-risk areas, Santa Barbara has experienced firsthand the growing threats posed by catastrophic wildfires and the essential need for resilient, well-regulated energy infrastructure. SB 256 takes important action to close critical gaps in current law by requiring the removal of permanently abandoned utility infrastructure, thereby reducing unnecessary hazards and protecting residents and property from preventable fire risks.

We particularly appreciate your bill's clear definition of "permanently abandoned facilities" and the direction to the California Public Utilities Commission to update General Order 95 to ensure timely removal of such equipment. These facilities, if left unaddressed, can contribute to fire ignition and pose ongoing safety threats—especially in high fire-threat districts like ours.

Additionally, SB 256 makes meaningful improvements to utility Wildfire Mitigation Plans, including updated requirements that emphasize climate risk, vulnerable populations, local government coordination, and the consideration of undergrounding in high-risk areas. These reforms align closely with Santa Barbara's local priorities and will help ensure utility planning reflects on-the-ground conditions and community needs.

Finally, we strongly support the bill's provisions requiring utilities to coordinate with regional emergency operations centers and assign trained representatives for improved situational awareness and real-time collaboration during emergencies. As we have seen in past Public Safety Power Shutoffs and wildfire events, such coordination is vital to protecting public health and safety.

For these reasons, the City of Santa Barbara supports SB 256 and thanks you for your leadership in advancing this critical measure.

Sincerely,

Mayor Randy Rowse
City of Santa Barbara

cc: Senator Monique Limon
Assembly Member Gregg Hart