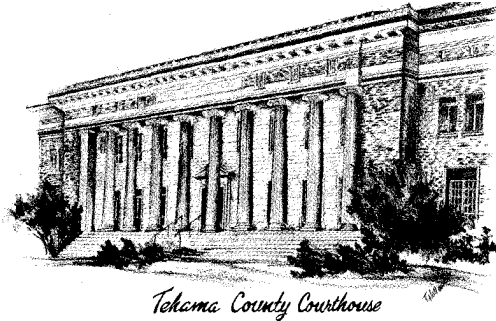


Board of Supervisors
COUNTY OF TEHAMA

*District 1 – Rob Burroughs
District 2 – Tom Walker
District 3 – Pati Nolen
District 4 – Matt Hansen
District 5 – Greg Jones*



*Gabriel Hydrick
Chief Administrator*

The Honorable Chris Rogers Member,
California State Assembly 1021 O
Street, Room 5130
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 531 – OPPOSE
As Introduced February 11, 2025**

Dear Assembly Member Rogers:

On behalf of the Tehama County Board of Supervisors, we must respectfully oppose your Assembly Bill 531, which expands the California Energy Commission's (CEC) AB 205 opt-in permitting process.

Assembly Bill 531 expands the CEC's AB 205 opt-in permitting process to include geothermal powerplants and geothermal field development projects. These projects are currently subject to local discretionary permit authority. As such, AB 531 usurps local permitting authority on geothermal energy projects and allows the project developer to give that authority to the CEC.

Local governments are invested with authority over local land use decisions and permitting. Unfortunately, the AB 205 process usurps that authority by allowing the CEC to issue permits even over local objections. Local governments are best suited to make these decisions because they know the communities impacted; are tasked with balancing competing land use, and are situated closest to those residents and communities that will be impacted by the projects. In the local permitting process, local decision makers can identify and compel mitigation of the project's impacts on the affected community. AB 531 takes these crucial responsibilities away from local governments and hands them to the CEC, which is far removed from being held accountable by impacted residents. That process also allows the CEC to bypass local standards, ordinances, and laws.

Our counties support geothermal energy, and we have advocated for pathways that provide greater technical assistance and flexibility for local governments to permit renewable energy projects.

While we strongly object to proposals that allow developers to bypass local permit processes, we believe there is a way to ensure that geothermal projects going through the CEC's AB 205 opt-in permitting process enjoy the support of the jurisdiction in which the

project will be located. We have no objections to allowing projects to access the CEC's AB 205 process if the project receives a letter of support from the local government where the facility will be located. This prerequisite will ensure that the project is supported by the host jurisdiction and that the developer will work collaboratively with that jurisdiction on any impacts that may result. We suggest the following amendments to Public Resources Code Section 25545(b)(7):

(7) A geothermal powerplant or a geothermal field development project, as defined in Section 65928.5 of the Government Code, that received a letter of support adopted at a public meeting by the governing body of the local government in which jurisdiction the facility will be located.

If these amendments are adopted, the Tehama County Board of Supervisors would be happy to remove our opposition and support the bill, but until that time, we must respectfully oppose AB 531. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at tcbos@tehama.gov

Sincerely,

Matt Hansen - Chairman
Tehama County Board of Supervisors