



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Agenda Date: 2/26/2018

Agenda Placement: 7C

Napa County Legislative Subcommittee Board Agenda Letter

TO: Napa County Legislative Subcommittee

FROM: Molly Rattigan for Minh Tran - County Executive Officer
County Executive Office

REPORT BY: Molly Rattigan, Deputy County Executive Officer - 253-4112

SUBJECT: SB 969-Garage Door Back-Up Batteries

RECOMMENDATION

County Executive Officer requests discussion and possible action on SB 969, a bill that would require the manufacturer of an automatic garage door opener sold in the state on or after January 1, 2019, to include a backup battery.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 8th, 2017, residents of Napa and surrounding counties suffered severe winds that spread wildfires that had broken out. Downed power lines caused power outages that complicated already difficult, middle of the night evacuations. It is estimated that at least five residents lost their lives in the Northern California wildfires because they could not lift their garage doors to get out of their garages during the power outage.

To ensure that California residents can safely and expeditiously evacuate their residence during a planned or unplanned evacuation, this bill would require the manufacturer of an automatic garage door opener sold in the state on or after January 1, 2019, to include a backup battery. This bill also prohibits any person, corporation or entity from installing a residential automatic garage door opener without a backup battery on or after this date.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The 2017 Northern California wildfires left a path of destruction and loss that Californians have not experienced previously. An October 2017 statewide fire summary by CalFIRE estimated 8,900 structures were destroyed, thousands were rushed to evacuate and 43 lives were lost.

On October 8th, 2017, residents of Napa, Sonoma, Yuba, Butte, Lake, Mendocino, Nevada, and Orange counties faced severe winds coupled with power outages that complicated already difficult, middle of the night evacuations. As utility lines fell and residents were left without electricity, numerous Northern California residents found themselves struggling to get out of their garages during evacuations. Media reports have recounted stories of neighbors stopping to help raise garage doors; elderly neighbors who did not have the strength to manually lift their garage door; and a mother who struggled to get her disabled adult son into a family car because their custom van was in a garage that she could not open.

Additionally, as strong winds accelerate the spread of wildfires, utilities oftentimes pre-emptively shut off the power to thousands of residents to prevent a falling line from igniting new fires. Cutting power increases the risk of residents being blocked by their garage doors, which do not operate during an outage. While backup batteries are offered to residents during garage door installation, the additional cost of the batteries have discouraged widespread use.

The Napa County Risk Manager and Fire Chief have reviewed this legislation and recommend a position of support.

CSAC: Pending
RCRC: Watch

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . SB 969 - BILL TEXT - Garage Door Back-up Batteries
- B . SB 969 Fact Sheet

Recommendation: Approve
Reviewed By: Molly Rattigan