March 11, 2026

The Honorable Scott Wiener
1021 O Street, Suite 8620
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 982 (Wiener), as introduced February 4, 2026 – OPPOSE – Creates new civil action for alleged climate disasters

Dear Senator Wiener:

The below-listed organizations respectfully **OPPOSE** your **SB 982**. These organizations oppose your bill for the following reasons:

1. SB 982 would drive up costs for California consumers and wreak havoc on the economy.

SB 982 would create a new civil action to be brought by the Attorney General to sue California's energy companies for damage allegedly caused by climate disasters such as fires, floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes. The bill bases liability on events "attributable to climate change" without providing any time bounds on attribution.

SB 982 allows this new civil action against energy companies without proof of causation – there is no requirement of any evidence that energy companies' actions caused the alleged damages. To sue, the AG needs only allege the damage was the result of a climate disaster. As a result, SB 982 violates the U.S. Constitution.

SB 982 would result in higher costs for all Californians. According to an independent study by the California Center for Jobs and the Economy on last year's similar bill, SB 982 would drive up costs for gasoline, diesel, electricity, and natural gas – resulting in a massive increase to the state's already-high cost of living.

Specifically, SB 982 would, by 2026, increase:

- the price per gallon of gas,
- the average household costs, and
- electricity rates.

In addition to enormous new costs imposed on California consumers, the bill would harm the state's economy, with a substantial number of jobs lost each year, reducing wages and state tax revenues, according to the California Center's study.

2. SB 982 is unconstitutional and would spawn costly and lengthy legal challenges to its provisions.

We believe that SB 982 contains several significant legal issues, including the following likely Constitutional violations:

- **Violates due process:** The bill would impose billions of dollars in liability related to alleged climate-related disasters upon energy companies, using vague and retroactive standards without requiring proof of causation. The bill also would prevent energy companies from limiting liability to intentional conduct or in proportion to fault, by making them jointly, severally, and strictly liable.

- **Violates equal protection:** The bill would hold a single industry responsible for all the costs associated with any alleged climate-related disasters, ignoring the inherently global nature of climate change and the multitude of factors and sources purportedly contributing thereto.

- **Violates the Fifth, Fourteenth, and potentially the Eighth Amendments**. The bill would levy excessive fines by creating billions of dollars in retroactive liability for lawful conduct.

As a result of these substantial legal flaws, SB 982 would generate a host of costly legal challenges to its provisions that could potentially last for a decade or more.

3. SB 982 sets a terrible precedent for all industries and would do nothing to help with Los Angeles wildfire recovery.

By singling out one industry for billions of dollars in arbitrary, retroactive liability, SB 982 would set a horrible precedent for every industry in California. Indeed, the bill begs the question: which industry will be targeted next?

And, while the bill is brought in response to the devastating Los Angeles wildfires, SB 982 would do nothing to benefit victims and survivors. By creating a new, likely unconstitutional way to sue, SB 982 would be tied up in litigation for years. SB 982 will not actually help Californians recover from alleged climate-related disasters.

Our state's citizens are looking for the Legislature to enact policies that make California affordable, not create gigantic new costs for consumers.

For the foregoing reasons, we must respectfully **OPPOSE SB 982**. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our position, please contact: Chris Micheli at (916) 743-6802, cmicheli@snodgrassmicheli.com.

Sincerely,

Jaime Huff
President & Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of the below-listed organizations:

Civil Justice Association of California – Jaime Huff
Agricultural Energy Consumers Association – Michael Boccadoro
American Chemistry Council – Tim Shestek
American Tort Reform Association – Sherman Joyce
California Business Roundtable – Oracio Gonzalez
California Chamber of Commerce – Jonathan Kendrick
California Fuels + Convenience Alliance – Alessandra Magnasco
California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce – Julian Canete
California Manufacturers and Technology Association – Elizabeth Esquivel
California Renewable Transportation Alliance – Nicole Rice
California Retailers Association – Ryan Allain
California Taxpayers Association – Peter Blocker
Central Valley Business Federation – Clint Olivier
Council of Business and Industries – Rauly Butler
Family Business Association of California – Robert Rivinius
Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce – Henry Rogers
Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association – Scott Kaufman
Kern Citizens for Energy – Tracy Leach
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies – Christian Rataj
National Federation of Independent Business – Tim Taylor
Orange County Business Council – Jeffrey Ball
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership – Matthew Lyons
Southern California Leadership Council – Mike Roos
U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform – Jeanne Walker
Western Propane Gas Association – Krysta Wanner
Western States Petroleum Association – Zachary Leary

cc: Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Allison Meredith, Consultant, Senate Judiciary Committee
Morgan Branch, Senate Republican Caucus