



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OCT 11 2025

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 696 without my signature.

This bill requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Office of the State Fire Marshal to convene a Lithium-Ion Car Battery Advisory Group by December 31, 2026.

Last year, I established the California Battery Safety Collaborative (Collaborative) to examine battery energy storage technologies and safety considerations, which includes the Office of the State Fire Marshal and several other state agencies and departments.

The establishment of a new advisory group, as required by this bill, would be uncoordinated with the work being done through the Collaborative and it is largely duplicative of the work already completed by the Lithium Ion Car Battery Recycling Advisory Group. In furtherance of my commitment to improve the safety of these technologies, I am directing the Collaborative to expand its state agency membership and scope to assess and address the safety risks of not just stationary, but also mobile, battery energy storage technologies.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom

