



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 18 2026

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 353 without my signature.

This bill would require the Governor to appoint an Inspector General of the Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to serve a six-year term and transfer the existing internal auditing functions to the new Inspector General.

I understand the author's ambition to bring more oversight to the decisions made at, and programs administered by, the CPUC. However, this bill contains several flaws. Most significantly, it would compromise the Public Advocates Office's (Office) role as a robust advocate before the CPUC. By granting existing agency staff access to internal deliberations, work products, and litigation strategies, this measure would undermine the independence of the Office. Further, a reorganization of the CPUC at the scale envisioned by this bill would have significant fixed and operational costs in the tens of millions of dollars that are not included in this year's budget.

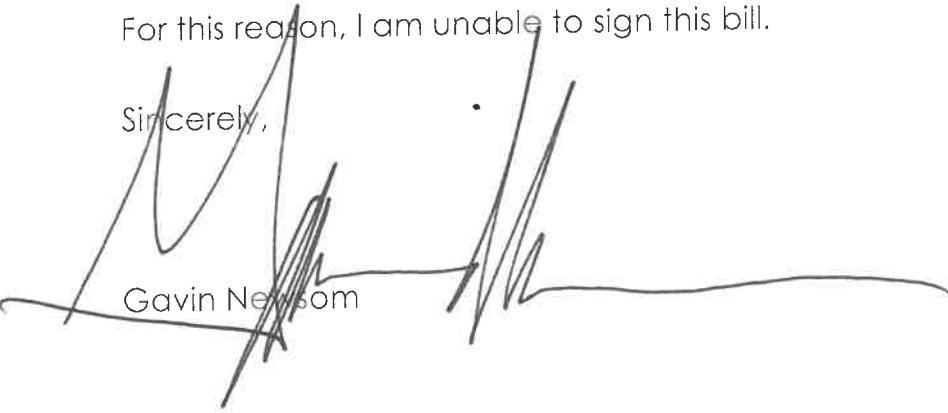
In partnership with the Legislature this year, my administration has enacted a balanced budget that recognizes the challenging fiscal landscape our state faces while maintaining our commitment to working families and our most vulnerable communities. With significant fiscal pressures and the federal government's hostile economic policies, it is vital that we remain disciplined

when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

For this reason, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gavin Newsom', is written over the printed name and extends across the page.