



March 18, 2024

The Honorable Steven Bradford  
1021 O Street, Suite 3350  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SUPPORT - Senate Bill 1309 (Padilla): Lithium Battery Production Council**

Dear Senator Bradford,

On behalf of the California Retailers Association (CRA), I am pleased to offer our strong support of SB 1309, which would direct the California Energy Commission (CEC), in consultation with other state agencies, including the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (Go-Biz) and the California Workforce Development Board, to establish a Lithium Battery Production Council to conduct an economic analysis on workforce development needs, infrastructure needs, sewage and wastewater treatment and housing needs for lithium battery production.

The California Retailers Association is the only statewide trade association representing all segments of the retail industry including general merchandise, department stores, mass merchandisers, on-line marketplaces, restaurants, convenience stores, supermarkets and grocery stores, chain drug and specialty retail such as auto, vision, jewelry, hardware, and home stores. CRA works on behalf of California's retail industry, a driving force of California's economy, with over 400,000 retail establishments, an annual gross domestic product of \$330 billion and one fourth of California's total employment.

In 2023, a new report by Lawrence Berkeley National Lab estimated that there was more lithium than previously estimated, enough to support over 375 million batteries for electric vehicles – more than the total number of vehicles currently on U.S. roads. Yet the region surrounding the state's vast lithium deposits has critical infrastructure gaps including a lack of bridges and roads and lack of communication and transportation infrastructure. As California seeks to power the future by producing lithium in a more sustainable and environmentally safer way than nearly anywhere else in the world, it is critical the state has a comprehensive strategy that secures California's global leadership in lithium battery manufacturing by preparing the region to meet the demands of sustaining a global industry.

For these reasons, CRA supports SB 1309 (Padilla), which will keep California competitive while also preserving the state's environmental and sustainability goals and growing economic opportunity through job creation. We encourage your "aye" vote when it is heard in your committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Pollo Moo', is located below the 'Sincerely,' text.

Sarah Pollo Moo  
Legislative and Policy Advocate