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February 24, 2012

Mr. Ken Alex  
Director  
Governor's Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. Box 3044  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

Re: SB 226 CEQA Reform

Dear Mr. Alex:

The Regional Economic Association Leaders (R.E.A.L.) Coalition, representing more than 11,000 employers and 3 million jobs in California, commends you for your efforts to reform the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in a way that realizes the spirit of the original legislation while also doing away with unnecessary impediments to infill development and job creation.

We write this letter specifically to applaud the intent of SB 226 (Simitian), but to encourage you to see that it is just the first step in a broader effort to modernize CEQA.

The members of the R.E.A.L. Coalition have spent a great deal of time and energy, both collectively and individually, advocating for a systemic reform of CEQA in a way consistent with its original intent. Many of our members worked with your staff in 2011 to help craft the type of streamlining that would accelerate infill development, put people back to work *and* maintain the highest possible levels of environmental stewardship. We feel that much progress was made, but there is still much to accomplish.

While we recognize that the intent of SB 226 (Simitian) was to create tangible CEQA relief for beneficial infill projects, the reality is that the qualifications mandated by the bill, and subsequent guidelines and performance standards proposed by the Office of Planning and Research (OPR), limit its intended CEQA streamlining benefits. The benefits are not enough to impact the behavior of the private sector.

For this reason, it is very important that SB 226 be viewed only as a beginning and not as an end to CEQA reform legislation. We would like to continue to work with you to achieve additional and meaningful CEQA modernization in a manner that preserves California's environment, provides for future housing and infrastructure needs, and creates economic opportunity for the people of our State.

Sincerely,

Carl Guardino  
President & CEO  
Silicon Valley Leadership Group

Lucy Dunn  
President & CEO  
Orange County Business Council

Bill Allen

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Jim Wynn

CC: Senator Joe Simitian  
California State Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg  
Mike Rossi, Office of Governor Jerry Brown