



July 20, 2020

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Environmental Quality

**SUBJECT: AB 2323 (FRIEDMAN) CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT: EXEMPTIONS SUPPORT – AS AMENDED JULY 1, 2020**

The California Chamber of Commerce and the organizations listed are pleased to **SUPPORT AB 2323 (Friedman)**, as amended, which would bring meaningful changes to existing streamlining provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in order to promote more “climate-friendly” residential housing in California.

**AB 2323** advances two very practical improvements to existing CEQA provisions. First, the bill would allow transit priority projects (TPP) that are consistent with all of the requirements of the Sustainable Communities Strategy, consistent with a community or specific plan, and consistent with the general use designation, density, and building intensity for the site, to be eligible for CEQA’s existing streamlining provisions. In doing so, the bill ensures that CEQA’s streamlining provisions better facilitate the type of affordable and environmentally sustainable housing projects that the Legislature intended when it enacted these provisions under CEQA. Second, the bill would allow certain infill, affordable and agricultural employee housing projects to utilize CEQA streamlining provisions provided they meet strict environmental criteria, are eligible for existing CEQA streamlining, and the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has approved the site for the proposed use. By acknowledging that DTSC approval is critical to ensuring a safe site for residential housing, **AB 2323** will facilitate the safe redevelopment of sites into thousands of new affordable and climate-friendly housing units in California.

CEQA serves an important goal of preventing public agencies from approving projects with potentially significant impacts if there are feasible mitigation measures that would eliminate or substantially reduce those impacts. **AB 2323** is a critical bill that will help solve California’s worsening housing crisis by expanding the CEQA streamlining provisions for “climate-friendly” housing projects overwhelmingly supported by this Legislature. We support these types of efforts to identify thoughtful ways to expedite the development of housing and other projects in California without compromising the statute’s objectives to protect California’s natural environment.

For these reasons, we are pleased to **SUPPORT AB 2323 (Friedman)**.

Sincerely,

Adam Regele, Policy Advocate  
California Chamber of Commerce

On behalf of the following organizations:

Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce, *Patrick Swarthout*  
Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce, *Patrick Ellis*  
North Orange County Chamber of Commerce, *Theresa Harvey*  
Oceanside Chamber of Commerce, *Scott Ashton*  
Orange County Business Council, *Jennifer Ward*  
Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce, *Steve Van Dorn*  
Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce, *Diann H. Rogers*  
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership, *Brad Jensen*  
Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce, *Glenn Morris*

cc: Rachel Wagoner, Office of the Governor  
Scott Seekatz, Senate Republican Caucus

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