

September 15, 2011

Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 226 – California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining

Dear Governor Brown:

I respectfully request your signature on Senate Bill 226, to address various CEQA issues.

In response to certain concerns relating to CEQA, SB 226:

- Adds several streamlined CEQA procedures for infill projects meeting certain requirements, including Office of Planning and Research guidelines. (§21094.5 and 21094.5.5).
- Allows public agencies to comment on planning and zoning matters, as required under Planning and Zoning Law, concurrently with project scoping meetings under CEQA. (Public Resources Code §21083.9).
- Prohibits a project's greenhouse gas emissions from causing a categorical exemption to be inapplicable if the project complies with regulations adopted to implement related statewide, regional, or local plans as provided in the CEQA guidelines. (§21084).

- Exempts the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on the roof of a building or at an existing parking lot, if certain conditions are met. (§21080.35).
- Authorizes the owner of a proposed solar thermal powerplant certified by the California Energy Commission to petition the Commission to review an amendment to the facility's certificate to convert the facility from solar thermal technology to photovoltaic technology without the need to file an entirely new application for certification. Certain related time limits and conditions must be met, and the Commission must prepare a supplemental environmental review document while providing for public notice and comment. (§25500.1).

I believe SB 226 responds to concerns relating to scoping meetings for certain projects, use of categorical exemptions for projects resulting in greenhouse gas emissions, and environmental review procedures for infill and solar projects.

I have worked with various parties to ensure that SB 226 balances business and government interests carrying out development projects with business, government and public concerns for the environment.

I respectfully request your signature on SB 226.

Sincerely,

S. Joseph Simitian
State Senator, Eleventh District

SJS:rp

cc: Nancy McFadden, Executive Secretary
Gareth Elliott, Legislative Secretary
Martha Guzman-Aceves, Deputy Legislative Secretary