



city of san luis obispo

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

990 Palm Street ■ San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-3249 ■ 805/781-7119

February 24, 2012

VIA Email to CEQA.Guidelines@ceres.ca.gov and U.S. MAIL

CEQA Guidelines Update
c/o Christopher Calfee
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: CEQA Streamlining for Infill Projects (SB 226)

Dear Mr. Calfee:

The City of San Luis Obispo has had the opportunity to review online information and participate in this week's webinar regarding proposed changes to the CEQA Guidelines to implement Senate Bill (SB) 226. The City supports the tenets of the legislation to provide a simpler environmental review process for infill projects that create a more sustainable and energy efficient community. In terms of proposed performance standards and checklists, the City backs continued efforts to refine the metrics and make completing the checklists as straightforward as possible.

The City of San Luis Obispo is known to be at the forefront in adopting plans, policies, and programs that are progressive and reflect good sound planning principles. These sustained planning efforts over the past few decades have resulted in the City maintaining a compact urban form that preserves its more steeply sloping hillsides, creek areas, and other natural features as open space. Intrinsic to the City's General Plan are defined growth boundaries and housing policies that encourage new infill and mixed use development. Many of these infill projects have benefited from a quicker overall review process because they have met the defined parameters of the Class 32 categorical exemption.

It appears that SB 226 expands and strengthens the potential ability of an infill project to have an expedited review, rather than eliminates the existing Class 32 categorical exemption. The City is supportive of maintaining the Class 32 exemption since it has been successfully utilized for a number of years and benefitted many excellent infill projects.

The City is committed to protecting the environment and making sure that new projects fully comply with CEQA. With any changes to the CEQA Guidelines, the City supports efforts to address potentially significant environmental issues without making the process more onerous and time-consuming or undermining local control. The infill exemption through SB 226 should

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be designed to accommodate new sustainable projects as long as other important programs such as historical preservation and affordable housing are not compromised.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the CEQA Guidelines. Please contact Senior Planner, Pam Ricci at 805-781-7422 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jan Marx
Mayor

cc: City Council
Katie Lichtig, City Manager
Christine Dietrick, City Attorney
Derek Johnson, Community Development Director
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