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## **Labor and environmental groups launch coalition to protect California Environmental Quality Act in 2018 legislative session**

*Deregulation advocates heighten attacks on landmark environmental law in push for deregulation*

**Sacramento, Calif.** – Several of California’s most prominent labor, conservation, and environmental justice groups today announced they are reactivating the [CEQA Works coalition](#) in an effort to protect the California Environmental Quality Act against attempts to weaken the law in California’s 2018 legislative session. Signed into law by Governor Ronald Reagan almost 50 years ago, CEQA is the bedrock of the state’s environmental protection laws.

While some development forces continue to roll out tired claims that CEQA is an impediment to housing development, evidence to support that claim is lacking. Numerous reports in recent years have demonstrated that CEQA promotes transparency and that updates to the law have succeeded in streamlining the environmental review process for priority projects related to affordable housing, mass transit and renewable energy, among others. CEQA has been updated dozens of times in response to concerns over process as well as to address the changing environment, like encouraging infill development and supporting the state’s commitment to reducing climate change-inducing emissions.

The California State Senate Environmental Quality Committee recently released the [results of a survey](#) of all state-led projects from 2011 to 2016. Of more than 11,000 projects, fewer than 1% were required to prepare a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR). A [2012 review by the California Department of Justice](#), and private studies by the [Rose Foundation](#) and the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#) all corroborated the finding that fewer than 1% of projects subject to CEQA review face litigation.

“Californians rely on CEQA to reduce the harm from projects that pollute air and water, or otherwise threaten public health,” said Kathryn Phillips, Director of Sierra Club California. “This law is an extremely important tool for community members. Before CEQA, we saw neighborhoods divided by freeways and houses demolished for shopping centers without a clear opportunity for the public to respond and influence those projects to mitigate impacts.”

CEQA has a long track record of reducing environmental and public health impacts from development. It requires project proponents to identify potential environmental impacts and to take steps to mitigate or eliminate such impacts to the extent feasible.

“In the era of Trump, it’s essential that we keep our environmental laws strong in California,” added Howard Penn, Director of the Planning and Conservation League. “California’s long-term prosperity depends on making rational development decisions that reduce, rather than contribute to, risks like wildfire and over-allocation of limited water supplies. The environmental review process provides essential information to policy-makers making land use decisions.”

Groups leading the CEQA Works charge include State Building and Construction Trades Council, California Labor Federation, California League of Conservation Voters, Earthjustice, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Planning and Conservation League (PCL) and Sierra Club California. There are more than 200 California organizations in the CEQA Works coalition.

“There’s no doubt that California is facing an affordable housing crisis, but study after study shows that CEQA is not to blame,” noted Cesar Diaz, Legislative Director for the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California. “We need the legislature to focus on solutions that will actually address the problems at hand instead of simply making it easier for developers to make big money at the public’s expense.”

To connect with spokespeople and get information about CEQA success stories in your area, please contact [nina@publicgoodpr.com](mailto:nina@publicgoodpr.com) or 510-336-9566.

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