



## Coalition to Preserve LA Slams Sacramento's Efforts to Ruin CEQA — a Disaster for Children

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Coalition to Preserve LA stands with key environmental groups and attorneys in condemning multiple attacks on CEQA in Sacramento this week, where Gov. Jerry Brown seeks to wipe out environmental protections for most urban housing if developers agree to include a handful of affordable units, and the state legislature is simultaneously attacking CEQA by letting mega-developments get “fast-tracked” in the courts — to give communities less time to fight violations of the law.

We stand with the Sierra Club and top environmental attorneys, urging those who believe developers are the last ones who should decide on our health and neighborhood livability, to tweet and call Gov. Brown immediately regarding Trailer Bill 707 and mega-development fast-tracking Senate Bill 734. Brown's twitter: @JerryBrownGov. His phone: (916) 445-2841.

Trailer Bill 707 is clearly aimed at five lucrative prizes for greedy developers: L.A., the OC, Inland Empire, Bay Area and San Diego. It hands undue power to developers in “urban areas” who won't hesitate to place thousands of children in harm's way next to toxic freeways, even as they create street gridlock and destroy neighborhood character.

Meanwhile, Senate Bill 734 is a sneaky move to extend AB 900, a temporary law created in 2011 in response to California's then-12% unemployment rate, to let controversial mega-projects muscle through the court system in record time. Now that California's unemployment rate has plunged, typically greedy developers want the same perks as before, giving communities far less time to mount CEQA legal challenges against inappropriate, neighborhood-destroying developments. One such project is 8150 Sunset, the outsized Frank Gehry-designed towers that will gridlock already-jammed Laurel Canyon and endanger residents around Sunset Boulevard by hindering firefighter response times.

CEQA, the California Environmental Quality Act, is under unprecedented attack by developers aiming to weaken the most powerful law protecting our communities and environment. The Coalition to Preserve LA is sponsoring the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative on the March 2017 Los Angeles ballot to end developer control over what L.A. becomes.

Howard Penn, executive director of the influential Planning and Conservation League in Sacramento, said of SB 734 written for mega-developers, “We were tracking more than 30 legislative bills to weaken CEQA this year. None were for strengthening it. As I work with stakeholders to come to a gentle kind of understanding that CEQA needs adjustments, the long and short of it is that Gov. Brown is outright opposed to CEQA ... so we are getting more attacks from the opponents of CEQA and they are endless, relentless and continuous.”

Respected environmental lawyer Robert P. Silverstein says Brown's Trailer Bill 707 budget maneuver, meanwhile, “is a Trojan horse that claims to create affordable housing, but is really just a multi-billion-dollar giveaway to developers. Under this plan, developers could do 95% luxury housing, with a meager 5% being 'affordable.' In return, they would avoid local government and public oversight and could sidestep all the protections of our current environmental laws. This would lead to even more violations of the public's rights, and further catastrophic impacts on our environment.”

Attorney Sabrina Venskus, who fought to save the Ballona Wetlands and is suing the city of Los Angeles for helping developers illegally overrun Venice, said: "The Governor seems to have a small group of special interests called the development lobby that he is listening to, rather than regular citizens. ... The answer to our problems is to limit the influence of big moneyed-special interests such as the development and construction lobbies."

The Coalition to Preserve LA this year revealed that L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti and the City Council are encouraging developers to erect housing for children near freeways. These developments have been dubbed Black Lung Lofts. Brown's attempts to detour around CEQA will hasten dangerous housing projects.

In USC's watershed Children's Health Study of 3,600 children, scientists found that children living within 1,000 feet of freeways suffer chronic lung damage. UCLA found a higher risk for premature babies. Experts say this tainted housing cannot be "mitigated" with filters — unseen metal and rubber bits still lodge in the lungs and brain.

In 2007, USC researchers urged Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Eric Garcetti and the City Council to act. They were ignored. The city has pushed for dozens of freeway-adjacent apartment buildings and condos. In 2010, Councilman Tom LaBonge told LA Weekly, "It would be great if we could call a time-out and try to plan better, but it's not practical."

The Neighborhood Integrity Initiative, gathering signatures for the March ballot, gives L.A. residents the power to "call a time-out" and shape what L.A. becomes. We believe environmental review is crucial to public safety, fighting gridlock and ending the destruction of neighborhood character.

Please visit us at <http://2PreserveLA.org>

#### PRESS CONTACT

Jill Stewart  
Campaign Director  
Coalition to Preserve LA  
(916) 595-9033