



City Hall “Reform” Too Little, Too Late

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Coalition to Preserve LA applauds the Sierra Club, the Planning and Conservation League and scores of groups who fought and today stopped Gov. Jerry Brown's proposal to gut CEQA and Coastal Act environmental protections for virtually any urban project where developers agreed to add an insignificant number of affordable housing units.

In June, we urged our supporters, and those who believe developers are the last ones who should decide their communities' fates, to call Gov. Brown to protest Trailer Bill 707. Brown's now fully dead idea would have trampled over the California Environmental Quality Act and Coastal Act, handing the wheel to developers who have shown that without environmental oversight they will gladly place thousands of children in harm's way, create massive surface street gridlock and destroy unique and beloved neighborhood character.

The Coalition is sponsoring the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative on the March 2017 Los Angeles ballot to end developer control over what L.A. becomes. Contact us to attend our events, or to very easily donate and send a message, at 2PreserveLA.org.

The Coalition this year criticized L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti and the City Council for encouraging developers to erect family housing near freeways. These developments have been dubbed Black Lung Lofts. Gov. Brown's now-dead attempt to detour around CEQA would have hastened these dangerous housing projects.

Jill Stewart, campaign director of the Coalition to Preserve LA, which is sponsoring the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative, said of this week's victory over developers, “Health and environmental safety must come first — families don't want apartments built on seeping brown fields or jammed by freeways in an invisible river of toxins.”

CEQA is a crucial tool to assure safe housing, but this year a raft of California legislators who take money from developers tried to pass some 30 bills to tear CEQA apart. In USC's watershed Children's Health Study of 3,600 children, scientists proved that youngsters living near freeways suffer chronic lung damage. UCLA found a higher risk for premature babies. Experts say this tainted housing cannot be “mitigated” with filters, trees or tight windows — microscopic metal and rubber particles still lodge in the lungs and brain.

In 2007, USC researchers urged Antonio Villaraigosa, Eric Garcetti and the City Council to act. The leaders of L.A. ignored the researchers. The City Council, all but one of whom takes money from developers, has pushed for dozens of freeway-adjacent housing complexes. In 2010, then-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.” Like the rest of the City Council, LaBonge pushed for more freeway-adjacent housing, insisting, “We need to save jobs.”

The Neighborhood Integrity Initiative, which is almost finished gathering more than 62,000 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 preserving safety, fighting gridlock and ending the current destruction of neighborhood character to build a luxury housing glut in Los Angeles.

The fight to protect CEQA is not over. Los Angeles city leaders have falsely claimed that CEQA is being abused and has increasingly pushed development disputes into court. Said Stewart “This is a lie designed to kill CEQA, which is used modestly to attack only the worst developments.” A new study from the NRDC shows that CEQA is used very seldom in court, has no effect on development costs, and is a key tool to force healthy out-of-court

compromise.

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