



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES  
OF CALIFORNIA

March 26, 2024

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear  
Member, California State Senate  
1021 O Street, Room 7340  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 1361 – SUPPORT  
As Introduced February 16, 2024**

Dear Senator Blakespear:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we are pleased to support your Senate Bill 1361 regarding the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). RCRC is an association of forty rural California counties; the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each of those member counties.

Senate Bill 1361 exempts from CEQA actions taken by a local agency to approve contracts providing services for homeless Californians. CEQA is an important tool to facilitate disclosure (and mitigation) of a project's significant effects on the environment. Unfortunately, CEQA has also provided ample grounds for opponents to frustrate, delay, and derail important public projects and services.

California is grappling with significant housing, homeless, mental health, and substance use disorder challenges. Those challenges often overlap with one another and complicate efforts to provide housing, support, and services for at-risk individuals and families. Efforts to address these issues can be complicated even more by the prospect of individuals or groups using CEQA to stymie local responses. To avoid this risk, California has created several CEQA exemptions applicable to the siting or conversion of transitional and supportive housing and emergency shelters.

SB 1361 creates another important tool to protect local governments from the risk of CEQA challenges related to discretionary contracts to provide support services for homeless residents. Local governments often enter into contracts with both private and nonprofit partners to provide case management; resource navigation; housing navigation; residential; and counseling services. These types of contracts are far from the typical projects CEQA was intended to cover. SB 1361 attempts to avoid future problems in light

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of recent trends where groups and individuals use creative and tangential CEQA challenges to oppose and delay a wide variety of projects.

For these reasons, RCRC supports SB 1361. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [jkennedy@rcrcnet.org](mailto:jkennedy@rcrcnet.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

JOHN KENNEDY  
Senior Policy Advocate

cc: The Honorable Benjamin Allen, Chair, Senate Environmental Quality Committee  
Members of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee  
Brynn Cook, Consultant, Senate Environmental Quality Committee  
Scott Seekatz, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus