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September 14, 2023

The Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 91 (Umberg) California Environmental Quality Act: supportive and transitional housing: motel conversion: environmental leadership transit projects
As Amended – September 8, 2023 – Request for Signature

Dear Governor Newsom:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 of the state's counties, respectfully requests your signature on SB 91 by Senator Thomas Umberg, which would permanently extend existing law that allows for a motel, hotel, residential hotel, or hostel that is converted into a supportive housing or transitional housing project to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

When SB 450 (Umberg) passed in 2019, it spurred motel conversion projects to better house individuals as soon as possible. It has helped streamline at least 804 units of motel conversions to supportive housing in Southern California by exempting these projects from CEQA.

SB 91 addresses both the need for supportive housing and the externalities created by nuisance motels. Additionally, SB 91 will lift the 5-year sunset provision previously established by SB 450.

To make meaningful progress in helping those who are unhoused, CSAC developed the '[AT HOME](#)' Plan. The six-pillar plan is designed to make true progress to effectively address homelessness at every level - state, local and federal. Through the AT-HOME Plan, CSAC is working to identify the policy changes needed to build a homelessness system that is effective and accountable, including specific recommendations related to prevention, housing, the unsheltered response system, and sustainable funding. SB 91 aligns with our AT HOME efforts, specifically as it relates to the Housing pillar.

CSAC supports providing counties with flexibility and options to house homeless individuals. Converting motels, hotels, residential hotels, and

hostels into housing is a faster and more cost-effective option for counties to provide housing. SB 450 streamlined the process of converting these structures into supportive and transitional housing. These conversions could not expand the floor area of each individual living unit by more than 10 percent, increase the number of dwelling units, or substantially reduce the number of parking spaces.

SB 91 would continue to allow the streamlining of the CEQA process for motels, hotels, residential hotels, and hostels that are converted to provide housing to homeless individuals.

It is for these reasons that CSAC respectfully requests your signature on SB 91. If you have any questions or concerns about our position, please do not hesitate to reach me at mneuburger@counties.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Neuburger", written in a cursive style.

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: Ronda Paschal, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
Grant Mack, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
The Honorable Senator Thomas Umberg, 34th District