[March xx, 2020]

The Honorable Miguel Santiago

State Capitol, Room 6027

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1907 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Santiago,

[Name of your organization] is proud to support AB 1907, your bill to facilitate housing families and individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness by exempting from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) emergency shelters, supportive housing, or 100% affordable housing developments funded by the Multifamily Housing Program, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, or the Community Development Block Grant Program.

While well intentioned, CEQA gives opponents of affordable housing and emergency shelters a second bite at the apple to block desperately needed facilities that have already received city or county approval. The mere filing of a CEQA lawsuit can derail a project that generally has been the subject of various public hearings and whose funding comes with strict expenditure deadlines. Moreover, the threat of litigation itself creates uncertainty and can result in project withdrawals, reductions in units or beds, or expensive redesigns to address political rather than environmental concerns.

This situation contributes significantly to the cost of affordable housing while providing little to no additional environmental benefit. By its nature and as a result of state and local funding priorities, affordable housing is higher density and built in infill locations close to services and amenities its residents need. Residents of affordable housing and emergency shelters own fewer cars and drive significantly less than the general public, creating de minimus traffic impacts. In addition, public and private lenders ensure that residents are not exposed to unhealthy environmental conditions.

Enacting this narrow exemption to CEQA will help California address its massive homelessness and affordable housing crises without endangering the environment. This bill builds on your successful effort of last year with AB 1197 to create a similar CEQA exemption within the City of Los Angeles. In his State of the State speech, Governor Newsom stated, “This year, let's expand that law and extend it to all homeless shelters and supportive housing statewide.”

Thank you for your authorship of this important measure.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Title