

Restore the Delta  
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Jun 27, 2025

The Honorable Mike Maguire  
President Pro Tempore  
State Senate

The Honorable Robert Rivas  
Speaker of the Assembly  
State Assembly

Senate Budget and Fiscal Review  
Committee  
1020 N. Street, Room 502  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Budget Committee  
1021 O Street, Suite 8230  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 553  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Scott Wiener  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
Chair  
State Senate

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
Vice-Chair  
State Assembly

The Honorable Benjamin Allen  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Senate

The Honorable Christopher  
Cabaldon  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Senate

The Honorable John Laird  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Senate

The Honorable Roger Niello  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Senate

The Honorable Rosilicie Ochoa  
Bogh  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Senate

The Honorable Laura Richardson  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Senate

The Honorable Akilah Weber  
Pierson  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Senate

The Honorable Dawn Addis  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Assembly

The Honorable David A. Alvarez  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Assembly

The Honorable Steve Bennett  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Assembly

The Honorable Heath Flora  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Assembly

The Honorable Joe Patterson  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Assembly

The Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Assembly

*Submitted electronically*

## **RE: Proposed CEQA Budget Trailer Bills**

Dear President Pro Tempore McGuire, Speaker Rivas, and members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee,

Restore the Delta writes in support of the recent letters submitted on behalf of numerous environmental, Tribal, and community organizations opposing the CEQA budget trailer bills. We echo the sentiments of our partners below, urging the California legislature to unequivocally reject the proposed CEQA Budget

Trailer Bills. If adopted, these proposals would devastate environmental protections, even as the federal government seeks to undercut the safety and well-being of Californians. Overturning critical protections under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) would further harm to Tribes, environmental justice communities, and the environment. The impacts would be especially felt for the 4 million Delta residents, removing their ability to respond to infrastructure projects and water management plans that threaten Delta property, agricultural land, and water rights, while also blocking environmental justice communities from responding to land, water, and air pollution threats that jeopardize public health and safety.

### **Destruction of the Democratic Process**

The negotiation and consideration of these bills, which would utterly destroy Californian's ability to participate or even know about decisions that may have significant and direct impacts on constituent lives, livelihoods, safety, and wellbeing, occurred rapidly and behind closed doors, effectively removing public input and transparency. Leveraging the sweeping power of the budget process to decimate democracy at a local level is wholly undemocratic.

The federal government has forsaken the protection of communities of color, immigrants, Tribes, environmental justice communities, and the environment, meaning that the State of California is the last line of defense. We urgently need state representatives to stand up for democracy and the protection of the people that elected them. The expeditious manner under which the largest CEQA rollbacks in history have made their way into the State Budget has forsaken critical time needed to evaluate the true cost to communities, public health and safety, and the environment. The destruction of CEQA in this way would be an utter betrayal of elected officials' responsibility to serve and represent both those that voted for them, and democracy as a whole.

### **Sacrifices Frontline Communities for the Benefit of Developers**

CEQA is foundational to ensuring protections for the health and safety of all Californians, but especially environmental justice communities. These communities already bear the brunt of our state's pollution burden, yet are repeatedly forced to sacrifice their safety, health, economic opportunities, and quality of life for the benefit of developers. The extensive rollbacks of CEQA would intentionally threaten human life, environmental values that are central to California, all for the sake of profit margins. This budget proposal would effectively sacrifice Californians for the benefit of corporate developers.

The Delta itself is an overwhelmingly disadvantaged region facing significant threats to its communities and ecosystems, which have seen substantial economic decline due to the deteriorating environment evidenced by the growing number of endangered species. The rollbacks in this proposal would open the floodgates for irreversible devastation to this already vulnerable region – which is critical to all of California – but whose impacts will be borne by Delta residents, Delta Tribes, and the Delta ecosystem.

### **Ignores existing CEQA exemptions and streamlining**

This proposal completely overlooks existing law and streamlining measures that were carefully and intentionally implemented to accelerate housing, energy, transportation, and other projects. For example, AB 205 establishes a one-stop process for energy permitting through the California Energy Commission, recently approving the largest solar project in California's history in a mere 8 months. Other CEQA exemptions, including several adopted just last year, bypass review and accelerate construction readiness for infill housing. The list goes on, all intentionally adopted to streamline specific needs for Californians.

However, little time has been allowed for these measures to prove their effectiveness before this sweeping proposal would destroy more protections.

**Conclusion**

Pitting critical state resources like healthcare and affordable housing against the gutting of CEQA is a preposterous and unethical tradeoff. The very communities the legislature seeks to support through affordable housing measures will be those most impacted by CEQA rollbacks, threatening their health, livelihood and wellbeing. CEQA is a pathway for frontline communities to have a say in the polluting and risky development that disproportionately falls within their neighborhoods. Holding funding for critical projects like affordable housing to steamroll the very laws that protect our most vulnerable communities is hypocritical and unconscionable.

Streamlining construction and development should not come at the expense of the community input and engagement that is foundational to the democratic process. Rolling back California's most critical environmental protections at the last minute, behind closed doors, and without public input or oversight is undemocratic and an abuse of the process.

For these reasons, we implore you to defend California's communities, Tribes, and the environment from this budget trailer bill that would fundamentally destroy the California Environmental Quality Act.

Sincerely,



Morgen Snyder  
Policy Manager  
Restore the Delta



Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla  
Executive Director  
Restore the Delta

CC: Senator Jerry McNerney, SD-5, co-chair of the Delta Caucus  
Assemblymember Lori Wilson, AD-11, co-chair of the Delta Caucus  
Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, AD-04  
Assemblymember Maggy Krell, AD-06  
Assemblymember Josh Hoover, AD-07  
Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen, AD-10  
Assemblymember Rhodesia Random, AD-13  
Assemblymember Anamarie Avila Farias, AD-15  
Senator Jesse Arreguin, SD-7  
Senator Angelique Ashby, SD-8  
Senator Tim Grayson, SD-9