





San Joaquin Valley
Rural Development Center



California Partnership for the
San Joaquin Valley



April 19, 2021

The Honorable Sabrina Cervantes
Chair, Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy
Legislative Office Building, Room 359
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 106 (Salas) – SUPPORT – Assembly JEDE committee on April 27, 2021

Dear Chair Cervantes:

On behalf of the above coalition of local, regional and statewide organizations who partner in the California Economic Summit, we urge your support of AB 106 (Salas) when it is heard in the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy. The bill creates the Regions Rise Grant Program - a timely tool for sustainable and equitable economic rebuilding.

Support for rebuilding regional economies that are fundamentally more inclusive and based on an equity framework, a true “California for All,” must be central to California’s COVID-19 recovery plan. Otherwise, we will simply be recreating the economic conditions of widespread geographic, racial and ethnic inequities that are aggravating the current crisis. AB 106 tackles this directly and lays the groundwork for a fundamentally more inclusive economy with more economic resilience for all Californians.

The approach to consensus building and governing reflected in AB 106 is particularly significant for underserved and under-resourced areas of the state, where capacity to undertake a resource and time intensive process is unavailable. The Regions Rise Grant Program would provide the needed incentive and support to institutionalize an inclusive process at the regional level focused on economic strategies that provide an opportunity for all people in a community to prosper.

Further, AB 106 can help prepare regional leaders to take advantage of additional federal, state and philanthropic funds available to address workforce, education, environmental and economic challenges. The ability to create regional consensus on such priorities and subsequently develop an action plan cannot be underestimated in its potential for true regional transformation. This economic development model is centered on the identification of needs and opportunities in distinct regions by an inclusive and diverse set of stakeholders. The transformation of our communities and local economies is most successful when there is local agreement and coordination on regional strategies for prosperity.

With the public health and economic fallout from COVID-19 still being acutely felt, we have learned it is even more imperative that our regions continue to identify feasible strategies and solutions that meet the needs of the local community. The importance of building sustainable economies resilient to extraordinary hardships is more important than ever.

For the above reasons, we urge the Committee's support of AB 106 and stand ready to work with the state in these efforts. We can be reached through Micah Weinberg Director of the California Forward Action Fund, the sponsor of the bill, at micah@cafwd.org.

Bill Allen
President & CEO
Los Angeles Economic Development
Corporation

Steve Frisch
President
Sierra Business Council

Mark Baza
Executive Director
Imperial County Transportation
Commission

Eduardo Gonzalez
Interim Executive Director
Office of Community & Economic Develop.
California State University, Fresno

Sonya Kay Blake
President & CEO
The Valley Economic Alliance

Paul Granillo
President & CEO
Inland Empire Economic Partnership

Michelle Decker
President & CEO
Inland Empire Community Foundation

Chelsea Irvine
Community Resource Manager
3CORE, Inc

Heidi Hill Drum
Chief Executive Officer
Tahoe Prosperity Center
Rosanne Foust
President & CEO
San Mateo County Economic Development
Association

Melissa James
President & CEO
REACH Central Coast

Marian Kaanon
President & CEO
Stanislaus Community Foundation

Kristen Connelly
CEO
The East Bay Leadership Council

Cynthia Murray
President & CEO
North Bay Leadership Council

Deborah Nankivell
CEO
Fresno Business Council

Nick Ortiz
President & CEO
Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce

Sheba Person-Whitley
Executive Director
Sonoma County Economic Development
Board

David Rattray
President & CEO
UNITE-LA

Kate Roberts
President & CEO
Monterey Bay Economic Partnership

Evan Schmidt
CEO
Valley Vision

Kristen Beall Watson
President & CEO
Kern Community Foundation

Micah Weinberg
Director
California Forward Action Fund

Kate Meis Wright
Executive Director
Local Government Commission

Jim Wunderman
President & CEO
Bay Area Council

cc: The Honorable Jordan Cunningham, Vice Chair, Assembly JEDE Committee
Members, Assembly JEDE Committee
Toni Symonds, Chief Consultant, Assembly JEDE Committee