Inland Empire Caucus  
California State Capitol  
1303 10th Street, Suite 3056  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Members of the Inland Empire Caucus,

On behalf of the Inland Economic Growth and Opportunity (IEGO), we write in support of fully appropriating the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) at $750 million as proposed in the Governor’s Budget revision.

This Fund would support efforts like IEGO’s groundbreaking and nationally-recognized work to advance the inclusive economic growth strategy for the Riverside / San Bernardino metropolitan area, which helped inspire similar efforts in Fresno, Bakersfield, and other California regions. The Fund provides competitive grants to economic regions such as ours that are implementing comprehensive, tailored strategies developed by diverse cross-sector coalitions in order to achieve quality job creation and access.

The IEGO experience affirms the premise and value of the CERF. Through a two-year process of data collection, analysis, consultation, and facilitation, IEGO established a regional collaborative representing business, community, labor, education, and government that agreed on a joint plan with shared vision and priority tactics. As a result, IEGO strategies focus on job quality, linking economic and workforce development efforts to generate more middle-skill jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and make them accessible to all workers, particularly those without a four-year degree. At the forefront of the IEGO work is a commitment to racial and gender equity, and the mission to close historic equity gaps in the Inland Empire.

IEGO has an aggressive agenda for inclusive, sustainable growth through public/private/civic partnerships, striving to do economic development differently by: developing asset-based, participatory strategies for generating quality jobs, implementing cluster-based development strategies, and strengthening the civic capacity and alignment for bi-county and cross-sectoral collaboration. IEGO views the Inland Empire’s racial and immigrant diversity as one of its greatest strengths and believes that diverse decision-making processes and power-sharing are foundational for closing the equity gaps that exist in the region.

IEGO partners now are making progress in four sectors identified as regional comparative advantages and concentrating the greatest opportunity for our residents – sustainable logistics, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity / IT, and green tech. These priority sectors reflect both emerging market demands that can produce quality jobs, and California’s policy goals for a carbon-neutral future, as envisioned by the Fund.

The CERF will fill vast local needs as well as deliver on state promises to align behind its distinctive economic regions as the engines that fuel California’s economic power. For the Inland Empire, the Fund would be a critical catalyst to accelerate IEGO implementation and leverage other private, public, and
philanthropic investments. For other regions, it will spur the kind of new direction, collaboration, and capacity that IEGO needed as we pursued an inclusive, sustainable economy and confronted long-standing inequities.

There will be many issues to resolve in Fund administration, such as defining regional boundaries, eligibility to submit applications, planning requirements, grant size, and selection criteria. We are ready to share our four years of IEGO experience and lessons to ensure effective choices.

However, the first step is to establish this innovative tool. Again, we ask for your support to include the Community Economic Reinvestment Fund at $750 million in the final approved budget. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Julian Cuevas, Director of Policy & Governmental Affairs of the Inland Empire Community Foundation at jcuevas@iegives.org.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Karen Suarez
IEGO Co-Chair
Uplift San Bernardino/Making Hope Happen Foundation

Juan Perez
IEGO Co-Chair
County of Riverside

cc: Governor Gavin Newsom
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins

IEGO MEMBERSHIP

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