



TO: East Bay Cities and Counties

FROM: The East Bay EDA Business Climate Initiative Group

- John McManus, Executive Director, Cushman & Wakefield of California, Inc., Group Chair
- Linda Best, President & CEO, Contra Costa Council
- Edward Del Beccaro, Managing Director, Grubb & Ellis
- Bill Lambert, Assistant Director, Alameda County Community Development Agency
- Cheryl O'Connor, Gov. Affairs Advisor, Building Industry Association of the Bay Area
- Margot Lederer Prado, Senior Business Development Specialist, City of Oakland

DATE: March 28, 2012

RE: Request to consider passage of the attached "Open for Business" Pledge

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Many East Bay cities and counties have experienced a significant negative impact on their General Fund revenues due to the on-going impacts of the national economic crisis stemming from the financial crisis and collapse of the housing market in 2008. Governor Jerry Brown's dissolution of redevelopment as a revenue source for cities and counties has only exacerbated this trend. As a result, many cities have been forced to cut essential staff and services.

An unintended consequence of these cuts can be a decline in the customer service focus of public entities in their regulatory capacity. Ironically, just as cities and counties are hoping for additional investment, their ability to provide essential services related to permit processing or development review may be hampered.

To counter this trend and help focus attention on the excellent business climate in the East Bay, a number of East Bay EDA's members – public and private - came together to develop an "Open for Business" pledge that cities, counties, and other regulatory bodies could adopt as an indication of their dedication to fostering and maintaining excellent customer service related to economic development despite the economic downturn.

Adoption of the pledge would be voluntary, but the East Bay EDA proposes to publish a list of the cities that have adopted it and track and publicize any permit streamlining initiatives or "best practices" that are identified as a result of its adoption.

The goal is not to dictate practices but raise awareness. Adoption of the pledge is also a signal to the business community and the public that the adopting city or agency is aware of the impact that customer service has on the business climate of the East Bay. Thank you for considering this request.