



ASSOCIATION OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROFESSIONALS

April 7, 2015

The Honorable Das Williams  
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee  
Assemblymember, 37<sup>th</sup> District  
State Capitol, Room 4005  
Sacramento, CA 94249

**Re: AB 291 (MEDINA) - SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Williams:

The Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP) is pleased to support Assembly Bill 291 by Assemblymember Medina.

AB 291 aims to streamline the filing requirements for Notices of Determination (NOD) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for multi-county water projects. The bill aims to improve public access by posting them directly on the state's CEQAnet website. As all aspects of government modernize and adapt to the efficiencies offered by technology, we should take this opportunity to update the notice requirements in CEQA.

Currently, agencies approving multi-county water projects face a myriad of different submission requirements from each county, posing substantial and unnecessary logistical burdens. It is important for local agencies to file CEQA notices at the same time to ensure a consistent posting for the minimum 30-day timeframe. Any deficiency in paper-based posting, even inadvertently, in any one county could expand the agency's legal exposure to a CEQA challenge. Such exposure could cause an unnecessary delay for water projects, which is especially problematic during our state's drought. Additionally, it is our experience that county clerk postings provide limited service to the public. Most counties simply post hard copies of the notices at their location requiring interested individuals to visit their office on an ongoing basis to be informed of and to review any notices.

The Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has operated the CEQAnet website to electronically post notices for projects undertaken by a state agency for statewide public access. The electronic posting provides the public with a description of the project, an agency's findings, the project's level of impact on the environment, and the agency's contact information. Because CEQAnet is available online and searchable by county, it provides better access to notices than merely

posting to a bulletin board in a county clerk's office. There is also opportunity for CEQAnet to be enhanced to better serve the public. OPR could be directed to offer noticing services within CEQAnet where an agency or individual could receive an automated email whenever a notice is filed for their area.

We support AB 291 because it provides a streamlined and modernized way to inform the public of NOD postings under CEQA. We believe it is a step in the right direction to enhance the CEQA process and utilize available technologies to broaden and simplify access to CEQA documents.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or our representative in Sacramento, Will Gonzalez: [will@gqhlobby.com](mailto:will@gqhlobby.com).

Thank you very much,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "C. Eugene Talmadge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

C. Eugene Talmadge  
AEP President  
Association of Environmental Professionals

c.c.: Assemblymember Jose Medina, Author  
Members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee