



April 30, 2020

The Honorable Sabrina Cervantes
 Chair, Assembly Committee on Jobs and Economic Development
 State Capitol, Room 5164
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support - AB 3205 (Salas): Regions Rise Grant Program

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 3205 (Salas), when it is heard in the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy on May 12, 2020. The bill creates the Regions Rise Grant Program in the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), a significant tool for sustainable and equitable economic rebuilding.

We understand the Governor and the Legislature have indicated that COVID-19 responses will be priorities during this time. Support for rebuilding regional economies that are fundamentally more inclusive, a true "California for All", must be central to that plan. Otherwise we will simply be recreating the economic conditions of widespread geographic and ethnic inequities that are aggravating the current crisis. AB 3205 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 3205 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 3205 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 an action plan cannot be underestimated in its potential for regional action and 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 current public COVID-19 health crisis, 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. As the impact of COVID-19 accelerates an economic downturn, 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 3205 and stand ready to work with the State in these efforts. We can be reached through Micah Weinberg CEO of California Forward, the sponsor of the bill, at micah@cafwd.org.

cc: Jordan Cunningham, Vice Chair, Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy
Members, Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy
Toni Symonds, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy
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Julia King, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Mary Kaems, Consultant, Office of Speaker Anthony Rendon
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