

February 9, 2026

Senator Christopher Cabaldon
1021 O Street, Suite 7320
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT – SB 299 (Cabaldon): California Environmental Quality Act Exemption, family daycare centers

Dear Sen. Cabaldon,

On behalf of the County of Monterey, I write in support of SB 299 (Cabaldon), which seeks to protect daycares from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) misuse. Senate Bill 299 expands a recently-enacted CEQA exemption for day care centers to projects located in residential areas.

CEQA is commendably intended to improve decision-making and mitigate a project's significant impacts on the environment. That being said, it is difficult to imagine that any of CEQA's original supporters could have envisioned it being used against daycare centers.

Senate Bill 131 (Budget, Chapter 24, Statutes of 2025) sought to exempt daycare centers from CEQA and thereby insulate much-needed projects from the real possibility of expensive and protracted CEQA compliance and litigation. While we sincerely appreciate the Legislature's attempt to exempt daycares from CEQA, SB 131's exemption does not apply to daycares located in "a residential area", which is where the overwhelming majority of facilities are (*and should be*) located. Instead, SB 131 merely provides a CEQA exemption for daycare facilities located in commercial, industrial, or agricultural areas. SB 299 builds upon that new exemption by expanding it to day care centers in residential areas, provided the parcel on which the project is located is not zoned exclusively for residential use.

There is a significant need for additional daycare facilities throughout the state. CEQA cannot be used to undermine the role daycare centers play in the development and enrichment of young children, especially considering the impact daycares have on children, families, and local economies. SB 299 helps providers and communities expand daycare opportunities.

For these reasons, we support SB 299 which expands a recently-enacted CEQA exemption for day care centers to projects located in residential areas. Should you have any questions, please contact Senior Policy Advisor, Ashley Walker at 916-930-7780.

Sincerely,

Wendy Root Askew
Chair
County of Monterey Board of Supervisors