



SAVE OUR CAPITOL!

May 17, 2021

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Capitol Annex Project – Opposition from CA Small Businesses

Dear Governor Newsom:

With nearly 30% of small businesses shuttered and more than one million jobs lost due to COVID-19 shutdowns, California must prioritize helping struggling employers and employees get back on their feet. Despite the state's budget surplus, we cannot be sure of the unforeseen consequences of the pandemic long-term. While we may be seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, we should proceed with caution as we work to pull ourselves out of the devastation of the last year.

It's in this vein, that we, the undersigned small business owners in the Golden State, are writing to express our deep concern with the Capitol Annex Project. On March 22, the Joint Committee on Rules held a meeting to discuss this project which would demolish-and-rebuild the Capitol Annex, build an unnecessary underground parking garage, and construct a garish visitor center, all severely impacting surrounding Park grounds. *Why are our state's elected officials prioritizing a billion-dollar luxury project when small businesses like ours are still reeling from the pandemic?*

As Californians work to emerge from this socio-economic disaster, the Annex project's outsized spending is unconscionable, especially when there are much less expensive alternatives to making the Capitol Annex a safe, comfortable and productive workspace for state officials, according to project opponents.

To ensure California resources are properly directed to where they are most needed, we ask that you pause the Capitol Annex Project to allow for a transparent review and reconsideration of the current plan.

Even with your administration expanding the state's COVID-19 Small Business Relief Grant Program, California's small businesses have a long road ahead before they reach stability. In the latest survey of its small-business-owning members, the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) found 51% applied for a second Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan or were planning to do so. The state has offered its own loan and grants, but more money is needed to jumpstart California's economy where all economic recoveries begin—Main Street.

State and federal aid to small business owners, their employees, and families have been sporadic and nowhere near enough to make them whole again. The delays and dysfunction with California's unemployment department add to the uncertainty with many facing claim backlogs and freezes resulting from fraudulent activity that has drained billions from funds.

Now is the time to make sure state resources are dedicated to economic recovery, making it ever more critical to review and reconsider costly plans like the Capitol Annex Project. Even without the pandemic, legislators

Capitol Annex Project – Opposition from CA Small Businesses should consider alternative solutions that do not waste funds and could otherwise provide economic relief to Californians.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the state is prioritizing small businesses – the backbone of California’s economy – as we all seek to emerge from the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

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