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BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY

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State of California Launches First-Ever Site Certification Program

New Program Streamlines and Facilitates State's Site Selection Process

(SACRAMENTO) -- In an ongoing effort to support new investment and retention of expanding industries in California, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Dale E. Bonner today announced the creation of a new statewide program aimed at allowing commercial and industrial building projects to commence more quickly than ever before. The newly created Site Certification Program allows local governments to register commercial or industrial sites that are "project ready," and market them as locations for new business investment and expansion.

"As California faces increasing competition from other states for new or relocating businesses, we must work together in finding new ways to reduce business costs and ease the process of expanding or relocating to California," said Bonner. "By streamlining and facilitating the site-selection process in California, we can help stimulate regional business expansion and attract new investment as the current economic situation improves in communities large and small."

The Site Certification Program was developed to assist with the commercial and industrial business site selection, planning and development process in the state. The certification of a site is performed by the California Department of Real Estate (DRE) who will review required materials to ensure a site meets specific criteria including, but not limited to, verification and availability of utilities, site access, environmental concerns, land use conformance and potential site development costs. The DRE will provide a current inventory of commercial and industrial sites that are available for purchase or lease, have the support of local permitting authorities, meet current evaluation criteria for various commercial and industrial uses and are readily available for project development or initiation of use in the shortest time possible.

"We should all compliment the State of California on establishing a program that will make California communities more competitive in the real estate market," said Wayne Schell, President and CEO of the California Association for Local Economic Development. "This is a great way of recognizing the forward-thinking communities that invest in the future of their economy by providing certified sites that are ready for business."

The DRE, which will be working in partnership with local and regional economic development agencies, utility companies, commercial realtors, and other economic development professionals, has already approved three sites and that number is expected to increase as the program gains exposure. The current certified sites are located in the cities of Redding and Apple Valley and one in Riverside County.

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“By working together over the past year, state and local stakeholders have developed a statewide program that will help local governments showcase opportunities for employers looking to expand or relocate to California as the economy continues to recover,” said Bonner. “In return for the modest up front costs of preparing sites for certification, local governments can now take the guess work out of the site location process thereby reducing relocation and expansion costs for business and accelerating the time it takes to generate much-needed jobs and tax revenue.”

Questionnaire and evaluation criteria for the State of California Site Certification Program as well as a listing of certified sites can be found at http://www.dre.ca.gov/ind_certified_sites.html

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What Others Are Saying... About California’s Newly Created Site Certification Program

Fran Inman, Chair of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

“Think this new site certification program is a great example of a state program that will facilitate the economic recovery in California. This reinforces our message that our state is indeed open for business.”

Wayne Schell, President and CEO of the California Association for Local Economic Development

“We should all compliment the State of California on establishing a program that will make California communities more competitive in the real estate market. This is a great way of recognizing the forward-thinking communities that invest in the future of their economy by providing certified sites that are ready for business.”

Kurt Starman, City Manager, City of Redding

“The City of Redding is extremely pleased that the Stillwater Business Park has been designated as one of the first “Certified Sites” under the California Site Certification Program. We feel such certification will enhance Stillwater Business Park’s attractiveness to site selectors.”

Ruben Barrales, president of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce

“California’s newly created Site Certification Program is a noble effort that provides local governments with a useful tool to enhance their own competitiveness and market their communities as premier locations for new business investment and expansion.”

Jim Wunderman, President and CEO of the Bay Area Council

“Lack of certainty in the permitting process has been a long standing obstacle for development. This program removes hurdles and creates more certainty which will spur investment and job growth.”