June 18, 2014

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PLANNING COMMISSION
Esther L. Valadez
Laura Shell
David W. Louie
Curt Petersen
Pat Modungo
200 W. Temple St., 13th floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Los Angeles County proposed Hillside Management Area and Significant Ecological Areas Ordinances

On behalf of BizFed, the Los Angeles County Business Federation, a grassroots alliance comprised of more than 120 top business organizations representing 268,000 employers with 3 million employees throughout LA County, we are writing to request that you postpone any action on proposed Hillside Management Area (HMA) and Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) ordinances until the completion of both the Fiscal Impacts Analysis of and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Review of the LA County General Plan Update.

The County must consider the fiscal and economic impacts of these ordinances, taken together with the other implementing ordinances of the General Plan. The economic benefits new residential units provide, including quality jobs, government revenue, and economic stimulus is vital to our continued economic recovery. The construction of homes is one of the largest sources of good paying new jobs that do not require post-high-school education. On average, three-fifths of a household’s income is spent in the local economy. It is our hope that the fiscal impacts analysis of the proposed LA County General Plan Update (which we understand is undergoing internal staff review and should be released in the near future) will make very clear many of these benefits.

Additionally, in reviewing the current proposed HMA and SEA ordinances, we have identified flaws that pose potentially serious threats to the region’s ability to address its expansion and housing needs in the future.

We are concerned with the dramatic expansion of the SEA land area from the current 245,000 acres to over 645,000 acres. This additional inclusion of over 400,000 acres is the equivalent of removing 1,000 square miles of land from consideration for future development. This development could be homes, schools and parks, industrial or commercial use.

The HMA guidelines are restrictive and will dramatically reduce the amount of available land for development, in addition to reducing the land yield on nearly every existing and proposed project. The proposed guidelines would mean that 40 percent of unincorporated land would not be available for future development to meet our housing and community’s needs, and fuel our economic recovery.

On behalf of BizFed, we urge the Regional Planning Commission and the County Board of Supervisors to reject the current draft ordinances and work
with stakeholders to develop processes that work. This means creating ordinances that protect our
environment while promoting a development plan that adequately addresses the needs of the region
now and in the future. But this can only be properly accomplished after all stakeholders have the
benefit of both the Fiscal Impacts Analysis of and complete CEQA review.

We look forward to continue working together to ensure balanced development policies that meet the
full scope of our region’s needs.

Sincerely,

Don St. Clair  
BizFed Chair  
Woodbury University

David Fleming  
BizFed Founding Chair  
Latham & Watkins LLP

Tracy Rafter  
BizFed Founding CEO  
IMPOWER, Inc.

CC: Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors