

California Governor Brown Signs CEQA Reform Bills

SEPTEMBER 27, 2011

by Richard Frank

Today California Governor Jerry Brown signed into law legislation amending the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to facilitate construction of both a major new sports stadium in downtown Los Angeles and large “environmental leadership development projects” involving financial commitments of at least \$10 million and that incorporate substantial urban infill or renewable energy components.

This controversial legislation, enacted in the waning hours of the California Legislature’s just-concluded session, constitutes two-thirds of a three-bill CEQA “reform package” that has previously been profiled by Legal Planet colleagues Eric Biber, Ethan Elkind and myself.

Governor Brown signed into law the so-called “stadium bill” (SB 292) and the more wide-ranging “Environmental Leadership Development Project” bill (SB 900) in a formal ceremony held today on the proposed site of the new sports stadium in downtown L.A.

Still sitting on the Governor’s desk is SB 226, the final piece of the CEQA reform package, and the bill that has the broadest potential impact on California developers, the state’s economy and environmental interests. SB 226 would “streamline” the CEQA process to facilitate development of an array of urban infill development and renewable energy projects. My guess? Governor Brown will sign that bill as well, by the end of next week.