March 14, 2016

Mary D. Nichols, Chair

California Air Resources Board

1001 I Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Southern California Consolidation Project’s Site Location - Support for Pomona Location

Dear Chair Nichols:

On behalf of the L.A. County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), an organization whose purpose is to raise standards of living for the residents of L.A. County by increasing economic opportunity and regional prosperity, please accept this letter in support of relocating the California Air Resources Board (ARB) motor vehicle and engine emissions testing and research facility to the university campus of Cal Poly Pomona.

In agreement with the *ARB Staff Report Analysis of Sites for the Southern California Relocation Project*, dated: February 11, 2016 which recommended the Pomona site, the LAEDC strongly urges ARB to adopt the staff’s site recommendation for Pomona for the following reasons:

* The Innovation Village at Cal Poly Pomona has a history of consummating highly productive public-private partnerships, and locating the testing and research facility there will leverage ARB's investment, as faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students share and exchange ideas with ARB, intern at the facility, and gain work experience that will effectively create a ready pool of talent as ARB seeks experienced new employees.
* The highly experienced employees who are currently staffing these operations in El Monte will be able to remain with ARB more easily with a transition to nearby Pomona. In contrast, a location change to Riverside would add to commute times and road congestion, with negative air quality impacts and likely increase attrition of these valued employees. Indeed, the *Staff Report* specifies that a move to Riverside would “likely involve relocation, resignation, or retirement of ARB employees,” keeping ARB in L.A. County “would likely retain more of ARB’s existing and highly trained workforce necessary to support ARB’s ability to carry out its responsibilities” and “would be much less disruptive to ARB’s operations because there would [be] less disruption to ARB employees.” In fact, the *Staff Report* found that “approximately 85 percent of the respondents prefer the Pomona site.” They cited commute distance and time, the impact a move to Riverside would make on their personal lives and families, and the impact to their work.
* A Pomona location would allow employees to complete field/outreach tasks within a single day, versus overnight, making Pomona a more efficient choice for timely completion of projects.
* Based on the economic contribution of the 400 individual employees, and the accompanying economic development components such as housing, retail, spousal jobs, etc., there is a strong rationale for keeping these jobs in LA County. Figure 10 in your *Staff Report* shows most of the El Monte ARB employees currently reside around LA and these employees are already engrained in LA County. Moving to Riverside would have a wider negative effect on L.A. County beyond these 400 jobs.
* Finally, a relocation to Riverside would prove costly for the State. As stated in the *Staff Report*, ARB is required per the recently revised Professional Engineers in California Government (PECG) Bargaining Unit 9 MOU with California to pay relocation expenses to qualified employees, which effects “almost 80% of the staff,” at an estimated cost of “$1.0 million to about $7.3 million” to the State.

For all of these reasons, the LAEDC strongly encourages ARB to adopt the *Staff Report* recommendation. We look forward to hearing the results of the March 17th Board meeting and sincerely hope that ARB will retain these operations in LA County.

If you need additional information, please contact myself or my staff at 213-236-4847.

Sincerely,



David Flaks,

President

Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC)

*The LAEDC is a 501(c)(3) organization*