Thank you for everything you do to implement economic development solutions to benefit our businesses, jurisdictions, and regions to improve the quality of life for all Californians. As your voice at the state level, we proactively speak to leaders and policymakers about the work you do—reminding many that every day you implement programs and policies to develop an environment where businesses can thrive and create opportunities for our residents. This has become increasingly more important as we hear “economic development” used to further policy agendas and create influence—not always by people that do the work of economic development.

The broad use of economic development in policy conversations gives us the chance to share that economic development is the creation of wealth through which community benefits are realized. It is not business development for the sake of growing business. It is a strategic approach to creating an environment where businesses consistent with the vision and values of a community can be successful and create meaningful employment opportunities for residents. Also, through those combined outcomes, jurisdictions receive more revenues and can continue to provide the program and services that residents and businesses require.

Additionally, economic developers design and implement programs to meet the unique needs of their community—it is not one-size-fits-all; so, some success metrics may vary between communities, while others may be more common such as job creation, number and type of businesses, and income levels. My hope in sharing this with you is that it gives you context and language to discuss what economic development is and your role with your residents, businesses, and leadership.

As the State of California prepares to launch the California Economic Resiliency Fund (CERF) program, economic developers and local governments should keep an eye out for how to participate and propose projects that could be transformational to your region’s future. We will continue to share information about CERF as we see it, as well as share any model practices we see in case this helps your efforts. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to me, our staff, and our board of directors and advisors if we can assist you.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season and great success in the New Year.

Sincerely,

Gurbax Sahota

Thank you.

We wanted to express our gratitude to our wonderful members for all the work you do every day to make this state better and to provide opportunities for all Californians.

—The CALED Team