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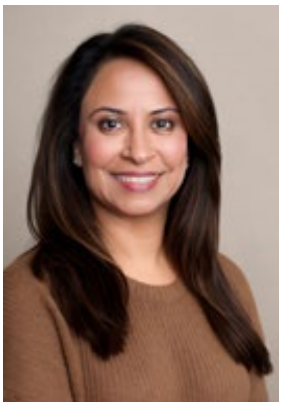
From the Desk of the CEO

Dear CALED Members,



The holidays are here and as we look forward to 2026, we are working hard on your behalf to close out 2025 strong. As part of CALED's role in promoting economic development and providing an opportunity for local economic developers to engage directly with candidates in the gubernatorial race, the Board of Directors met with two gubernatorial candidates so far. This Journal includes summaries of meetings with former California Controller, the Honorable Betty Yee and former Los Angeles Mayor, the Honorable Antonio Villaraigosa. Here are some additional highlights for the rest of the year:

- We are supporting the issuance of several bond projects that are scheduled to close by 12/31/25.
- We will be presenting at the League's Municipal Finance Event alongside board members PJ Gagajena and Leni Zarate, as well as Scott Wagner from Santa Rosa.
- We will be working on potential legislation that CALED may wish to sponsor.
- We are also planning our January Rural Exchange.
- And, of course, planning for our annual conference will be in full swing with our promotion and registration due to kick off soon.

Not only are we close to the end of the calendar year, we are nearing the end of celebrating our 45th anniversary year. When CALED began, we didn't even have enough economic developers to fill a full board. Today, we represent more than 1,000 members across the state — professionals who work every day to help California's businesses grow, create jobs, strengthen local economies, and generate the revenue communities rely on to serve their residents. That growth didn't happen by accident. It happened because of the engagement and leadership of those who built the foundation of the profession in California, and those of you who show, through your work, the value of economic development and help drive us forward.

Over the last 45 years, we've expanded our reach and our impact. Through the California Academy for Economic Development and the California Enterprise Development Authority, we've deepened our ability to support our members — launching the Accredited California Economic Developer (ACE) accreditation program and facilitating more than $2 billion in project financing, respectively. Those resources have allowed us to reinvest in our mission and continue advancing the profession statewide.

Reflecting on our 45th year and looking ahead to 2026, I'm continually amazed at the work professional economic developers do to help businesses and communities. It's an honor for me and our CALED team to be your champions, your support, and to deliver on the mission of your association.

Thank you for making a difference and being part of CALED!

Sincerely,
Gurbax