



CALIFORNIA CAPITOL HISTORIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Sacramento --Three former (retired) Democratic California Senators and one former Republican Assemblyman joined leading architectural and park preservationists to call upon the Legislative leadership against spending over a billion dollars to demolish and rebuild the historic State Capitol East Annex and construct a new visitors center that would ruin the historical appearance of the Capitol's historic West front the gateway to the Capitol.

Former Senate pro Tem James Mills of San Diego, Senators Alan Sieroty of Los Angeles, Quentin Kopp of San Francisco, and Assemblyman Bill Bagley of San Rafael stated the following: "We applaud Governor Newsom placing a pause on construction of state building projects amid the coronavirus pandemic that has shut down the economy affecting millions of workers."

These former legislators also urged the public to support the *California Capitol Historic Preservation Society*, *Save Our Capitol* and *Public Accountability for Our Capitol* (PAC) organizations in contacting their local representatives to oppose "the needless destruction of the East Annex, the terrible environmental impact on the Capitol's facade and its park by destroying over 60 trees to expand an underground parking garage."

Governor Newsom removed \$775 million in general funds from construction of a new annex, authorized by SB 836, the enabling legislation, due to "coronavirus deficits." After general funds were confiscated from the Capitol Annex Project, Joint Rules Committee Chair Ken Cooley decided to utilize leased revenue bonds to finance construction of a new annex. At the last JRC hearing, Cooley made it clear that that the annex undertaking would solely be by the Legislature and not the Governor.

"This is an urgent issue that involves the imminent destruction of historical state property, the senseless expenditure of a billion dollars of state funds and apparently numerous violations of state law and regulations," Senator Mills declared. "The Joint Rules Committee has continually ignored and thwarted the Historic State Capitol Commission in its proper pursuit of its statutory duties and responsibilities with regard to this project."

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Senator Quentin Kopp (D-SF) stated: "During budget hearings in May 1994, Senators Al Alquist (D-San Jose), Nicholas Petris (D-Oakland), Dan Boatwright (D-Concord) and I led an effort to eliminate \$45 million to demolish and construct a new Museum of Science and Industry in Los Angeles. Los Angeles legislators pushed a bill through the Legislature requiring that the normal review process be bypassed and those funds be allocated for a new museum. At issue was whether the museum should be completely replaced or simply rehabilitated to make it earthquake safe -- at a cost of less than \$16 million.

"I persuaded the Senate Budget Committee to adopt a budget amendment cancelling all funding for the project. That put the issue before the Joint Budget Committee that set a special hearing on the museum," said Kopp. "As a result, we held up the entire 1994-95 \$55 billion state budget for five days that required a two thirds vote of both houses.

"We were against tearing down the buildings and rebuilding them, contrary to usual preservation procedures -- and somewhat illegal. Similarly now, we don't think the State of California can afford to use lease revenue bond money for a billion dollar project when there are critical demands to help the needy during this plague.

" Senator Petris fought the project because he felt that the state law requiring preservation of historic buildings was being circumvented. Senator Boatwright believed it was an example of improper behavior that should have been investigated. Our State Capitol, a national landmark, deserves the same kind of attention that the Museum of Science and Industry was given, a dedication to preserving its wonderful facade and its beautiful Rose Garden."

"This is the one of the first times in my life that I have ever agreed with Quentin Kopp," said former Republican Assemblyman Bill Bagley. "We urge the Senate pro Tem and Assembly Speaker to put a stop to this truly mindless and misdirected so-called 'progress.'"

San Diego Architect Milford Wayne Donaldson FAIA, Chair of CCHPS, formerly served as Chair of the State Historical Safety Building Board, created by legislation introduced by Senator Mills. Donaldson later served as Chairman of the California Preservation Foundation, as State Historic Preservation Officer, Chair of the State Capitol Historic Capitol Commission and Chair of President Obama's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The Society Chair stated the following:

"Former Governor Pete Wilson issued Executive Order W-26-93 that states all government agencies shall preserve historic buildings, if feasible. Not only is rehabilitation less expensive in dollars, but it is far more labor intensive. It would provide many jobs more quickly than new construction. On both sides of the rehabilitation coin we would see much greater social responsibility by the Legislature in a time where state funds are desperately needed to fight the plague and wild forest fires caused by climate change."

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