CALIFORNIA SENATE
REPUBLICANS

FACT SHEET

SB 954 (D-Blakespear) Negates CEQA Exemptions Enacted Last Year, Swaps in Potential Pay-to-Play Rules

As of May 22, 2026

- Just last year the Legislature approved and the governor signed SB 131 (Budget, 2025) that provided the existing broad CEQA exemption for advanced manufacturing that SB 954 seeks to upend.
- When SB 131 was being debated it was made very clear that it would make it less onerous for manufacturers to build facilities and make it more difficult for special interests to demand concessions to large projects by abusing CEQA's environmental review process.
- Now, SB 954 proponents want to eliminate the broad CEQA exemption put in place a year ago that gave everyone the same opportunity and replace it with a process in which the governor will select the advanced manufacturing projects to be provided with a CEQA exemption. It returns opportunity for special interests to leverage the process.
- The SB 954 process will be costly and complicated to meet. The process also will be ripe for secret deals with NDAs to flourish. (Think Panera-gate.) Politicians picking winners and losers might be good for the politicians and their moneyed special interest friends, but it's not good for Californians.
- SB 954 will reward large multi-national corporations with close government connections and deep pockets… just like the governor's pandemic shutdowns rewarded large big-box stores while punishing small businesses. CEQA relief will exist only for the most wealthy and well-connected project applicants.