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LEGISLATION TO SUPPORT CALIFORNIA'S HISTORIC COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS MOVES FORWARD

Sacramento, Calif., (April 27, 2023) – The California Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports and Tourism along with the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy have both voted to approve AB 1669, the **California Historically Significant Commercial District Initiative**.

The measure passed unanimously with bipartisan support through the two Committees and now moves to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

The bill was introduced to the Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports and Tourism by **Committee Chair** and **Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva** (D - Fullerton) with **Senator Benjamin Allen**, Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on the Arts as its' Principal Co-Author. The bill supports entrepreneurial development within California's historic commercial districts, including Main Streets and Cultural Districts.

The global pandemic created numerous challenges for small businesses, particularly those owned by women and minorities, and spurred increased rates of entrepreneurship. Supporting existing and new small businesses can bolster California's economy, as 88.7% of all workers in California are employed in businesses with fewer than 20 employees. New support mechanisms are available statewide, but to reach underserved small businesses, new strategies must be deployed.

"At the heart of California's communities, historically and culturally significant commercial corridors are places where diverse small businesses can thrive. We recognize that these businesses face specific challenges to succeed," said **Committee Chair, Assemblywoman Quirk-Silva**. "Through place-based strategies and tailored support services, we can help local small businesses grow and connect to broader networks of support."

Through AB 1669, training and technical assistance will be offered to Main Streets and Cultural Districts by organizations like **California Main Street** that support our state's historic commercial districts, to bolster their ability to conduct place-specific outreach to small businesses and connect businesses within these districts to the broader network of small business services through Go-Biz and other agencies. Additionally, Main Streets and Cultural Districts themselves will be eligible for subgrants to help execute their locally driven strategies.

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“Our small businesses are the heartbeat of our community,” said **Senator Allen**. “Supporting small businesses while simultaneously revitalizing historically and culturally significant commercial districts is a win-win, creating resilient communities.”

“We are so grateful to Assemblywoman Quirk-Silva and Senator Allen for working to pass this initiative on behalf of our Main Street Organizations and Cultural Districts who sent over 20 letters of support,” said **Amanda Elliott, Senior Program Officer and Director of California Main Street at Main Street America**. “Investing in the networks already in place to support engagement with disadvantaged small businesses creates opportunities for greater impact and underscores the importance of a community’s cultural identity.”

As the Chair of the Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports and Tourism, **Assemblywoman Quirk-Silva** is committed to support historically and culturally significant places and the small businesses that operate within them.

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California Main Street (CAMS) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working with a diverse network of 30+ communities statewide to foster local economic development and enhance quality of life through a place-based model that fosters inclusive transformation strategies. CAMS supports these efforts by providing training, access to resources, partnership opportunities, and best practices to our members and affiliates. For more information, visit www.CaliforniaMainStreet.org.

CAMS is administered by **Main Street America**, a nation-wide network of 1200+ organizations committed to strengthening communities through preservation-based economic development in older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. For more than 40 years, Main Street America has provided a practical, adaptable, and impactful framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization through the Main Street Approach™. Main Street America is a nonprofit subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. For more information, visit www.mainstreet.org.