



**CACEO**

**California Association of Code Enforcement Officers**

May 1, 2020

Honorable Reginald Jones-Sawyer  
Member of the California Assembly  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer:

The California Association of Code Enforcement Officers (CACEO) is pleased to sponsor Assembly Bill 3319, which will provide more thorough, and much needed, protections for our officers. Our organization commends you for introducing this very, very important bill. Code Enforcement is an inherently dangerous profession. Too often, Code Enforcement Officers encounter individuals who defiantly refuse to comply with a city's local codes that impact the quality of life in a local community. It is not unusual for Code Enforcement Officers to be threatened, harassed, or even assaulted. Frequently, alienated individuals will come to the home of a Code Enforcement Officer to confront them, an unhappy event that even happened to the CACEO President three months ago. Tragically, there have been Code Enforcement Officers even murdered in the line of duty. Physical threats, intimidation and assaults are all too common an experience for Code Enforcement Officers while they protect our communities.

In addition, Code Enforcement Officers are charged with enforcing State and local housing laws and various pest, mold, lead and other regulations concerning hazardous conditions. This work is critical to improving the housing conditions, health, safety and quality of life for millions of Californians. However, it exposes Code Enforcement Officers to a range of hazardous conditions and environments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these health threats to Code Enforcement Officers has been significantly increased, as they have had to continue their important safety work despite the additional hazards posed by the pandemic, and have even been charged with enforcing the State and local health orders.

Assembly Bill 3319 is a simple but extremely critical piece of Legislation. This bill would require each local jurisdiction that employs code enforcement officers to develop safety standards appropriate for the code enforcement officers employed in their jurisdiction based on the nature of their work and the issues they face. For example, a city might decide to restructure its organization chart so that its Code Enforcement Officers might have the confidentiality of their home addresses protected; or they might require that a Code Enforcement Officer be

accompanied by a colleague or even a peace officer to certain field assignments; training on de-escalation strategies might be provided; sufficient protective equipment might be provided a Code Enforcement Officer; proper hazardous waste protections, clothing, masks, respirators and gloves may be provided; or any of a number of other strategies designed to protect a Code Enforcement Officer based on the nature and unique challenges of his or her assignment. AB 3319 does not contain a specific one size fits all laundry list of to do items, but correctly vests discretion with the employing agency to come up with the best guidelines suited to the particular challenges of those Code Enforcement Officers they do employ. This recognizes that Code Enforcement Officers deal with a very broad array of health and safety, and quality of life issues throughout the State.

While most or all cities have developed safety standards for peace officers and firefighters, and may believe these adequately would protect Code Enforcement Officers as well, this is incorrect. First, many jurisdictions do not have any safety standards applicable to Code Enforcement Officers. Second, those standards rarely apply to Code Enforcement Officers, or reflect the unique situations Code Enforcement Officers deal with, or the fact that they are civilian enforcement officials lacking the protection measures from which peace officers benefit. Simply put, Code Enforcement Officers lack adequate, and in many cases, any protection or safety standards, while they continue to risk their safety, health and lives protecting our communities.

Assembly Bill 3319 is about the safety of our officers, and protecting those who protect our communities; as such, it is our highest Legislative priority of this Legislative session. Again, we commend you for introducing this bill and look forward to working collaboratively with you to secure its enactment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Lovell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Lovell  
Legislative Counsel

CC: Gregory Pagan, Chief Counsel, Assembly Committee on Public Safety  
Gary Olson, Republican Counsel, Assembly Committee on Public Safety