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**PLANNING AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

Planning  
Community Development  
Administrative Operations

RE: **Declaration of Consultant Nondisclosure Agreement and Waiver by Project Applicant**

Dear Applicant:

When preparing Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Planning and Natural Resources Department allows the applicant to contract directly with consultants for necessary background studies, provided the environmental studies are factual and objectively prepared. The Department reviews consultant-prepared administrative draft environmental documents prior to public review to ensure that they are objective, factual, and conform to the Department's standards for EIR preparation. As the Lead Agency for CEQA, the Department relies on the information provided to be complete and accurate in its disclosure of baseline information and environmental effects. Section 15003(i) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that the County's CEQA document be adequate, complete, and a good-faith effort at full disclosure.

The Department is aware that confidentiality agreements are sometimes included by applicants in contracts with consultants for studies related to development projects particularly for work done prior to application and direct work on any draft EIR or related studies. These agreements can restrict the preparers of studies and documents from disclosing specified information to any third party without the permission of the applicant, which would be contrary to the Department's objective to prepare an environmental document that is complete and represents a good-faith effort at full disclosure.

Accordingly, the Department requires that every applicant involving an EIR complete and sign the attached Declaration of Consultant Nondisclosure Agreement and Waiver prior to the preparation and public circulation of the environmental document.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Department Staff in the Plan Development Division. Your compliance with this requirement is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorelei H. Oviatt".

LORELEI H. OVIATT, AICP, Director  
Kern County Planning and Natural  
Resources Department

