

Press Release

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Eminent Domain Reform Ballot Measure Turns in Signatures Diverse Coalition Seeks to End Abusive Seizure of Private Property

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Sacramento, CA - Californians for Property Rights Protection announced today that they are submitting more than one million signatures to qualify the California Property Owners and Farmland Protection Act (CPOFPA) for the June 2008 ballot. This eminent domain reform measure will stop government from taking homes, family farms, small business and places of worship and giving the land to other private interests.

"We are submitting this ballot measure to prevent government from snatching private property from unwilling sellers to benefit wealthy and politically connected developers," said former Senator Jim Nielsen and chairman of the California Alliance to Protect Private Property Rights. "California law needs to be changed to protect all California property owners from eminent domain abuse."

"Our members have worked hard to achieve their piece of the American Dream," said California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce Chairman Ken Macias. "Hispanic business owners deserve private property protections. This initiative is the only measure that will appear on the June ballot that protects our members from eminent domain abuse."

"California's economy and jobs are dependent on the success of small business owners," said National Federation of Independent Business California executive director John Kabateck. "California laws need to be changed to prohibit the kind of eminent domain abuse that allows government to profit by seizing homes and small businesses and giving it to politically connected developers."

"Eminent domain abuse is putting California family farms and ranches at risk," said Linden farmer Kenny Watkins, second vice president of the California Farm Bureau Federation. "We need this measure to protect against sprawl and assure that farmland stays in private ownership, so it can continue to provide the food and farm products that Californians need."

"Simply stated, our ballot measure protects all California property owners," said Howard Jarvis Taxpayer Association president Jon Coupal. "Never again will government use eminent domain to destroy a person's home and livelihood."

Since the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Kelo v. New London* case two years ago, California is not among the more than 40 states that have reformed their eminent domain laws. Today, public agencies continue to seize private property from unwilling sellers for private projects that benefit wealthy and politically connected developers.

According to [independent analysis](#) of the CPOFPA by the Institute for Justice, a non-profit organization that litigated the *Kelo* case, "California is one of the biggest abusers of eminent domain in the country." They added, "While CPOFPA would stop governments and redevelopment agencies from taking property for private uses, traditional uses of eminent domain for public use will not be affected."

The ballot measure does the following:

- Prohibits government from using eminent domain for private purposes, while allowing eminent domain to be used for legitimate public uses like building roads, schools, other government buildings and water projects.
- Provides procedural reforms and full compensation when property is seized for public purposes, including lifting the current \$10,000 cap on reimbursable expenses associated with legal and other expenses for those property owners displaced by eminent domain.

- To protect the State's food supply and open space, prohibits public agencies from seizing family farms, ranches and other property in order to acquire water rights or acquire farmland land to further enable urban sprawl.
- Prohibits government from setting the price at which property owners sell or lease their property, but does not affect tenants currently living in rent-regulated communities.

The California Property Owners and Farmland Protection Act is sponsored by the [Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association](#), the [California Farm Bureau Federation](#) and the [California Alliance to Protect Private Property Rights](#). The ballot measure has been endorsed by NFIB, the Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, the Black Chamber of Commerce and a diverse coalition of taxpayer, faith-based groups and good government organizations. For more information regarding the CPOFPA measure, visit <http://www.yesonpropertyrights.com/>.

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