



1400 K Street, Suite 400 • Sacramento, California 95814
Phone: (916) 658-8200 Fax: (916) 658-8240
www.cacities.org

Sept. 21, 2011

Contact: Eva Spiegel, (916) 658-8228
Cell: (530) 400-9068

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**League of California Cities Honors Senators Bob Huff
and Rod Wright as its 2011 Legislators of the Year**

SAN FRANCISCO — Sens. Robert Huff (R-Diamond Bar) and Roderick Wright (D-Los Angeles) were recipients of the League of California Cities' 2011 Legislators of the Year award, which was announced today at the League's 2011 Annual Conference and Expo in San Francisco.

The top honor award was given to the Senators in appreciation for their efforts to protect local redevelopment agencies during a tumultuous legislative session. Both Senators saw the value of redevelopment as an effective tool to build infrastructure, affordable housing, clean up brownfields, and create hundreds of thousands of jobs both in construction and in the manufacturing, retail, and service industries. Both Senators also voted against efforts to eliminate the agencies.

The state Supreme Court is currently reviewing the constitutionality of legislation passed as part of the state budget process that sought to take revenues from redevelopment.

The award was presented to Sen. Wright during Wednesday's general session. The Senator stood out from his Democratic colleagues by refusing to vote for Gov. Jerry Brown's redevelopment elimination proposal in March, causing the proposal to stall for three months.

Sen. Wright then worked with local agencies to develop a package of redevelopment reforms that contained SB 286, sponsored by the California Redevelopment Association, and supported by the League and other organizations. Senator Wright also authored SB 1x 24, an alternative redevelopment financing proposal that would have been a positive outcome for local agencies and the state.

League Executive Director Chris McKenzie expressed his appreciation for Sen. Wright's dedication to redevelopment despite the political pressure from the Governor to fold. McKenzie said, "Sen. Wright told the Governor 'no' because he knows the value of redevelopment in our cities. He has been instrumental in the battle to protect redevelopment and the League commends him for his virtue."

-more-

Upon receiving his award, Sen. Wright thanked the League saying, "I was proud to partner with the League of Cities in the fight to save redevelopment. There is still much to do to ensure the good work our redevelopment agencies have done to curb blight and establish quality low-income housing continues."

While Sen. Huff was not available Wednesday to attend the meeting, he will be presented with the award during the League's board of directors meeting in November. The Senator was involved in countless meetings with his Senate Republican colleagues, and they sought to put together a larger budget agreement with the Governor. Although the Governor and Republicans did not ultimately reach agreement on a comprehensive budget package Sen. Huff was intent on making sure that redevelopment was preserved.

McKenzie spoke about Sen. Huff's leadership saying, "Given his knowledge and experience with redevelopment Senator Huff quickly was referred to by his Republican colleagues as the 'quarterback on redevelopment' and as you know, every team needs a quarterback. He is definitely a top pick for League in the battle of redevelopment."

The League contacted Sen. Huff prior to the League's annual conference and he was humbled by this award. "This recognition is a tremendous honor," said Sen. Huff. "Having served for nine years as mayor and council member of Diamond Bar, I view policy decisions not only through the eyes of the State Legislature, but through my city experience as well. It is my honor to represent the needs of cities in the state Legislature."

Founded in 1898, the League of California Cities is an association of California city officials who work together to enhance their knowledge and skills, exchange information, and combine resources so that they may influence policy decisions that affect cities. The League's mission is to restore and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy to enhance the quality of life for all Californians.

###