Figure B
CEQA Flow Chart for Local Agencies

Application received
30-day review
Application accepted as complete

Public Agency determines whether the activity is a "project"

Project
Public Agency determines if the project is exempt

Not Exempt
Public agency prepares initial study to determine if the project may have a significant effect on environment

30 days (optional 15-day extension)
Lead agency completed initial study

Lead agency decision to prepare EIR or Negative Declaration

EIR
Lead agency sends Notice of Preparation to responsible agency

30-day Review Period
Lead agency prepares draft EIR

Lead agency files Notice of Completion and gives public notice of availability of draft EIR

Negative Declaration
Lead Agency gives public notice of availability of draft Negative Declaration

30-day Public Review Period (30 days for local projects)
Consideration and approval of Negative Declaration by decision-making body

NOTES
Total time for a Negative Declaration, from complete application to adoption of the Negative Declaration equals 180 days (Pub. Res. Code section 21151.5, Guidelines section 15107).

Total time for an EIR, from complete application to certification of the EIR equals one year (Pub. Res. Code section 21151.5, Guidelines section 15108).

Pub. Res. Code section 21151.5 allows a "reasonable extension" of these periods when agreeable to both the lead agency and the project applicant, and when compelling circumstances exist. Guidelines section 15108 defines this for EIRs as one 90-day extension.

Guidelines section 15109 provides that the running of these time periods may be suspended when there is "unreasonable delay" by the applicant in providing to the lead agency material necessary to complete the Negative Declaration or EIR.