



FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY
Office of the Director

May 1, 2014

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: California Property Assessed Clean Energy Program

Dear Governor Brown:

Thank you for your letter of April 28, 2014 about California's Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program. The Federal Housing Finance Agency's (FHFA) General Counsel has been in touch with your staff, and I appreciate the time and materials they have provided concerning California's PACE program and intentions in creating the Reserve Fund.

I am writing to inform you that FHFA is not prepared to change its position on California's first-lien PACE program and will continue to prohibit the Enterprises from purchasing or refinancing mortgages that are encumbered with first-lien PACE loans. California's PACE program would allow local governments to finance energy-related home improvement projects by placing an assessment on a homeowner's property in a first lien position, resulting in the subordination of an existing Enterprise-backed mortgage to a second lien position. The effect of this is to increase the risks and possibility of losses to the Enterprises. Additionally, because these loans run with the land, the ongoing monthly assessments for PACE loans are passed on to any subsequent property owners – including after a foreclosure or other distressed sale – unless fully paid off beforehand.

In making this determination, FHFA has carefully reviewed the Reserve Fund created by the State of California and, while I appreciate that it is intended to mitigate these increased losses, it fails to offer full loss protection to the Enterprises. The Reserve Fund is not an adequate substitute for Enterprise mortgages maintaining a first lien position and FHFA also has concerns about the Reserve Fund's ongoing sustainability.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, I would be happy to discuss alternatives to first-lien PACE programs with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Melvin L. Watt", is written over the "Sincerely," line.

Melvin L. Watt

xc: The Honorable Barbara Boxer
The Honorable Zoe Lofgren