

February 26, 2026

President and Members of the California Architects Board
2420 Del Paso Road, Suite 105
Sacramento, CA 95834

Re: AB 1796 – Opposition

Dear President and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the California Legislative Coalition for Interior Designers (CLCid), we respectfully submit this letter in opposition to AB 1796.

CLCid is the coalition *of* interior designers *for* interior designers. Our unified mission is to protect every interior designer's right to practice in California while maintaining high standards of competency, accountability, and public safety. We represent designers across education routes, practice areas, and affiliations, and we serve as the collective voice of independent practitioners and small firms throughout the state.

We wish to state clearly that CLCid supports strong professional standards and the protection of public health, safety, and welfare. Our concern with AB 1796 is not about accountability. It is about structure.

Interior designers currently practice within the California Building Code. Plans are reviewed. Life safety provisions are enforced. Architects and engineers retain their defined statutory responsibilities. The regulatory and professional framework within which interior designers practice today is collaborative and functions effectively.

AB 1796 does not arise from a documented failure in that framework. Instead, it redraws professional boundaries. The bill narrows the scope under which interior designers currently practice and shifts portions of long-standing interior design work to architects. At the same time, it requires interior designers to obtain a new state license simply to continue practicing interior design under a more restrictive model.

This is not a modest adjustment. It is an unnecessary restructuring of a profession that is already operating safely within the existing system.

The bill also divides interior designers into separate regulatory classes. No other built environment profession bifurcates itself in this manner. Architects are not divided into separate licensure tracks based on project type. Engineers are not separated into parallel systems based on market segment. Creating two tiers within interior design weakens the profession rather than strengthening public protection.

While larger firms may be able to absorb these changes, the impact on small and independent businesses would be significant. Interior design in California is composed largely of women-owned, minority-owned, and sole practitioner firms. These professionals depend on the ability to fully serve their clients within the existing framework.

Narrowing scope and increasing barriers to practice without a demonstrated public safety gap limits opportunity, restricts competition, and ultimately increases costs to consumers.

CLCid's position is grounded in proportional regulation. If public safety requires reform, reform is warranted. However, absent clear evidence of a systemic risk to public health, safety, or welfare, restructuring and bifurcating a profession does not enhance protection. It alters professional access and market participation without demonstrated necessity.

For these reasons, the CLCid Board of Directors respectfully urges the California Architects Board to oppose AB 1796.

We appreciate your consideration of our perspective and stand ready to provide any additional information that may assist the Board in its deliberations.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Directors
California Legislative Council for Interior Designers