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## **Vice Chair Horton, Board Member Steel and Assemblymember Lowenthal Host Successful Long Beach Business Seminar**

*Well-Attended Seminar Gives Businesses Access to Vital Information*

Jerome E. Horton, Vice Chairperson of the California State Board of Equalization, along with Board Member Michelle Steel and State Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal, hosted a successful business seminar in Long Beach. Important information related to business operations in California was shared at the event with more than 150 business owners, representing roughly 750 employees.

"In today's tough economic climate, we want to provide business owners as much information as possible to succeed," said Steel. Horton stated that "Today's seminar provided some useful tools and valuable information to enable businesses to grow and thrive in the global economy."

"I was pleased to see so many business owners taking advantage of today's seminar. They walked away with valuable information on marketing, government-backed loans, and other helpful tools to survive this difficult economic period," said Lowenthal.

Representatives from the Board of Equalization, Employment Development Department, Franchise Tax Board, Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Small Business Administration, and the Long Beach City College's Small Business Development Center presented a series of important tax tips to large audience. Participating organizations included the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater Signal Hill Chamber of Commerce, Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Cambodian American Chamber of Commerce, California Black Chamber of Commerce, East Spring Street Business Association, and the Assistance League of Long Beach.

"My Chamber members were amazed at the amount of helpful information that is available to assist businesses," said Sandy Cajas, Executive Director of the Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. "This was one of the best seminars that we have been partners on. Our business owners were able to speak one-on-one with government agencies that were willing to help them with their problems."

Vice Chairperson Jerome E. Horton is the 4th District Member of the BOE, representing more than 8.5 million residents in Los Angeles County. He is also the BOE Legislative Committee chairperson. Horton is the first African American to serve on the BOE since its inception in 1879, and the third African American constitutional officer in California's history. Horton was appointed by the Governor and confirmed by both the Assembly and the Senate in 2009. Horton previously served as an Assembly member from 2000-2006.

Elected to the Board of Equalization in 2006, Michelle Steel serves as Southern California's elected taxpayer advocate. In 2008, Steel uncovered a \$42 million mistake in the agency's sales tax refund procedures. Following her investigation, the tax agency refunded tax security deposits to over 5,500 small businesses.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$48 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit [www.taxes.ca.gov](http://www.taxes.ca.gov).

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