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August 14, 2020

Assemblymembers Rivas, Kalra, Chu, Berman, Low, Stone
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

VIA email

RE: Housing-Related Legislative Bills

Dear Assemblymembers Rivas, Kalra, Chu, Berman, Low, and Stone:

Thank you for all your work toward housing solutions in California.

We write today on behalf of the Cities Association of Santa Clara County (CASCC), an association of the fifteen cities of the county and the elected representatives of more than 1.9 million Bay-Area residents. Since 1990, the city representatives have been gathering to discuss and find consensus and solutions for regional issues. The cities of our association are diverse and include cities of a few thousand people and a city of a million people.

In an effort to provide constructive feedback on all the different housing related bills currently being considered by both the Senate and Assembly, we identified several themes and issues that are problematic and offer the following specific requests:

- Include efforts to preserve adequate open space and parkland in each jurisdiction
- Do not gut the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process because it weakens environmental protections from climate change and traffic congestion to public health
- Do not allow cities to override voter initiatives
- Question the data that claims it is cost effective to increase density in single family zoned neighborhoods because we believe it will result in increased value of the land
- Maintain and protect sufficient land space for commercial, industrial, retail and other services in each jurisdiction. This will avoid increased travel to other jurisdictions, which is counter to our GHG emission reduction goals and Climate Action Plans
- Consider the impact on the revenue generated from Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and other essential tax revenue sources and the consequential impact on cities and school districts.
- Include incentives for developers to build during the recession
- Do not take away local control from local jurisdictions
- Acknowledge there is not enough land to build all the housing
- Do not penalize cities if developers are not building housing because cities do not have control over the actual housing construction
- Make the focus increasing affordable housing units and not market rate housing
- Provide funding to cities for the construction of affordable housing
- View and treat each city as unique because the one size fits all approach does not work

- Do not push housing legislation through the legislative process at this time because the impact of COVID is still unknown
- Validate the data to confirm it supports the viability, access to and proximity of public transportation that drives the assumptions for many of the housing bills.

We respectfully request that you either vote against these bills or push to incorporate our concerns into the final bills. As you know, many of these bills could radically change our communities and unfortunately, they would still not achieve our shared goal of increasing housing, especially affordable housing units, throughout California. There is also the challenge of limited political will based on the response from our constituents.

We appreciate all that you have been able to accomplish in these unprecedented and challenging times and thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Larry Klein
President, Cities Association
Mayor, City of Sunnyvale



Neysa Fligor
Chair, Legislative Action Committee
Vice-Mayor, City of Los Altos

cc: Senators Wieckowski, Beall, Hill, Monning
League of California Cities
CASCC Board of Directors, Legislative Committee