



2017-18 OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

February 27, 2018

The Honorable Scott Wiener
California State Senate
State Capitol Building, Room 4066
Sacramento, CA 95814
VIA FAX: 916-651-4911

**RE: SB 827 (Wiener) Planning and Zoning.
*Notice of Opposition (as introduced 1/3/18)***

Dear Senator Wiener:

The Los Angeles County Division of the League of California Cities® (Division), opposes SB 827 (Wiener), which would exempt certain housing projects from locally developed and adopted height limitations, densities, parking requirements, and design review standards.

Specifically, SB 827 would undermine locally adopted General Plans, Housing Elements (which are certified by the Department of Housing and Community Development), and Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS). SB 827 allows private for-profit housing developers and transit agencies to determine housing densities, parking requirements, and design review standards within one-half mile of a “major transit stop,” or along a “high-quality transit corridor” which could be miles away from an actual bus stop. Under existing law, cities are already required to zone for densities at levels necessary to meet their entire Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). Additionally, SB 827 would provide developers a means to generate additional profits without any requirement to build affordable housing.

Exempting large-scale developments from General Plans, Housing Elements, and zoning ordinances goes against the principles of local democracy and public engagement. Public hearings allow members of the community to inform their representative of their support or concerns when planning documents are developed. Public engagement also often leads to better projects. Disregarding such processes will increase public distrust in government and could lead to more ballot measures dealing with growth management.

Last year, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed a comprehensive 15 bill “housing package”, which included measures that provided new sources of funding, streamlined the housing approval process, and increased oversight of local government land use decisions. Your bill, SB 35, was included in the package and was a significant part of the housing discussion. All of these bills just took effect on January 1, 2018, two days prior to the introduction of SB 827

Given that the significant changes to California’s housing law have only been in effect for a few weeks, the Legislature’s focus should not be on passing more bills that seek to change the rules for housing construction, but rather assist HCD with

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implementing the new laws. Importantly, HCD is already understaffed and is currently seeking a significant budget augmentation to hire additional personnel. As a result, HCD has only begun to solicit stakeholder input and involvement, and it will be many months before guidelines are issued. While there is still more work to be done to address the housing affordability and supply crisis gripping many regions of the state, the Legislature, housing developers, and cities all need adequate time to fully understand and digest the many changes to California housing law. Several Legislators have also discussed introducing a “cleanup” bill this year to address some of the inconsistencies in the “housing package.”

The Division is committed to collaboratively working with you and others on finding solutions to the housing supply and affordability crisis gripping many areas of the state. However, in its present form, the Division must oppose SB 827.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miguel Canales". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Miguel Canales
President, Los Angeles County Division
League of California Cities®

cc: Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation
Meg Desmond, League of California Cities, cityletters@cacities.org