



June 14, 2023

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing
1021 O Street, Suite 3300
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **AB 309 (Lee) Social Housing Act 2023.**
(As amended 5/1/23)
Notice of Oppose Unless Amended

Dear Senator Wiener:

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) writes to express our opposition to AB 309 (Lee), unless it is amended to address our concerns. AB 309 would create the California Housing Authority with a mission to produce and acquire social housing developments for the purpose of eliminating the gap between housing production and regional housing needs assessment targets and to preserve affordable housing.

Cal Cities strongly supports the intent of AB 309, which is to produce more housing as housing affordability and homelessness are among the most critical issues facing California cities. Affordably priced homes are out of reach for many people and housing is not being built fast enough to meet the current or projected needs of people living in the state. Cities lay the essential groundwork for housing production by planning and zoning new projects in their communities based on extensive public input and engagement, and state housing laws. Importantly, cities are currently updating housing plans to identify sites for more than 2.5 million additional housing units

Unfortunately, AB 309 would disregard this state mandated planning process and force cities to allow housing developments in nearly all areas of a city. This seriously questions the rationale for the regional housing needs allocation (RHNA) process. If the California Housing Authority can build housing on any parcel they own or acquire, why should cities go through the multiyear planning process to identify sites suitable for new housing units for those plans to be ignored and housing built on sites never considered for new housing.

Additionally, as a state entity, the California Housing Authority would have full control over the properties they own and would not be required to abide by local zoning, design standards, density requirements, height limitations, parking requirements, or other development standards.

Bypassing California's longstanding housing planning laws and local rules is not a way out of the housing crisis. That's why Cal Cities is calling on the Governor and lawmakers



to include a \$3 billion annual investment in the state budget to help cities prevent and reduce homelessness and spur affordable housing development. Targeted, ongoing funding is the only way cities can find community-based solutions that produce housing at all income levels.

For these reasons, Cal Cities respectfully opposes AB 309 unless it is amended to address our concerns. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 658-8264.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Rhine".

Jason Rhine
Assistant Director, Legislative Affairs

Cc: Assembly Member Alex Lee
Members, Senate Committee on Housing