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April 16, 2025

Aisha Wahab, Chair, Senate Housing Committee (via Legislative Portal)
Maria Elena Durazo, Chair, Senate Local Government Committee

RE: SB-677 (Weiner): OPPOSE
Housing development: streamlined approvals

Dear Senate Housing Committee & Senate Local Government Committee:

What problem is SB-677 intended to solve? This measure is intended to make it easier and faster for investor/developers to capitalize on turning areas formerly zoned as single-family neighborhoods into crowded, high-density living. It speeds up the demise of middle-class home ownership by putting more property into the hands of consolidated, corporate ownership.

What is the likelihood of success? This bill is likely to achieve the developer/investors' goals of building high-density compounds and make a profit. However, from the point of view of constituents, SB-677 undermines the California dream of home ownership in a neighborhood with gardens, parking, and amenities. It fails to enable communities to meet the inflated, unreliable Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) mandates.

What are the core problems with SB-677?

1. This measure expands top-down, state control over community planning. The state, through a bill like SB-677, ignores the unique circumstances of every community, its history, values, wishes, and needs. It enables outside developer/investors to wipe out the charm and special characteristics of a neighborhood or community, as if the state knows best.
2. Specifically, the bill would eliminate local agencies' ability to determine setback requirements, height limits, lot coverage limits, floor area ratios, or any other standard, as if the state knows best.
3. In addition, the measure would prohibit local governments from collecting impact fees for projects less than 1,750 square feet. What could be the wisdom of this provision? If the community is prohibited from collecting compensation for the added infrastructure costs of transportation, fire and police services, libraries, parks, and schools, how is a city to survive? Is that the point—Pass legislation that will bankrupt jurisdictions in order to consolidate regional/state planning and control?
4. Increasing density doesn't increase affordability. [Research](#) (*Higher Urban Densities Associated with the Worst Housing Affordability*) and [research](#) (*Density Makes Housing Less Affordable, Not More*).
5. This bill, like the earlier SB-9, is off-track by using a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach. This legislation, like other bills, careens off target because it fails to analyze the root economic causes of the housing dilemma.

Your vote to OPPOSE SB-677 matters: This bill gives advantage to outside developer/investors, but harms neighborhoods and communities, and fails to meet the need for housing that is affordable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Kirsch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Kirsch, Director
Catalysts for Local Control



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Citations:

1. <https://www.newgeography.com/content/007221-higher-urban-densities-associated-with-worst-housing-affordability>
2. <https://www.cato.org/commentary/density-makes-housing-less-affordable-not-more#>
3. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w33576> - Supply Constraints do not Explain House Price and Quantity Growth Across U.S. Cities; [Schuyler Louie](#), [John A. Mondragon](#) & [Johannes Wieland](#)
4. <https://48hills.org/2025/03/new-study-by-fed-economists-directly-contradicts-yimby-narrative-on-housing-prices/>
5. <https://sfstandard.com/2023/12/22/san-francisco-record-low-housing-permits-despite-shortage/>