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April 11, 2025

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

RE: SB-79 (Wiener): OPPOSE

Local government land: public transit use: housing development: transit-oriented development.

Dear Senate Housing Committee & Senate Local Government Committee:

What problem is SB-79 intended to solve? Supporters of this bill seem convinced that micro-managed policy along bus routes will meet the need for affordable housing. Senator Wiener reasons that restrictive zoning causes housing shortages. He claims building near transit will increase ridership and revenue, *which will generate sustainable funding for the transit agency.*

What is the likelihood of success? Like the majority of housing bills enacted since 2017, SB-79 will be a win for large-scale transit and housing developers, but it won't solve the key issue: We need affordable housing and home-ownership opportunities, with state funding, for average California wage-earners.

What is the core problem? The core problem is that legislators rely on housing assumptions that are wrong. New research shows that state requirements that cities relinquish local planning and community participation does not increase supply or affordability. In March, the [National Bureau of Economic Research](#) published the report entitled, *Supply Constraints do not Explain House Price and Quantity Growth Across U.S. Cities*. The carefully researched project [is reported on in 48 Hills](#) with the title, *New study by fed economists directly contradicts yimby narrative on housing prices*. See Citations, page 2, for more evidence.

Instead of adding pressure to the old top-down, punish-the-cities-for-what-they-have-no-control-over model, it's time to recognize what your constituents recognize. Housing policy is destroying what we love about our communities. Something is wrong when you open the floodgates to drastic housing and transit development, without evidence of meeting the need for affordable housing!

Your vote to OPPOSE SB-79 matters: Don't tinker. Stop this over-reaching bill in its tracks. Join the League of California Cities and other groups. Stand with your constituents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Kirsch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Kirsch".

Susan Kirsch, Director
Catalysts for Local Control



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Citations:

1. <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](#)
2. <https://48hills.org/2025/03/new-study-by-fed-economists-directly-contradicts-yimby-narrative-on-housing-prices/>
3. <https://www.newgeography.com/content/007221-higher-urban-densities-associated-with-worst-housing-affordability>
4. <https://www.cato.org/commentary/density-makes-housing-less-affordable-not-more#>
5. <https://sfstandard.com/2023/12/22/san-francisco-record-low-housing-permits-despite-shortage/>