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May 11, 2025

To: Senator Mike McGuire, Senate Pro-Tem – Senator.McGuire@senate.ca.gov
Cc: Senator.Wahab@senate.ca.gov, Senator.Seyarto@senate.ca.gov, Senator.Durazo@senate.ca.gov,
Senator.Choi@senate.ca.gov, Senator.Wiener@senate.ca.gov

Re: SB-79 (Wiener) OPPOSE

Dear Senator McGuire:

Thank you for your Senate leadership and thoughtful appointments of the chair and vice-chair of the Senate Housing Committee and the Senate Local Government Committee.

What problem is SB-79 intended to solve? Senator Wiener’s bill to address the state’s housing affordability crisis by building multi-family, high density housing near transit misses the mark. A [study by Fed economists](#) directly contradicts the YIMBY narrative on housing. The [National Bureau of Economic Research](#) found that “restrictive zoning” does not cause housing shortage. This bill changes the Surplus Land Act, foolishly increasing the power of transportation agencies to use eminent domain, thus increasing the chance of fraud.

What’s at stake? Californians, including leadership on both the Senate Housing and Local Government committees, oppose pro-development activities categorized under the “abundance” platform. The League of CA Cities opposes SB-79 and so do nearly 100 jurisdictions listed in the staff report.

Constituents agree we need housing for renters and first-time home buyers. SB-79 goes too far with its bright green light to developer/investors and a red light to local officials representing safety, fiscal responsibility, and community well-being. The TOD model doesn’t work. After five+ years of YIMBY experimentation, we see their policies neither increase affordability nor reduce homelessness. Cities carry unsustainable financial burdens when bills are passed as unfunded mandates.

What’s a solution? Allow SB-79 to die in Appropriations. Then return to the wisdom and stewardship of collaborative environmental and community planning and implementation. Support the thoughtful leadership you appointed to the policy committees.

		Housing Committee	Local Government Committee
Sen. Wahab, Chair	D-10, Hayward	No	
Sen. Seyarto, VC	R-32, Riverside	No	No
Sen. Durazo, Chair	D-26, Ventura		No
Sen. Choi, VC	R-37, Orange		No

Senator McGuire, your research and intuition to appoint the leaders you did was right on. We urge you to support their diverse and extensive knowledge, insights, and experience. **Oppose SB-79.**

Best wishes,

Susan Kirsch, Director, Catalysts for Local Control