Please put on your organization’s letterhead

Send to: Annie Fryman, Legislative Aide, Senator Scott Wiener - ann.fryman@sen.ca.gov

Cc: Pedro Galvao, State and Regional Policy Manager, NPH - pedro@nonprofithousing.org

Louis Mirante, Legislative Director CA YIMBY – Louis@cayimby.org

DATE

The Honorable Scott Wiener

California State Senate

State Capitol, Room 4066

Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 50 (Wiener): More HOMES Act of 2019: SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Wiener,

On behalf of ORGANIZATION we write to support SB 50 (Wiener), as a bold approach to address our state’s affordable housing crisis by promoting inclusive growth while combating restrictive and exclusionary zoning and protecting existing affordability.

2-3 sentences about your organization.

California’s housing crisis has truly become a humanitarian emergency. While California is the world’s fifth largest economy, on any given night about 134,000 Californians experience homelessness. In the Bay Area and other parts of the state, hundreds of thousands of lower-income families have been displaced from our cities’ cores and are forced to commute hours on end for jobs that no longer pay enough to make rent. Our middle class is feeling ever more squeezed with many of our young people planning to leave the state altogether in the next few years. We see SB 50 as a critical step forward that will help California build more homes for people of all income levels including its lowest income residents.

SB 50 will help our state build hundreds of thousands of new homes and ensures that a significant percentage of these homes are affordable. By respecting local inclusionary policies and State Density Bonus law, both of which require that a certain percentage of new multi-family housing have an affordability component, the zoning changes in SB 50 will result in tens of thousands of new high-quality affordable homes. The density increases resulting from SB 50 also create an additional opportunity to use the value generated by these height increases to reinvest in homes affordable to California’s low, very-low, and extremely-low income residents.

SB 50 will help correct for decades of underbuilding and underutilizing prime land that can promote more compact, sustainable, development. This will significantly help transit systems like BART and VTA increase their ridership by turning their surface parking lots into tens of thousands of new transit-oriented homes, 35 percent of which will be affordable to low and very-low income families who sustain the Bay Area’s economic engine.

By limiting height increases to 55’ around ¼ mile of high-quality transit and 45’ within the next ¼ mile, SB 50 will promote more of the “missing middle” types of homes for families that make too much for traditional affordable housing and too little to afford what is available in the market. “Missing middle” housing types are now rarely built anywhere in the state. SB 50’s height limits will help promote density that is consistent with neighborhood character with these same height increases helping to make new affordable development feasible in many places that would otherwise never have approved such height increases.

SB 50 is also a major tool to combat restrictive and exclusionary zoning that has contributed to the Bay Area’s and the State’s concentration of wealth and opportunity for the few to the detriment of the many. By creating new height and density standards for jobs and opportunity rich neighborhoods, SB 50 tackles the exclusionary zoning practices that have effectively priced out and excluded many lower and middle-income families, and people of color, from accessing neighborhoods of opportunity.

SB 50 also recognizes importance of self-determination in low-income communities of color. Bay Area communities of color and low-income people have had few housing options, contributing to segregation and the growth of racially/ethnically concentrated neighborhoods and cities. Many of these same communities are still struggling for control and voice as their neighborhoods are systematically targeted for gentrification. Recognizing this troubling legacy, SB 50 creates the “sensitive communities” designation to defer any state-imposed upzoning for a period of 5 years during which time the community can engage in a neighborhood-level process to determine what future development will look like at the neighborhood level and ensure that long-time residents benefit from new development.

Finally, SB 50 includes critical anti-displacement protections to ensure that new growth does not also displace existing low-income communities of color. The anti-displacement protections in SB 50 include no upzoning in parcels that have been occupied by tenants over the past seven years or in any parcel that has had an Ellis Act eviction over the past 15 years to prevent mass evictions of tenants or demolition of rental housing in anticipation of the higher sales price an upzoned parcel will attract. SB 50 also respects hard fought local victories to promote TOD such as LA’s Transit-Oriented Communities program that, like SB 50, exchanges increased density near transit for additional affordability and strong labor provisions.

For these reasons ORGANIZATION supports SB 50,

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

ORGANIZATION