



June 15, 2022

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development
1020 N Street, Suite 156
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2011 (Wicks) Affordable Housing and High Road Jobs Act of 2022 -- Oppose (As amended 5/11/2022)

On behalf of the City of Santa Rosa, I am writing to oppose your legislation, AB 2011. This bill, as drafted, would require cities to ministerially approve, without condition or discretion, certain affordable housing and mixed-use housing developments in zones where office, retail, or parking are a principally permitted use. Overall, AB 2011 disregards local planning and zoning as the ministerial approval would occur regardless of any inconsistency with a local government's general plan, specific plan, zoning ordinance, or regulation.

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, state housing laws, and the needs of the building industry. Importantly, cities are currently updating housing plans to identify sites for more than two million additional housing units.

AB 2011 disregards this state-mandated local planning effort and forces cities to allow housing developments in nearly all areas of a city. This seriously questions the rational for the regional housing needs allocation (RHNA) process. If developers can build housing in office, retail, and parking areas, why should cities go through the multiyear planning process to identify sites suitable for new housing units, only to have those plans ignored and housing built on sites never considered for new housing?

Eliminating opportunities for public review of housing developments goes against the principles of transparency and public engagement. Public hearings allow members of the community to inform their representatives of their support or concerns. "Streamlining" in the context of AB 2011 is a shortcut around public input. While it may be frustrating for some developers to address neighborhood concerns about traffic, parking, and other development impacts, those directly affected by such projects should be heard. Public engagement often leads to better

Office of the Mayor
City of Santa Rosa
100 Santa Rosa Avenue, Room 10
Santa Rosa, CA 95404



projects. Disregarding community input will increase public distrust in government and may result in additional efforts by voters to restrict growth.

In March 2020, the City of Santa Rosa started the Santa Rosa Forward project. This three-year project entails a comprehensive update of the City's existing General Plan. In August 2020, a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was assembled with representation from the City's diverse neighborhoods and interests and from each of the Council Districts. CAC members provide input on the project and serve as liaisons to help to promote broad and inclusive public engagement. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was also convened among City departments to provide the Project Team with ongoing advice and guidance. This bill would undermine our community outreach and engagement efforts with our housing priorities and updates to the General Plan. The City continues to engage the community and working on alternatives for the General Plan for the Council's consideration.

The City of Santa Rosa is committed to being part of the solution to the housing shortfall across all income levels and will work collaboratively with you and other stakeholders on legislative proposals that will spur much needed housing construction without disregarding the state-mandated local planning process and important public engagement.

For these reasons, the City of Santa Rosa opposes AB 2011. Should you have any questions please contact our legislative advocate, Sharon Gonsalves, with the Renne Public Policy Group, at (916) 974-9270.

Sincerely,

Chris Rogers, Mayor

CC: Senator Mike McGuire
Assemblymember Jim Wood
Assemblymember Marc Levine

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