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April 15, 2025

Hon. Aisha Wahab, Chair
Senate Housing Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Oppose SB 79 (Wiener) as Amended 4/09/2025

Dear Chair Wahab,

Allied Neighborhoods Association of Santa Barbara, an alliance of neighborhood associations, has been working for five decades to preserve and protect the City of Santa Barbara and its neighborhoods through conservation and good planning. We oppose Senate Bill 79. This bill will not help develop the type of housing needed in Santa Barbara for our workforce and has many damaging impacts.

This is yet another major statewide up-zoning bill. Despite eight years of passing similar up-zoning bills, this process has not been successful in significantly increasing housing supply or housing affordability. Instead, there has been a major give-away to market-rate developers. It gives them the choice of properties for market-rate profits without requiring any affordability.

It might appear that promoting building along transit routes would increase transit ridership. Yet the reverse may be more likely. Public transit primarily serves lower income households. Upzoning, however, tends to increase land values. Increased land values then promote the building of market rate housing. This whole process promotes gentrification and displacement of the lower income residents who use public transit. Overall, the prospect of SB 79 substantially increasing transit usage is nil.

Another major concern is that SB 79 projects are approved ministerially. Major cities could lose land use control over much of their most valuable land. One might think this bill is just around transit stops, but mapping shows that because of the wide radius of SB 79 application around such transit stops, cities will lose control of whole neighborhoods and communities.

That development will increased associated infrastructure costs; costs that the cities, not the transit agencies, will need to cover.

SB 79 would also undermine city Housing Element process that have consumed hundreds of hours of work and coordination with the HCD.

In Santa Barbara, historic sites and single-family neighborhoods are very important to our residents and should be exempt. We encourage amendments to SB 79 for these exemptions. SB 79 shows no respect for existing residential neighborhoods, which would be disrupted by uncontrolled insertion of high-density market-rate buildings along community bus routes. SB 79 is a major land grab by the state on behalf of market-rate housing developers and an affront to established local communities and their residents.

The Committee needs to reject this bill. Allied is committed to the development of affordable housing and fair treatment of cities.

Sincerely,



Mary Turley
President, Allied Neighborhoods Association