



January 9, 2020

VIA Online Portal to Author and Senate Committees on Appropriations, Governance & Finance, and Housing

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:

The League of Women Voters of California writes to support SB 50 as amended, and its goal to build our way out of the current housing crisis through incentivizing dense construction near jobs and transit.

SB 50 confronts the legacy of racist redlining that has translated into segregation, dislocation, inequitable development patterns, and lack of affordable housing. By enhancing protections to sensitive communities through recent amendments, and by incorporating inclusionary requirements, the bill recognizes the critical need to promote housing equity for communities of color and those with low income.

California's statewide housing crisis requires a statewide solution. California has enjoyed explosive population growth. Yet our approach to housing, which has favored single-family homes and restrictive zoning for decades, has not kept pace. With 40 million current residents and a projected increase to 50 million by 2050,¹ we suffer from a deficit of 3.5 million homes.² This scarcity feeds poverty, homelessness, and sprawl, and erodes the stability of the middle class. While the problem is complex and needs multiple reforms, one thing is clear: we must build more homes. Recent amendments adding local flexibility encourage varied approaches and preserve the bill's end goals.

Living closer to work and transit centers mitigates against climate change. People forced to find affordable homes far from their jobs must endure long, polluting commutes. The transportation sector is the primary source of greenhouse gas emissions in California and building more homes near public transit and jobs will reduce drive-time. In addition to helping avert the catastrophic consequences of climate change, SB 50 will improve our quality of life through accessible, walkable, and affordable housing, and more time for family, friends, and recreation.

The League of Women Voters of California strongly supports SB 50 and urges its passage.

As the bill continues to evolve through amendments, we encourage you to build in more elements that maximize the production of affordable housing and ensure that Californians who are most at risk reap its benefits. We recommend a blended approach to affordability levels and incentives to better reflect the value and density of each project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carol Moon Goldberg".

Carol Moon Goldberg
President

¹ Johnson, Hans. 2017. "California's Population." Public Policy Institute of California. Accessed October 2019 at <http://bit.ly/PPICPop>

² Woetzel, J., Mischke, J., Peloquin, S. and Weisfield, D. (2016). "A Tool Kit to Close California's Housing Gap: 3.5 Million Homes by 2025." McKinsey Global Institute, McKinsey & Company. October 2016. Accessed October 2019 at bit.ly/CAHousingGap