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September 10, 2025

The Honorable Scott Wiener
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8620
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 79 (Wiener) Housing development: transit-oriented development. – Neutral

Dear Senator Wiener,

On behalf of the California Council for Affordable Housing, we submit this letter in a neutral position to express several important concerns regarding Senate Bill 79. SB 79 proposes state standards for transit-oriented zoning around qualifying major transit stops, particularly train stations. It would permit multifamily residential development on sites currently zoned for residential, mixed-use, commercial, or light industrial uses, subject to specified height, density, and floor area ratio requirements. These standards are intended to promote the feasibility of transit-oriented development and improve access to public transit. While our organization supports the bill's intent to increase housing density near transit hubs, we are concerned that the inclusion of labor requirements may hinder the implementation of these otherwise commendable policy goals.

The California Council for Affordable Housing (CCAH) is a dynamic, member-supported organization made up of developers, lenders, equity investors, management firms, and industry leaders working to overcome California's housing shortage. We are dedicated to helping our members successfully grow and deliver affordable rental housing for low- and moderate-income Californians – scaling solutions, building communities, and making a lasting impact.

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California continues to face a severe and persistent housing shortage, particularly in areas served by robust public transit infrastructure. Restrictive zoning in established communities has pushed development outward, contributing to urban sprawl, increased traffic congestion, pollution, and the loss of open space and farmland. Encouraging housing development near transit not only lowers transportation and housing costs for families, but also promotes environmental sustainability, economic growth, and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

SB 79 aims to accelerate housing production in transit rich areas, a goal we strongly support. However, the recent amendments introducing costly labor requirements threaten to undermine the bill's effectiveness. Specifically, the addition of Section 65912.157(k) will significantly increase the cost of producing housing and may set a precedent that complicates future upzoning efforts. A Turner Center analysis of prevailing wage impacts on Low Income Housing Tax Credit developments found that between 2020 and 2023, such labor mandates added approximately \$94,000 per unit to construction costs.

We appreciate your commitment to expanding affordable housing through SB 79 and support the bill's original intent. However, we cannot support provisions that increase the cost of affordable housing development and introduce new labor standards that may hinder future zoning reforms.

Respectfully,



Jenna Abbott
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California Council for Affordable Housing
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