

# SUSTAINABLE TAMALMONTE

215 Julia Ave  
Mill Valley, CA 94941

April 10, 2019

Senate Governance and Finance Committee  
Senator Mike McGuire, Chair  
State Capitol, Room 5061  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: OPPOSE Senate Bill 50

Dear Chair Senator McGuire and Senate Governance and Finance Committee Members,

We urge you to vote “NO” on Senate Bill 50 (Wiener). The bill is fundamentally flawed and the amendments are far from adequate to remedy the bill’s many problems.

Reasons to oppose Senate Bill 50 are:

- Senate Bill 50 would pose a significant threat to local control, democracy, and public engagement. The bill ignores regional differences. It would override local land use plans and regulations and eviscerate decades of careful planning. Local planning efforts (general plans and zoning ordinances) encourage public engagement and are much better than the State at determining where and how much housing growth should occur. Local planning efforts are also better at anticipating necessary government services such as water, sewer, utilities, schools and traffic flow;
- The bill creates incentives for housing developers to build near bus corridors by exempting developments from specified low-density zoning standards, including density, FAR, parking requirements, design guidelines, and height. However, it doesn’t make sense to tie housing growth to bus services that are not permanent and can change frequency or cease to exist. The potential for unpredictable bus service could lead to confusion for both developers seeking to use the benefits of the bill as well as local governments for planning purposes;
- The bill does virtually nothing to solve affordable housing needs and would actually decrease opportunities for affordable housing. Exemptions from low-

density zoning standards such as those proposed in the bill would greatly increase land values near transit and jobs as up-zoning confers a monetary benefit to property owners and developers. Therefore, the bill would decrease opportunities for the development of affordable housing because the increased value of land would exacerbate the challenges affordable housing developers have in competing for expensive parcels;

- The bill would increase traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. For “job-rich housing projects”, the bill allows developers to build much denser, taller housing, while lowering parking requirements, within high-income areas that are close to jobs and schools but may not be near any public transportation. Without public transportation, tenants would be forced to drive vehicles to get to destinations and would have to park on the street due to insufficient off-street parking spaces. Due to more cars on the road plus more circulation of those cars, as residents search for vacant on-street parking spaces, traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions would rise.
- The bill would increase displacement of existing residents, particularly those from low-income communities;
- The subsequent housing densification and population growth would increase the risk of adverse impacts on the environment, public health and safety, traffic congestion, infrastructure, utilities (water supply), public services (schools), views, sunlight, privacy, neighborhood character, and quality of life.
- The bill would create unfunded mandates. There is no funding for dealing with the above listed impacts and the bill provides an official sidestep of addressing this issue. The bill states; “No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII-B of the California Constitution because a local agency or school district has the authority to levy services, charges, fees or assessments sufficient to pay for the programs or level of service mandates by this act within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code.” Moreover, there are no subsidies provided for affordable housing programs.

Once again, we urge you to oppose Senate Bill 50. Instead, support locally-grown sustainable strategies that enable our communities to meet all housing needs.

Thank you in advance for your conscientious consideration.

Very truly yours,

/s/

Sharon Rushton, Chairperson

**Sustainable TamAlmonte**

