



April 22, 2025

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**CITY MANAGER**

John Conley

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

**RE: SB 79 (Wiener) Transit-oriented Development Notice of Opposition**

Dear Senator Wiener,

The City of Vista writes to express our strong opposition to your SB 79 (Wiener), which would disregard state-certified housing elements and bestow land use authority to transit agencies without any requirement that developers build housing, let alone affordable housing.

SB 79 doubles down on the recent trend of the state overriding its own mandated local housing elements. This latest overreaching effort forces cities to approve transit-oriented development projects near specified transit stops — up to seven stories high and a density of 120 homes per acre — without regard to the community's needs, environmental review, or public input.

The bill could reduce the city's ability to control the types of housing projects approved, potentially leading to developments that don't align with Vista's existing character or community needs. Reduced local control could lead to community backlash against projects that don't reflect local preferences or address community concerns. Streamlined approvals might result in higher-density projects that strain existing infrastructure, such as water, sewer, and traffic systems.

Most alarmingly, SB 79 defies cities' general plans and provides transit agencies unlimited land use authority on property they own or have a permanent easement, regardless of the distance from a transit stop. Transit agencies would have the power to determine all aspects of the development including height, density, and design, without any regard to local zoning or planning.

This broad new authority applies to both residential and commercial development. Transit agencies could develop 100% commercial projects — even at transit stops — and not provide a single new home, while simultaneously making the argument that more housing must be constructed around transit stops.

The City of Vista appreciates and respects your desire to pursue a housing production proposal. However, as currently drafted, SB 79 will not spur much-needed housing construction in a manner that supports local flexibility, decision-making, and community input. State-driven ministerial or by-right housing approval processes fail to recognize the extensive public engagement associated with developing and adopting zoning ordinances and housing elements.

California will never produce the number of homes needed with an increasingly state-driven, by-right housing approval process. What we really need is a sustainable state investment that matches the scale of this decades-in-the-making crisis. For these reasons, the City of Vista strongly opposes SB 79.

Sincerely,

John Franklin  
Mayor  
City of Vista

cc. Office of Assemblymember Laurie Davis, [assemblymember.davies@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.davies@assembly.ca.gov)  
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