

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez  
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COUNCILWOMAN MONICA RODRIGUEZ  
SEVENTH DISTRICT

July 15, 2025

Senator Scott Wiener  
California Senate District 11  
1021 O Street, Suite 8620  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 79 Low Income Renter Single Family Home Mitigation Measures - Technical Change to Local Alternative Plan

Dear Senator Wiener,

I am writing to you today to highlight what I believe are some unintended consequences of SB 79, as currently written, and provide recommended amendments that can address these concerns in an effort to protect low-income renting families in urban-suburban communities in Los Angeles County.

I represent the Northeast San Fernando Valley: a predominantly working class community, with large pockets qualifying as a Disadvantaged Community (DAC) by State standards, that is physically disconnected from the urban core of Los Angeles by at least 25-30 miles. Historically, these communities have been left out of high quality transportation investment, until now with the East San Fernando Valley Light Rail Project (ESFV LRT), the first light rail line coming to the area. Recognizing this once-in-a-lifetime investment in our region, the affected Council Districts have funded a Transit Neighborhood Plan (TNP) for the entirety of the alignment in order to maximize housing development along the line, beyond what State Density Bonus and the City's bold and recently adopted Citywide Housing Incentive Program (CHIP) offers. This plan is 65 percent complete, and represents nearly a million dollar investment and months of community input that will now be unfortunately rendered moot by SB 79.

However, more importantly, what I'd like to bring to your attention is the way in which affordability will be undermined and displacement incited in low income areas where single family homes are mostly renter occupied under the proposed blanket half-mile buffer upzone mandate. I believe that with some modification to the current version of the criteria, many jurisdictions like ours can meet the density targets laid out in SB 79, but in a way that allows us to better-preserve affordability and protect tenants.

It is important to understand the demographics of the single family community along the ESFV LRT line, because it's not what likely comes to mind for most people, but it is a recurring story in Los Angeles County. Our TNP project area is 56 percent single family homes that are 2 units or less. Twenty seven percent of those are renter occupied, according to 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year data. A large number of those single family homes function as multigenerational family homes, often with multiple families present - Pacoima has an average household size of 4.24 persons, versus the LA County average of 2.85 persons per household. The population living below 200 percent of the federal poverty line is over 30 percent, and nearly 40 percent are foreign-born. Especially given the present moment, the possibility of these families being displaced brings me great consternation. Single family rentals are not covered under the recent amendment made to SB 79 that exempts rent controlled properties that are three units or more. Anecdotes from casework in my district also informs me that many of these landlords are aging and absentee. Therefore these new development incentives may very well trigger sales to the highest bidder, with no recourse, relocation, or support to its tenants. This will affect many communities in the greater LA County area with similar demographics and first of its kind transit investment - the Southeast Gateway Line in Southeast Los Angeles comes to mind as another example.

Four key amendments that would allow for greater protection of single family renters while allowing for the goals of increased development capacity, and the implementation of zoning plans underway would be the following:

- **Extend the Implementation Period to Qualify for an Exemption to 2027** - The ESFV TNP is at 65 percent completion and represents about a \$1M investment in planning that will be ready to implement by 2027. Many jurisdictions in Los Angeles County have also expressed concern about local TOD plans in the works that SB 79 will halt. Allowing jurisdictions to qualify now for an exemption so long as their plans a) are implemented by 2027 and b) can hit SB 79 density targets would allow the long range planning activities already underway to continue without undermining the work and investment made to date.
  - Sec 65912.161.
    - (a) Prior to the seventh revision of the housing element, this chapter shall not apply to any site for which a local government has adopted an ordinance exempting any of the following:*
      - (1) Any local upzoning ordinance that is under development and meant for implementation by Second Quarter of 2027, or April 1, 2027.*
- **Allow for Greater Density in Areas to Qualify for an Exemption** - This would require dropping the requirement of 33 percent of sites, instead allowing jurisdictions the flexibility to meet the 75% capacity requirement within their proposed plan area being offered for exemption. A good portion of the station areas along the TNP are industrially zoned land that are slated for rezone to housing and mixed use in large capacity. Many of these parcels are multiple acre facilities that have been underutilized for decades and can

narrow, parcels that are not like-for-like with the aforementioned. Therefore, we should instead be looking for strategic placement of the density across the TOD area.

- *Sec 65912.161.*

*(a) Prior to the seventh revision of the housing element, this chapter shall not apply to any site for which a local government has adopted an ordinance exempting any of the following:*

*This paragraph shall only apply to a transit-oriented development zone in which ~~at least 33 percent of sites in the relevant transit-oriented development zone~~ have been rezoned for densities that cumulatively allow for at least 75 percent of the aggregate density for the transit-oriented development zone specified under subdivision (a) of Section 65912.157.*

- **Protect renters from displacement, and create more vibrant, mixed income and mixed typology communities by removing minimum density on sites within the given zones** - This added flexibility to load density in strategic blocks, still including single family parcels, within the zone would prevent displacement that could occur from the development incentive that requiring the minimum density on every plot creates. Renters living in single family homes and duplexes would not benefit from the same renter protections afforded to residents in three Unit Triplexes and larger rent stabilized apartments. This would be achieved by removing the following:

- *Sec 65912.161.*

*(1) A local transit-oriented development alternative plan shall maintain at least the same total increase in feasible zoned capacity, in terms of both total units and residential floor area, as provided for in this chapter across all transit-oriented development zones within the jurisdiction.*

*~~(A) The plan shall not reduce the capacity in any transit-oriented development zone in total units or residential floor area by more than 50 percent.~~*

*~~(B) The plan shall not reduce the maximum allowed density for any individual site on which the plan allows residential use by more than 50 percent below that permitted under this chapter.~~*

- **Allow for Greater Density in Local Alternative Plans** - Economic analyses completed as part of various long range planning efforts have shown in certain underdeveloped areas of the city, it is feasible to increase unit capacity well above 200 percent of what is presently there. The cap inadvertently limits the level of development in areas of the city that need it the most. This would be achieved by adjusting the Following Sections:

- *Sec 65912.161.*

- *~~(iii) A site's maximum feasible capacity counted toward the plan shall be not more than 200 percent of the maximum density established under this chapter.~~*

- *~~(C) A site's maximum feasible capacity counted toward the plan shall be not more than 200 percent of the maximum density established under this chapter.~~*

Facilitating the development of housing is a high priority which will help revitalize the areas of

my district that have had very little investment and development across recent decades. I am grateful for the iterative nature of this bill's development that seeks to allow for flexibility in the placement of density to effectuate the goals of transit oriented communities. I ask for your consideration of this additional flexibility requested that would allow for this critical TNP plan in the main corridor of the Northeast San Fernando Valley to continue, so it can help revitalize the area, while protecting residents.

Should you require additional information, assistance, or would like to discuss next steps, please contact my Planning Director, Paola Bassignana, [paola.bassignana@lacity.org](mailto:paola.bassignana@lacity.org).

Together, we can create safer, more inclusive communities that receive the care and support they need and deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Rodriguez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monica Rodriguez

Los Angeles City Councilwoman, 7th District