

August 1, 2023

The Honorable Steven Bradford
Member, California State Senate

RE: **AB 309 (Lee) Social Housing Program**
(as amended 7/13/2023)
Notice of Oppose Unless Amended

Dear Senator Bradford:

The **City of Carson** writes to express our opposition to AB 309 (Lee), unless it is amended to address our concerns. AB 309 would create the Social Housing Program within the Department of General Services (DGS) to facilitate the construction of government-owned housing on leased state property or excess state-owned property. Cities would have no ability to regulate zoning or development standards, including floor area ratios, height limitations, or density requirements.

Carson strongly supports the intent of AB 309, which is to produce more housing as housing affordability and homelessness are among the most critical issues facing California cities. Affordably priced homes are out of reach for many people and housing is not being built fast enough to meet the current or projected needs of people living in the state. Cities lay the essential groundwork for housing production by planning and zoning new projects in their communities based on extensive public input and engagement, as well as state housing laws. Importantly, cities are currently updating housing plans to identify sites for more than 2.5 million additional housing units.

AB 309 would disregard this state-mandated planning process and specifically empower DGS to make land use and zoning decisions on state excess property. If DGS can approve housing, why should cities go through the multiyear planning process to identify sites suitable for new housing units if the state can ignore those plans and build housing on sites never considered for new housing?

While AB 309 currently limits DGS authority to three housing projects on declared excess state property suitable for housing, the measure broadly establishes the Social Housing Program within DGS and could be easily expanded to include all state-owned lands.

Bypassing California's longstanding housing planning laws and local rules is not a way out of the housing crisis. That's why Cal Cities continues to call on the Governor and lawmakers to annually invest \$3 billion to help cities prevent and reduce homelessness and spur affordable housing development. Targeted, ongoing funding is the only way

cities can find community-based solutions that produce housing at all income levels.

For these reasons, **Carson** respectfully opposes AB 309 unless it is amended to address our concerns.

Sincerely,

Carson City Council

Cc: Your Cal Cities Regional Public Affairs Manager (via email)
League of California Cities (Via email: cityletters@calcities.org)