



CITY OF CARSON

March 11, 2021

The Honorable Toni Atkins
State President Pro Tempore
State Capitol Office, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 9 (Atkins) – Increased Density in Single-Family Zones – Oppose Unless Amended (As Introduced 12/7/2020)

Dear Senate President Pro Tem Atkins:

On behalf of the City of Carson, I am writing to express the City's opposition to SB 9. This bill mandates ministerial approval for proposed housing developments that would lead to up to *six*, potentially more, dwelling units on lots where currently only one dwelling unit exists and it would require cities to permit the development of a duplex or subdivision of a parcel into two equal parcels (minimum lot size of 1,200 square feet).

No environmental review is allowed to assess and to try to mitigate the potential negative impacts of such developments on local communities. SB 9 is not well thought out and creates unintended consequences on the resources of local communities, or worse, if a local community is not in a position to study or mitigate certain impacts, it can create public health and safety concerns in local communities.

We understand that there is a housing crisis in the state. But SB 9 is not the solution. It will have grave unintended consequences and it does not even impose a requirement to build affordable units. SB 9 continues a one-size-fits-all approach to the housing crisis by eroding local control and the ability of residents to plan for and shape the future of their community. This bill will encourage large-scale investors and builders to exploit SB 9 provisions, which will result in gentrification of neighborhoods.

Lastly, SB 9 will reduce the housing choices that are available within our communities. Local jurisdictions should be allowed to determine the appropriate mix of housing solutions and location that are right for their communities, which may include single-family housing. 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 that are certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Again, the City is mindful that housing affordability and homelessness are among the most critical issues facing California cities. We are committed to being part of the solution to the housing shortfall across all income levels. We also recognize that any effort to increase housing production must take into consideration local needs and the City's ability to plan and accommodate for higher density residential development that fits the fabric of our community. That is why SB 9, as drafted, is not the correct solution.

The City requests the following amendments in order to address our concerns and remove our opposition:

- Clarify that a property owner using SB 9 is limited to constructing two residential units, not two residential units and additional accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on the same parcel;
- Require a housing developer to acquire a building permit within one year of a lot split, so that speculators do not sell lots and never build homes;
- Allow local governments to require adequate access for police, fire and other public safety vehicles and equipment;
- Prohibit developers from using SB 9 in very high fire hazard severity zones;
- Allow cities to determine a range of lot sizes suitable for SB 9 development projects;
- Ensure HCD provides Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) credit for production of SB 9 units;
- Allow local governments to take into account local conditions such as hillsides, lot dimensions, natural hazards, available infrastructure, etc. when approving or denying housing project applications;
- Allow local governments to continue to determine parking standards; and
- Ensure large-scale investors and builders do not exploit SB 9 provisions.

The City desires to work collaboratively to spur much needed housing construction in a way that effectively considers all factors and community engagement. For these reasons, the City of Carson respectfully opposes SB 9 unless it is amended to address our concerns.

Sincerely,

Lula Davis-Holmes
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Steven Bradford
State Senator, 35th District
Via Email: Daryl.Sweeney@sen.ca.gov

The Honorable Mike A. Gipson
Assembly Member, 64th District
Via Email: Moises.Aglipay@asm.ca.gov

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