



PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

January 16, 2020

Hon. Mike Bonin, Councilmember, CD11

Via email: mike.bonin@lacity.org

Deputy Chief Armando Hogan, LAFD West Bureau Commander

Via email: armando.hogan@lacity.org

Dear Councilmember Bonin and Deputy Chief Hogan:

We are writing to request your urgent assistance in protecting the City's residential areas within the Cal Fire Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) from the dangerous impacts of proposed Senate Bill 50 (Wiener).

SB 50 (as now revised) mandates that cities permit single-family homes to be converted to fourplexes (four dwelling units per parcel) and allow fourplexes to be built on vacant lots in R-1 zones, *regardless of whether the parcel is located within the VHFHSZ*. Thus, residential population in many portions of our VHFHSZ areas could potentially be increased *four-fold* -- an alarming proposition with significant implications for the safety of hundreds of thousands of residents who now live in our hillside and fire-prone communities and who, during wildfires, must flee their homes via limited egress routes and on narrow, already-crowded streets which at times barely allow passage for emergency vehicles.

Currently, the only exception to this mandate under the bill is when a developer seeks to combine parcels to build a very large multi-family structure (under the so-called "equitable communities incentive"), or, as the bill's author describes it, when a "bonus" is sought. In that circumstance only, parcels within the VHFHSZ would be exempt and the requested bonus would not be allowed. In all other instances, up to four dwelling units would be allowed *by right* on single-family parcels (home conversions and vacant lots). With the new state laws permitting up to 2 additional ADUs per dwelling unit, depending on lot size a single parcel could potentially have *up to 12 dwelling units*.

As you know, Pacific Palisades is entirely within the VHFHSZ as is most of Brentwood. The increased density allowed under SB 50 would be devastating when evacuations are required during fire events (as residents of the Palisades and Brentwood recently experienced in the Getty and Palisades fires of 2019 and also experienced during the Mandeville Canyon fire of 1978, which burned from Brentwood through the Palisades and Malibu to the ocean). PPCC and BCC have proactively communicated these serious concerns to Assemblymember Bloom and others (Sen. Allen currently opposes SB 50). See the PPCC-BCC joint letter of January 14, 2010: <http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/PPCC-BCC-SB50-Letter.pdf>.

Although the Senate Appropriations Committee has held SB 50 "in suspense" since last May, many observers expect the Committee to take up the revised bill at its January 28 meeting. The bill will die in the legislature if it is not moved out of committee and passed in the Senate by January 31. Time is clearly of the essence.

We respectfully urge that LAFD and CD11 and/or the City Council (which voted to oppose SB 50) immediately take all available measures (via letters, phone calls, personal visits by the City's lobbyist or otherwise) to convince the Appropriations Committee Chair (Sen. Portantino) and other Committee members that the *absence of a clear exemption for all VHFHSZ areas is a critical flaw in the bill which endangers the life and*

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safety of hundreds of thousands of Los Angeles residents --- and that the Committee should decline to recommend SB 50 as currently written to the full Senate.

To the extent possible, we also ask that Councilmember Bonin contact the League of California Cities (which opposes SB 50 but has not yet commented on the bill's revisions) to let the League know of these significant concerns regarding the lack of an exemption for all VHFHSZ parcels.

Thank you as always for your assistance and efforts to protect the safety of our communities.

Best regards,

David Card, Vice-Chair
Pacific Palisades Community Council

Chris Spitz, Secretary
Pacific Palisades Community Council

cc: Hon. Paul Koretz, Councilmember, CD5
Ami Fields-Meyer, WLA Rep., Mayor Eric Garcetti
Michelle Bisnoff, Chair, Brentwood Community Council
Robin Greenberg, Chair, BABCNC
Maryam Zar, Chair, WRAC

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