



## PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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June 8, 2020

Hon. Anthony J. Portantino  
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee

Via email to: [senator.portantino@sen.ca.gov](mailto:senator.portantino@sen.ca.gov)

Re: SB 902 (Wiener); Appropriations Committee hearing June 9; OPPOSED (serious public safety issue/removal of VHFHSZ exemption)

Dear Senator Portantino:

Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) is the voice of Pacific Palisades – a community of about 25,000 situated within the wildland-urban interface between the coast and the Santa Monica Mountains in the City of Los Angeles. Pacific Palisades is entirely located within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). We have experienced numerous serious wildfires and evacuations, including most recently mandatory evacuations as a result of the dangerous Getty Fire in November 2019.

SB 902 (Sen. Wiener's successor bill to SB 50<sup>1</sup>) originally included an **unconditional exemption for VHFHSZ areas**. To our dismay, we have just learned that on May 21, Sen. Wiener amended the bill to **remove the VHFHSZ exemption entirely**. This is inexplicable and completely unacceptable. The risk of catastrophic damage to life and property during wildfire events in VHFHSZ areas -- resulting from clogged evacuation routes due to increased density under SB 902 -- is clear.

We respectfully urge you to bring this serious flaw in the bill to the attention of the members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and to vote "No" on SB 902 and/or to decline to move the bill forward without an amendment to add back an unconditional exemption for all parcels within VHFHSZs.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

**Executive Committee, PPCC**

David Card, Chair  
David Kaplan, Vice-Chair  
Richard Cohen, Treasurer  
Chris Spitz, Secretary

Maryam Zar, Chair Emeritus  
John Padden, Organization Representative (PRIDE)  
Joanna Spak, Area Representative (Area 1 – Castellammare and Paseo Miramar)

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<sup>1</sup> PPCC and Brentwood Community Council (our neighboring community) previously opposed SB 50. One of our primary objections was the bill's lack of an unconditional exemption for VHFHSZ areas. We explained our position in detail in letters to elected officials; see, e.g., <http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/LetterSenatorRulesSB50R.pdf>. The Cal Fire Chiefs also expressed concerns about the impact of SB 50 and exacerbation of wildland-urban interface issues (<http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Email-Message-from-Chief-Michael-McLaughlin.pdf>), as did Senators whose districts have experienced serious wildfires and evacuation issues, including Senators Ben Allen and Henry Stern. **Sen. Allen advises us that both he and Sen. Stern share the same concerns about the removal of the VHFHSZ exemption from SB 902.**

## Pacific Palisades Community Council

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cc:

Senate Appropriations Committee

Hon. Scott Wiener, Senator (SD 11)

Hon. Ben Allen, Senator (SD 26)

Hon. Henry Stern, Senator (SD 27)

Hon. Richard Bloom, Assemblymember (AD 50)

Hon. Sheila Kuehl, Supervisor (CSD 3)

Hon. Mike Bonin, Councilmember (CD 11)

Michelle Bisnoff, Chair, Brentwood Community Council

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