



PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

August 9, 2025

Hon. Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California
via Vishesh Anand, Deputy Regional Director

via email

Re: Oppose SB 79 (Wiener) and Request Assistance of the Governor

Dear Governor Newsom:

Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) – the voice of the Palisades community that was destroyed in the unprecedented Palisades Fire – thanks you for your strong support of Pacific Palisades, and for expressly recognizing, in your Emergency Order # N-32-25, the dangerous evacuations that occurred during the Fire and the concerns about the risk to public safety that would have resulted from mandating streamlined housing density in the VHFHSZ (in the Palisades and other burn areas of Los Angeles) under SB 9.

As you recognized in your Emergency Order, SB 9 was “not tailored for circumstances like the present situation in Los Angeles, where more than 13,000 homes were destroyed, including more than 5,000 single-family homes in the Palisades Fire that fall into a designated very high fire hazard severity zone.” We now urgently bring to your attention another housing density bill that is currently proceeding in the legislature: SB 79 (Wiener). This bill is also *not tailored for Pacific Palisades or other VHFHSZ areas of Los Angeles*.

SB 79 would mandate further streamlining of dense housing, with ministerial, “by right” approvals, to permit very tall, multi-family buildings, including in single-family zones, near certain transit stops. *Like SB 9, the bill fails to include an unconditional exemption for the VHFHSZ and thus compromises public safety in our community.*¹

We understand that our Senator Ben Allen and Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin also oppose SB 79, as does Los Angeles City Attorney Hydee Feldstein Soto.²

We have consistently reminded Sen. Wiener and other legislators of the need for an unconditional exemption for the VHFHSZ in proposed housing density bills. Sen. Wiener has never responded.

¹ PPCC opposes SB 79: <https://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/PPCC-Letter-Oppose-SB-79-R.pdf>.

² The C.A.’s opposition focuses on the *extreme financial burden* placed on cities due to SB 79’s provisions: <https://westsidecouncils.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Microsoft-Word-05.23.2025-SB-79-Opposition-Letter-.docx.pdf>. PPCC also opposes housing density legislation that fails to provide a funding mechanism for the bill’s requirements. See: <https://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PPCC-Position-Housing-Density-Funding-.pdf>. We oppose SB 79 on these grounds as well.

You recognized and acknowledged in your order that direct, massive harm to constituents in the VHFHSZ from the results of terrifying emergency evacuations during the Palisades Fire (under *current* density levels) was plainly evident. SB 79 presents a clear risk of even greater harm from increased density in all VHFHSZ areas, including in Pacific Palisades.

SB 79 narrowly passed in the Senate, has passed in Assembly committees and will be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee when the legislature reconvenes on August 18. Since time is of the essence, we urgently request that you act now and strongly encourage Sen. Wiener to withdraw SB 79 or amend the bill to include an unconditional exemption for the VHFHSZ.

If SB 79 is not withdrawn and passes in the legislature without a full exemption for the VHFHSZ, we respectfully request that you VETO the bill when it comes to your desk.

We remind our elected officials: “Public safety is a core responsibility of government entities, ensuring the well-being and security of communities . . . The role of government in ensuring public safety remains crucial in building resilient communities and fostering a sense of security for all citizens.”³

Thank you again for your support and anticipated prompt attention to this critical request.

Sincerely,

Pacific Palisades Community Council
Executive Committee:

Sue Kohl, President; Quentin Fleming, Vice-President; Jenny Li, Treasurer; Beth Holden Garland, Secretary; Maryam Zar, Chair Emeritus; Christina Spitz, Elected Representative (At-large); John Padden, Organizational Representative (Palisades P.R.I.D.E.)

cc (*via email*):

Hon. Ben Allen, Senator, SD 24

Hon. Scott Wiener, Senator, SD 11

Hon. Jacqui Irwin, Assemblymember, AD 42

Hon. Karen Bass, Mayor, City of Los Angeles

Hon. Hydee Feldstein Soto, Los Angeles City Attorney

Hon. Traci Park, City Councilmember, CD 11

³ <https://www.govbusinessreview.com/news/ensuring-public-safety-the-role-of-government-in-protecting-communities-nwid-220.html>