

Message to Legislators re SB 79

From: info@pacpalicc.org

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Honorable State Assemblymembers and Senators:

Pacific Palisades Community Council (PPCC) -- the voice of the Palisades for 52 years -- writes to you on behalf of Pacific Palisades, the community that was destroyed in the Palisades Fire and, *along with Paradise, suffered the worst disaster in California history*, including experiencing dangerous and life-threatening evacuations at *current* levels of density.

We understand that one of the bill's sponsors was asked appropriately by staff for our respected Assemblymember Irwin to clarify whether SB 79 as amended contains a full / unconditional (global) exemption for the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).

The answer to that question is **critically important to the safety of Pacific Palisades and all other VHFHSZ areas of California**.

We also understand that the sponsor was unable to provide a substantive answer to the question.

This is totally unacceptable. Respectfully, if the bill's authors cannot or will not explain the bill's provisions or give a direct answer to a simple question of such key importance to public safety, then the legislation is clearly fatally flawed.

Moreover, SB 79's provisions in our judgment are almost entirely undecipherable, certainly to laypersons, not only with respect to the issue of the VHFHSZ exemption, but also as to important exemptions for other vulnerable areas (such as historic zones and flood zones) and in numerous other respects. *We are frankly concerned that many legislators will vote on this bill without an accurate understanding of its provisions.*

We note that we have separately been told by senior staff of the Los Angeles Dept. of City Planning that in their reading, SB 79 as now amended does *not* provide a global, unconditional exemption for the VHFHSZ. It is unclear why the bill's sponsor could not provide a similar direct explanation (in order to definitively answer the question), and again, it appears that this information is not widely understood by elected officials who will be voting on SB 79.

PPCC, along with the City of Los Angeles (the city in which Pacific Palisades is located), strongly opposes SB 79; we urge all state elected officials to vote No on the bill.

At the same time, we implore the leaders and members of the state legislature to respect the still-suffering Palisades community -- and all of your respective constituents, particularly those in fire zones -- by insisting, at a minimum and before any vote, that honest, clear and accurate information be provided to legislators as to *exactly what is in this bill and whether or not our very vulnerable VHFHSZ areas will be protected with a full, unconditional exemption.*

If this critical explanatory information cannot be disseminated or made clear by the passage deadline, then we respectfully ask that the bill be held in suspense (or paused by appropriate process) until at least the next legislative session.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Christina Spitz
At-large Rep, PPCC Land Use Committee Chair and past President
Authorized to send this message on behalf of
Pacific Palisades Community Council
www.pacpalicc.org

cc: Hon. Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California, via his Deputy Regional Director Vishesh Anand; key staff for elected officials; Hon. Karen Bass, Mayor, City of Los Angeles, Traci Park, Councilwoman, CD 11; Sue Kohl, President, PPCC