

**SPUR**

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

31 May 2016

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

**RE: Proposed “Streamlining Affordable Housing Approvals” State Trailer Bill
File No. 160601**

Dear President Breed and Supervisors:

We are writing to urge San Francisco and its Board of Supervisors to support Governor Brown’s “Streamlining Affordable Housing Approvals” proposed trailer bill.

This is a statewide bill, and it will have statewide benefits. But San Francisco residents would also benefit strongly from it. While San Francisco does a good job funding and approving subsidized affordable housing, it has many other problems with its planning process, which together contribute to a situation of chronic delay, high costs and under-supply of housing.

This reform is important for the environment: it will encourage high-density compact infill development close to transit and in developed urban areas rather than in greenfield locations.

This reform is important for social justice: it will encourage mixed-income infill development in places that have no local inclusionary housing requirements.

This reform is important for livability: it will encourage concentrated development in locations that are conducive to walking, biking and taking transit.

And this reform is important for retaining San Francisco’s diversity: it will lead to reduced displacement and greater affordability in our city – both directly through its impacts on our planning process and indirectly through its impacts on the housing supply in other Bay Area cities.

While there are many causes of the housing crisis, chief among them is the fact that our local land use system has made it extremely difficult to add housing supply. Proposals to add housing are met with years of delay and, often, outright disapproval.

There is no way we will ever have enough money to buy everyone who is struggling with housing costs a subsidized affordable unit. We simply cannot address the affordability crisis unless we are simultaneously investing in housing subsidies while at the same time changing our planning systems to bring more supply on line in San Francisco and statewide.

Under the Governor’s proposal, San Francisco will still have great control over land use. We will still be able to develop our own zoning. But the zoning will actually matter; there will actually be predictable,

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transparent rules that govern development, rather than a capricious and unpredictable system in which even projects that fit within the zoning are routinely rejected. Let us be clear: under this proposal, there will still be significant process, public input and decision-making by elected officials; the process will simply take place at the level of the General Plan, area plans and zoning, rather than at the project level.

The Governor's proposal is not a panacea, but it is a practical, modest step in the right direction – one that will make a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in San Francisco and millions of people across the state.

We urge you to support the proposed trailer bill on streamlining affordable housing approvals in order to expand housing opportunities for San Francisco Bay Area and California residents. In tandem with funding for permanent affordable housing, overall supply is part of the solution to our affordability issues. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important proposal. Please feel free to contact me or Kristy Wang, Community Planning Policy Director (kwang@spur.org, 415-644-4884), if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Metcalf', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gabriel Metcalf
President & CEO

CC: Mayor Ed Lee
SPUR Board of Directors