



**SPUR**

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

May 22, 2019

Assemblymember David Chiu  
Capitol Office, Room 4112  
Sacramento, CA 94249

**RE: AB 1487 (Chiu): Bay Area Regional Housing Entity – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Chiu:

SPUR supports a package of bills that address protection, preservation and production of all levels of housing, and therefore supports Assembly Bill 1487, which authorizes the creation of a regional housing entity that would help increase affordable housing in the Bay Area by providing funding and technical assistance. **SPUR supports the creation of this regional housing entity along with granting the specified powers to it. We are concerned about proliferating new entities at the regional level and believe it is critical that this entity remain within the MTC/ABAG structure. We are pleased to see the most recent amendments, which clarify that the entity’s board would remain within MTC and ABAG’s jurisdiction.**

SPUR (San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association) is a member-supported nonprofit organization that promotes good planning and good government. We bring people together from across the political spectrum to develop solutions to the big problems our cities face. With offices in San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland, we are recognized as a leading civic planning organization and are respected for our independent and holistic approach to urban issues.

AB 1487 would create a regional housing entity, the Housing Alliance for the Bay Area (HABA), which would be authorized to raise funding and provide technical assistance in order to increase affordable housing in the Bay Area. HABA would work on all three “Ps” of affordable housing: tenant protection, affordable housing preservation and new affordable housing production. The Bay Area’s housing market is regional, and we should have regional tools to address our needs. SPUR supports the creation of a regional entity that would provide some of those tools.

The Bay Area needs more funding for affordable housing and is willing to identify and create those sources. Our region also has a significant need for regional coordination of policies, and we want more and better data collection on the planning and production of housing. HABA would be able to address many of these needs and help take steps towards making our region more affordable. Additionally, even when small localities have the interest, many of them do not have the capacity to implement key housing policies on their own; this entity would also help provide

**SAN FRANCISCO**

654 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 781-8726

**SAN JOSE**

76 South First Street  
San Jose, CA 95113  
(408) 638-0083

**OAKLAND**

1544 Broadway  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 827-1900

[spur.org](http://spur.org)

technical assistance to those cities.

SPUR has been a major supporter of the ongoing merger of MTC and ABAG and has been heavily involved in questions around regional governance. While we see a clear need for a regional entity to have the powers that would be granted to HABA, we have been concerned that this housing entity could be created as a separate regional entity, undoing much of the work that has been done to merge our regional agencies. We think it is of critical importance that HABA, like the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA), share governance with MTC/ABAG and ultimately be folded into the single regional agency once MTC and ABAG's governing boards merge. We believe it is critical that the creation of this entity strengthen the Bay Area's ability to function as a region rather than weakening it.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for your work to make California a place where more people can afford a high quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alicia John-Baptiste', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alicia John-Baptiste  
President & CEO