

April 18, 2019

The Honorable Bill Quirk
Member of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2163
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 1706 (Quirk) – Housing development, incentives - SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Quirk:

SPUR supports a package of bills this year that address protection, preservation and production of all levels of housing. Thus we specifically support AB 1706, which will provide incentives to make much-needed housing developments that target the “missing middle” workable.

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.

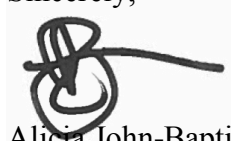
Improving and speeding up the approvals and permitting process is a longstanding thread of SPUR’s policy and good government work and one way to make housing development less expensive and more feasible. SPUR’s *Improving the Permit-Approval Process* report from 2000, *8 Ways to Make San Francisco More Affordable* from 2014 and SPUR’s San Jose 2017 housing report *Room for More* are just three of the places where we have articulated these values. SPUR has also been a voice for CEQA reform and increasing opportunities to exempt infill housing and transit projects from the CEQA process, including in our 2017 *Agenda for CASA* (not board-adopted), 2006’s *Form and Reform*, our *Planning the City’s Future* report with the AIA in 2007 and our support for Governor Brown’s by-right proposal and 2017’s SB 35.

In our current constrained environment, with a longstanding housing shortage and rising construction costs, AB 1706 provides financial feasibility incentives and a shortened approval timeline to Bay Area housing development proposals that provide mixed-income housing, developments that serve the missing middle, pay prevailing wages and meet certain infill location requirements. The incentives include: exemption from CEQA, a density bonus of 35 percent, a waiver of local parking requirements, a waiver of physical building requirements and the ability to pay an in-lieu inclusionary fee instead of providing affordability onsite. AB 1706 also limits

fees that can be imposed on these projects. This package of incentives will help make these important projects viable without public subsidy.

It is critical that the California Legislature act quickly to address the housing challenges sweeping the state and hitting the Bay Area particularly hard. It has been difficult to serve the needs of those who do not qualify for typical subsidized affordable housing but cannot compete in the market. For these reasons, we support AB 1706. Thank you for your work to make California and the Bay Area welcoming and affordable to all those who want to be here.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alicia John-Baptiste', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Alicia John-Baptiste
President & CEO