

April 18, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Member of the Senate
State Capitol, Room 2059
Sacramento, CA 95814
Sent Via Email to: Katerina.Robinson@sen.ca.gov

Re: SB 330 (Skinner) – Housing Crisis Act of 2019 – SUPPORT IN CONCEPT

Dear Senator Skinner:

SPUR supports a package of bills that address protection, preservation and production of all levels of housing. Thus we specifically support the concepts of SB 330, the Housing Crisis Act of 2019.

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.

As you well know, California is experiencing a longstanding housing shortage, which is resulting in intense affordability challenges for Californians of all stripes, for middle-income residents today as well as low-income households for whom this is not new. Of the 50 U.S. cities with the highest rent levels, 33 are in California. The state needs an estimated 180,000 additional units of housing each year – just to keep up with current population growth. Governor Gavin Newsom has called for the creation of 3.5 million units of housing in the next seven years.

Since the middle of the last century, California cities and counties have established numerous barriers to new housing, including downzoning, which limits rather than encourages housing units, and bureaucratic permitting processes that slow or block new housing construction. Overly cumbersome housing restrictions, parking requirements, and red tape have helped make housing very expensive to build. Some of these things have come about through overt efforts to limit new housing, and some of them have emerged as unintended consequences of other decisions or other priorities.

We believe that California must re-establish good government standards for permitting zoning compliant projects, and require transparency and consistency when rules are established for new projects.

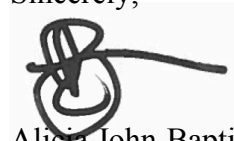
SB 330 intends to remove many barriers to the creation of new housing. It prohibits jurisdictions from downzoning and imposing moratoriums. It limits expensive design standards and bans requirements that local voters approve increases in density, establishment of housing as an allowable use or the provision of services and infrastructure needed to develop housing. The bill limits the number of hearings a project can have and makes the Permit Streamlining Act Timelines mandatory, thereby speeding up the approvals and permitting process. It also requires jurisdictions to set and fix fees, requirements, etc. based on levels/requirements at the time of application.

Improving and speeding up the approvals and permitting process is a longstanding thread of SPUR's policy and good government work. SPUR's *Improving the Permit-Approval Process* report from 2000, our 2004 *Planning Department Reform Agenda* for San Francisco, *8 Ways to Make San Francisco More Affordable* from 2014 and SPUR's San Jose 2017 housing report *Room for More* are just a few of the places where we have articulated these values.

As a result, SPUR strongly supports SB 330 in concept. The bill is complicated and covers a lot of territory, so we encourage your office to work with willing city and county partners to identify how to make these requirements and standards feasible and implementable. We suggest refining the requirements and prohibitions to ensure that they do not have unintended consequences, especially where this bill may intersect with SB 50 and related bills.

It is critical that the California Legislature act quickly to curb the housing crisis sweeping the state. For these reasons, we strongly support SB 330 in concept. Thank you for your work to make California welcoming and affordable to those who want to be here.

Sincerely,

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

Alicia John-Baptiste
President & CEO