

City of Palo Alto

Office of the Mayor and City Council

March 8, 2021

The Honorable Toni Atkins, President pro Tempore
California State Senate
State Capitol Building, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 9 (Atkins) Increased Density in Single Family Zones – Oppose from the City of Palo Alto

Dear Senate President Pro Tem Atkins,

The City of Palo Alto writes to respectfully Oppose State Bill 9 (SB 9), in accordance with the City’s Resolution No. 9942, affirming the need for local determination of land-use policies.

Such measures should be considered by cities themselves. Not only are local voters and their local governments best able to balance the needs of their communities, but even YIMBY studies show that Bay Area voters strongly prefer local control to state zoning mandates (Sept 2020):

[Bay Area YIMBY Index
Key Findings Report](#)

17. Which of the following comes closest to your view?

| Bay Area Voters | % |
|---|----|
| State officials should take action when policies by local officials prevent new homebuilding and development within their own communities | 26 |
| Local officials should have the right to control the type and pace of homebuilding development within their own communities | 53 |
| Don't know / not sure | 21 |

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewiqpcOS66vuAhWkHDQIHc0tBysQFjAAegQIAxAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcoredecision.com%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Farticle-files%2FCODA-FSBPA-Bay-Area-YIMBY.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1MvAV935lo-1IYcR8kNu3h>

Furthermore, there is no reason to believe SB 9 will address California’s (and Palo Alto’s) overwhelming housing need: **Affordable Housing for low- and moderate-income households** (defined as 60-80 percent Area Median Income (AMI) for low-income and 100-120% AMI for moderate-income). Decades of city and state overachievement on Market-Rate housing targets for high-income households have not reduced housing costs for low- and moderate-income households^{1, 2}; and even Plan Bay Area 2050 finds that upzoning strategies such as SB9 do not facilitate production of Affordable Housing³.

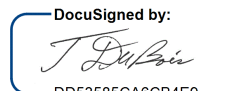
Affordable Housing requires funding -- there is no way around this. If you can help us with such funding, we will see that it is put to work!

As California's high-wage tech workers take advantage of Remote Work to flee urban cores for suburbs (including out-of-state suburbs), ideological attempts to eliminate those same suburbs seem particularly ill-timed.

State driven ministerial or by-right housing approval processes fail to recognize the extensive public engagement associated with developing and adopting zoning ordinances and housing elements that are certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Therefore, the City of Palo Alto respectfully opposes SB 9 (Atkins). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

DD53585CA6CB4E9...
Tom DuBois, Mayor
City of Palo Alto

Cc:

Josh Becker, Senator, California's 13th Senate District
Marc Berman, Assemblymember, California's 24th Assembly District
Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California
Kate Gordon, Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research
Seth Miller, Regional Public Affairs Manager, Peninsula Division, League of California Cities
Emily Beach, Division President, League of California Cities
Cities Association of Santa Clara County
Palo Alto City Council

REFERENCES

1. **"Double Counting in the Latest Housing Needs Assessment"**
<https://securservercdn.net/198.71.233.65/r3g.8a0.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Double-counting-in-the-Latest-Housing-Needs-Assessment-Oct2020.pdf>
2. **"Nearly 3 in 4 half-duplexes sold for more than the single detached homes they replaced"**
<https://openhousing.ca/2020/12/21/nearly-3-in-4-half-duplexes-sold-for-more-than-the-single-detached-homes-they-replaced/>
3. **Plan Bay Area 2050 Regional Growth Forecast**
https://www.planbayarea.org/sites/default/files/Plan_Bay_Area_2050_-_Regional_Growth_Forecast_July_2020v2DV.pdf

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