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February 12, 2018

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Senator, 11th District
State Capitol, Room 4066
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

RE: SB 827 (Wiener) – OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED

Dear Senator Wiener,

The California Contract Cities Association writes to express opposition to SB 827 (Wiener) unless amended. SB 827 would grant a housing development to receive transit-rich housing bonus. These bonuses, under certain criteria, would exempt projects from locally developed and adopted regulations concerning height limitations, densities, parking requirement ratios, and design review standards. The Association represents 76 cities and over 7.5 million residents. As representatives of both small and large cities, SB 827 undermines local control.

SB 827 would weaken locally adopted General Plans, Housing Elements, and Sustainable Community Strategies. These plans were created in concert with input and feedback from residents, carefully balancing the desires of the community and future city planning needs. By allowing housing developers and transit agencies to ignore local ordinances for the sake of increasing density and profits, SB 827 runs the risk of harming our democratic process.

More specifically, CCCA is concerned with provisions that would grant a housing bonus in proximity to a major transit stop or a high-quality transit corridor. The bill does not clearly distinguish the types of transit stops (e.g. bus services versus rail) that would qualify for a bonus, potentially impeding many cities who are already adopting policies for new developments in proximity to transit. CCCA is recommending narrowing the definition of a major transit stop and reduce the radius from a transit stop and high-quality transit corridor that a development could receive a bonus, mitigating the area size of a bonus.

Additionally, the bill over-assumes the potential use of transit among new residents. In communities where transit is not readily available or reliant, car ownership is a necessity for day-to-day activities, including transportation to school or work. The prohibition of parking ratios could increase traffic and public safety concerns.

The effect of SB 827 could irreparably alter the character of our cities and impede existing efforts to address the housing crisis. Local governments are entrusted by residents to enact sound policies that balance needs and desires. Contract Cities is dedicated to steadfast collaborative solutions and is committed to working with Senator Wiener to solve the ongoing crisis. However, as the bill stands, Contract Cities opposes SB 827 unless amended.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Michael Vuong at (562) 622-5533 or michael@contractcities.org.

Sincerely,



Michael T. Davitt
CCCA President
Mayor, La Cañada Flintridge



Lindsey Horvath
CCCA Legislative Committee Chair
Councilmember, West Hollywood

CC: Chair and Members, Senate Transportation and Housing Committee
Chair and Members, Senate Committee on Governance and Finance
League of California Cities