



523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826  
Los Angeles, CA 90014

213 623 2489 OFFICE  
213 623 3909 FAX  
[laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org)

April 18, 2025

**Submitted electronically**

Senator María Elena Durazo  
1021 O Street, Suite 7530  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
[senator.durazo@sen.ca.gov](mailto:senator.durazo@sen.ca.gov)

**Re: OPPOSE SB 79 (Wiener) – Abundant & Affordable Housing  
Near Transit Act**

Dear Senator Durazo,

The Los Angeles Conservancy writes to express our strong opposition to SB 79 (Wiener), which would disregard state-certified housing elements and bestow land use authority to transit agencies without any requirement that developers build housing—let alone affordable housing. This bill undermines the very planning tools designed to support housing production and protect community resources.

SB 79 doubles down on the recent trend of the state overriding its own mandated local housing elements. This latest overreaching effort forces cities to approve transit-oriented development projects near specified transit stops—**up to seven stories in height and 120 homes per acre**—without regard to community needs and existing planning policies, environmental review, or public input. Most alarmingly, it allows transit agencies unlimited land use authority on property they own or control, regardless of distance from a transit stop. Agencies would control all aspects of development—including height, density, and design—without regard to local zoning or adopted community plans.

This sweeping preemption not only marginalizes local governments and communities but directly threatens California's historic and cultural resources. Older and historic neighborhoods—often home to underrecognized communities—face increased development pressure,



risking tenant displacement and erasure of cultural identity. Communities like Boyle Heights, Chinatown, Highland Park and Little Tokyo are facing some of the most intense development pressures statewide. SB 79 would remove all remaining guardrails that these communities helped create.

The Conservancy has been actively engaged in multiple planning efforts in your district including:

- The Downtown Community Plan Update, implemented 2025
- The Hollywood Community Plan, implemented 2025
- The Citywide Housing Incentive Program (CHIP) ordinance, implemented 2025
- The Boyle Heights Community Plan, adopted by LA City Council in 2024, to be implemented in 2025
- The Citywide Adaptive Reuse Ordinance (ARO), adopted by LA City Council in 2024, to be implemented in 2025
- LA County's Metro Area Plan, implemented 2024

Collectively, these planning efforts plan for hundreds of thousands of new housing units and tens of thousands of jobs throughout Senate District 26. In most cases, the most intense development is focused in areas adjacent to transit. Unlike SB 79, each of these plans went through robust community engagement processes, where diverse community voices were present. Planners had to balance the need for housing with community concerns about gentrification and displacement and the critical need for affordable housing, all while providing space for industrial and commercial growth that support good paying jobs to the local workforce. Planners designed protections for historic resources and legacy businesses and provided incentives to enhance community character.

We understand and share the goal of addressing California's housing shortage. However, as currently drafted, SB 79 will not deliver the housing needed in a manner that supports local flexibility, community engagement, and preservation of historic places. California will not meet its housing goals through a purely state-driven, by-right model. SB 79 seriously undermines the local community planning processes and the needs of the constituents who participated in that process.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

### **About the Los Angeles Conservancy:**

The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local historic preservation organization in the United States, with nearly 5,000 member households throughout the Los Angeles area. Established in



1978, the Conservancy works to preserve and revitalize the significant architectural and cultural heritage of Los Angeles County through advocacy and education.

Sincerely,



Andrew Salimian  
Director of Advocacy

cc: Mayor Karen Bass  
Eunisses Hernandez, Council District 1  
Adrin Nazarian, Council District 2  
Bob Blumenfield, Council District 3  
Nithya Raman, Council District 4  
Katy Yaroslavsky, Council District 5  
Imelda Padilla, Council District 6  
Monica Rodriguez, Council District 7  
Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Council District 8  
Curren D. Price Jr., Council District 9  
Heather Hutt, Council District 10  
Traci Park, Council District 11  
John Lee, Council District 12  
Hugo Soto-Martínez, Council District 13  
Ysabel Jurado, Council District 14  
Tim McOsker, Council District 15

