



March 2019

California State Legislators
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Opposition to Senator Scott Wiener's SB 50 legislation

Dear California State Legislators:

The Cow Hollow Association (CHA) is a San Francisco neighborhood association representing approximately 1,900 residents and dedicated to the preservation of the residential character of the Cow Hollow neighborhood

As an association, we have been deeply involved in understanding the implications of Senator Scott Wiener's SB 50 legislation and its impact on our neighborhood, San Francisco and California at large. As with this bill's predecessor SB 827, we disagree with SB 50's premise that building density around transit corridors will increase affordable housing stock by somehow reducing the price of renting or buying property in San Francisco and beyond. We all know the truth of San Francisco's desirability, and this bill merely incentivizes developers to fulfill that need with top-dollar luxury condos while doing nothing to address the creation of truly affordable housing for low, middle and moderate incomes workers.

We are asking that the California Legislators oppose SB 50. As constituents of San Francisco's state legislative representatives - Wiener, Ting and Chiu - we are disappointed and angry that they are pushing through housing legislation at a dizzying pace with little or no regard to their real impact on the city they were elected to protect.

We have a list of objections to this bill that we [sent in an email to our membership](#). Below are the highlights of our objections:

1. SB 50 indiscriminately robs California communities of the fundamental control of how and when to shape their communities: It robs them of self-determination. It prescribes a "one size fit all" for density and building heights resulting, in its interface with other proposed and already enacted legislation, up to 85 ft. high multi unit buildings for full half mile wide swatches along local bus lines, thereby "Manhattanizing" San Francisco. (Our Planning Department estimates SB 50 will affect a full 96% of the parcels in the city!).

2. There is no showing that such draconian measures will meet real housing needs. SB 50 would work with already passed SB 35, State Density Bonus and Housing Accountability Act to green light the building of multi-unit residential properties, some



up to 85 ft. vs the current, long standing height limitations of about half that. This will significantly increase luxury, high end housing and urban density at the expense of neighborhood charm and affordable housing prices for those who need it the most.

3. There are discreet, effective means to achieve more affordable housing. For example, there are literally thousands of affordable housing units in San Francisco, with permits granted, long awaiting to be built. And tech companies (for example, Facebook and Google) ,with facilities outside San Francisco, are now starting to build housing for employees there. Again, what is needed for the already permitted affordable housing still to be built are discreet fixes, not statewide impositions: for example, consider imposing a substantial “vacancy tax” on already permitted housing still not built, and/or float tax deductible affordable housing bonds, all to make the ready-to-be-built affordable housing “pencil out” for developers/builders. And what is needed for tech worker housing is incentivizing the tech companies and their local communities to construct more proximate housing.

As for the tech workers who want to live in SF while they work elsewhere: Their desire to patronize city bars, restaurants and entertainment venues simply does not constitute any kind of justifiable basis for a state law, under the guise of a stretched-beyond-recognition definition of “affordable housing”, to accord them housing wherever they would like it. There is no need for the launching of a “nuclear option.”

4. The infrastructure costs of hugely increasing population and building density will be born by local communities. The escalated costs of police and fire protection, gas, electric and sewage conduits and service, schools, social services and parks-- these would burden local communities for decades, if not centuries to come.

Conclusion: Oppose SB 50. Go back to the drawing board and begin with the understanding that the core of the problem is that affordable housing does not pencil out in popular, job-rich regions. You need a solution that either subsidizes the building of truly affordable homes, or find ways to finance the already entitled 58,000 properties in San Francisco, impose a “motivating” vacancy tax, or wait out this current bubble and let market conditions correct the situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lori Brooke'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lori Brooke
President, Cow Hollow Association

COW HOLLOW ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 471136 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94147 TEL: 415.749.1841



cc: CHA Board
CHA Advisory
CHA Membership