

February 28th, 2017

GROW THE
RICHMOND

Senator Scott Wiener
California State Capitol, Rm. 4066
Sacramento, CA 95814

**LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR:
Senate Bill 35 - Housing Accountability and Affordability Act**

Dear Senator Wiener,

We are writing on behalf of Grow The Richmond, a local group of about 60 residents who support building more housing in the neighborhood.

The Bay Area housing crisis has been devastating to The Richmond District. A systematic failure to build new homes has caused rents to skyrocket, overburdening our working class neighbors already coping with rising medical and education costs.

The Existing Conditions Report from Supervisor Mar's Richmond District Strategy explains that 44% of residents are "rent burdened", spending more than a third of their income on rent¹. This is unacceptable and incompatible with Richmond District values. If we cannot decrease the price of housing, The Richmond will cease to be a diverse and welcoming place.

Last year, President Obama highlighted the severity of the problem in the Housing Development Toolkit²:

Significant barriers to new housing development can cause working families to be pushed out of the job markets with the best opportunities for them, or prevent them from moving to regions with higher-paying jobs and stronger career tracks. Excessive barriers to housing development result in increasing drag on national economic growth and exacerbate income inequality.

The White House recommended a key policy change: Streamline permitting processes and timelines.

With this pragmatic advice in mind, we are excited to endorse SB 35. The State of California should require all cities to approve new housing if they are not meeting Regional Housing Needs Assessment goals.

Furthermore, this legislation will help us build more affordable housing in our own backyard. Our neighborhood has built 198 affordable housing units, only 3.2% of the city's total!¹

Neighborhood groups are banding together because this crisis is regional-- resistance to new housing in places like Berkeley, Palo Alto, and Brisbane hurts all Richmond tenants, from Stanyan to Ocean Beach.

We have much more work to do on parking minimums and upzoning, but SB 35 is a great first step.

Sincerely,

Nick Carneiro Katie Mackenzie
Bobak Esfandiari William Hooten
Ariel Dang-Tran Asumu Takikawa and 60+ other members

Copies to:

Consultants of Senate Transportation & Housing Committee

Members of Senate Transportation & Housing Committee

[1] San Francisco Planning Department, September 2015

http://default.sfplanning.org/plans-and-programs/in-your-neighborhood/invest-in-neighborhoods/richmond-district/Executive_Summary_for-web.pdf

[2] The White House, September 2016

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/Housing_Development_Toolkit%20f.2.pdf