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April 9, 2021

The Honorable Henry Stern
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5080
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Stern,

California Building Officials (CALBO) must respectfully **OPPOSE** SB 55, as amended on April 5, 2021. This bill would prohibit new developments in a very high fire hazard severity zone or a state responsibility area unless the local agency can provide “substantial evidence that the local agency has adopted a comprehensive, necessary, and appropriate wildfire prevention and community hardening strategy to mitigate significant risks of loss, injury, or death, as specified”.

As background, CALBO members are primarily responsible for enforcing building code requirements in an estimated 95% of the buildings constructed in California. Our mission is to promote public health and safety in building construction through responsible legislation, education, and building code development. We ensure that proper public health and structural safety requirements, codes, and standards are adhered to within the built environment. We protect the citizens and the overall safety of the public.

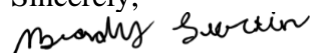
CALBO opposes SB 55 as the bill specifically targets rural areas also known as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones or State Responsibility Areas (SRA) which encompass almost a third of California. Limiting housing development in these regions is problematic as Building Departments are primarily funded by building permit and construction fees. The Building Department, and its staff, would struggle to continue serving the community if some housing and commercial projects in the community were terminated.

Ceasing some development in these areas would not only impact local building departments, which are already under financial strain, but also negatively affect the inhabitants of the region. This bill specifically includes Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Junior ADUs,

which have been found as an affordable source of housing throughout the state. Ultimately, SB 55 would result in the termination of affordable housing in SRAs, and directly impact the economy of these rural communities.

CALBO continues to support current efforts to increase fire safety throughout the state, while adhering to building and safety codes. However, CALBO opposes the use of broad mandates which negatively impact local governments. For these reasons we must respectfully **OPPOSE** SB 55. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at (916) 208-2582.

Sincerely,



Brady Guertin

Public Affairs Manager