



April 20, 2023

The Honorable Josh Becker
Member, California State Senate
1021 O Street, Room 7250
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 634 (Becker): Low Barrier Navigation Center: opportunity housing: use by right
As amended April 10, 2023 – OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED
Set for hearing in Senate Governance and Finance Committee – April 26, 2023**

Dear Senator Becker:

On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC), the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we write in regrettable opposition to your Senate Bill 634 unless it is amended as discussed below. While we appreciate the need to proactively address emergency housing needs of unsheltered Californians, we are concerned by the extension of the by-right approval process created for low-barrier navigation centers to a new and largely untested form of interim housing, as well as extending the types of zones where the by-right process may be utilized. Moreover, we are troubled by the addition of new provisions requiring local governments to prove that their property is unavailable or unsuitable to be leased for “opportunity housing.”

Remove Section 6 Regarding Local Government Property

While local governments around the state have made appropriate publicly owned properties available for interim housing projects as they work to address the homelessness crisis, local agencies must retain flexibility to use their property to address a myriad of community needs. Unfortunately, Section 6 of SB 634 turns this premise on its head by requiring local agencies to demonstrate that they do not require the use of their property receiving “a request to lease” is for an “opportunity housing” project. Moreover, this process must occur during an unreasonably fast 60-day timeframe. Finally, the new process created by SB 634 includes requirements that likely conflict with existing law related to the disposition of surplus local government property.

Limit By-Right Process to Multifamily & Mixed-Use Zones

The by-right process in SB 634 should apply to the same zones as those where low-barrier navigation centers are a use by-right under existing law. This will reduce conflicts with surrounding land uses and help ensure that this new type of interim housing is located near services and amenities for residents. While other types of land uses may be appropriate for SB 634 projects, local governments need to maintain discretion to impose appropriate conditions on the operation and design of these projects.

For these reasons, we are regrettably opposed to SB 634 unless amended. Please contact Chris Lee (UCC) at clee@politicogroup.com, Jason Rhine (Cal Cities) at jrhine@calcities.org, or Tracy Rhine (RCRC) at trhine@rcrcnet.org with any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher Lee
UCC



Jason Rhine
Cal Cities



Tracy Rhine
RCRC

cc: The Honorable Anna Caballero, Chair, Senate Governance & Finance Committee
Honorable Members, Senate Governance & Finance Committee
Jonathan Peterson, Consultant, Senate Governance & Finance Committee
Ryan Eisberg, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus