



September 15, 2025

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 79 (Wiener) Housing development: transit-oriented development.
Request for Veto**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) writes to request your **Veto** on **SB 79 (Wiener)** which would disregard state-certified housing elements and bestow land use authority to transit agencies without any requirement to align development standards with local general plan and zoning requirements.

SB 79 doubles down on the recent trend of the state overriding its own mandated local housing elements. This latest overreaching effort forces cities in urban transit counties defined as “a county with more than 15 rail stations” to approve transit-oriented development projects near specified transit stops — up to seven stories high and a density of 120 homes per acre — without regard to the community's needs, environmental review, or public input.

Most alarmingly, SB 79 defies cities' general plans and provides transit agencies with land use authority on property they own that is adjacent to a transit stop, or if the agency owns land on or before January 1, 2026, within a half mile of a transit stop. Transit agencies would have the power to determine nearly all aspects of the development, including height, density, and design, without any regard to local zoning or planning. Transit agencies play a crucial role in planning transportation services, providing operations and logistics management, and ensuring that Californians have various options for commuting. By expanding their role to include housing developers and land-use authorities, this measure would continue to stretch already-thin agencies that are dealing with [funding shortfalls](#) and that lack expertise in land-use planning and development. It is fiscally unsound to assign them new responsibilities in housing development when they are struggling to sustain core operations.

SB 79 also creates more workload not provided in the state budget for the Department of Housing and Community Development, requiring additional



information from local governments when reviewing housing plans, adopting new regulations around residential capacity near transit stops likely on a parcel-by-parcel basis, and requiring more technical assistance for cities attempting to qualify for the local alternative transit-oriented development plan. This will further delay housing element approvals, increase administrative burdens, and create uncertainty for developers navigating an already complex system.

Finally, the measure requires the approval of dense, residential development near specific transit stops, without the guarantee that there is a market for this kind of development. [Recent polls](#) from the Public Policy Institute of California show that 71% of all adults would prefer living in a single-family detached home, and less than 30% wish to live in a condo or townhome, the exact kind of development this measure is trying to promote.

For these reasons, Cal Cities urges your **Veto** on SB 79 (Wiener). If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at bguertin@calcities.org or 916-658-8255.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brady Guertin".

Brady Guertin
Legislative Advocate

Cc: The Honorable Scott Wiener, Senator, Senate District 11
Brady Borcharding, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Governor's Office of
Legislative Affairs