



March 5, 2021

The Honorable Richard Bloom
California State Assembly
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0050

RE: AB 115 (Bloom) – Planning and Zoning: Commercial Zoning: Housing Development – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Bloom,

East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO) is pleased to support AB 115, which responds to our state's longstanding need for more affordable homes by making it easier to construct multi-family housing in commercial zones as long as 20% of units are affordable to lower-income residents.

EBHO is a non-profit, member-driven organization with over 300 organizational and individual members. For 35 years, we have worked to preserve, protect, and create affordable housing opportunities for low-income communities in the East Bay by educating, advocating, organizing, and building coalitions. We believe that solutions to California's severe housing crisis must be comprehensive. As such, we support a multi-pronged effort based on the three principles of production of new housing, preservation of existing housing that is affordable, and protection of residents from unaffordable rent increases, eviction, displacement, and homelessness.

While the limitation of public funding is often one of the biggest barriers to building more affordable housing, the availability of appropriate sites is another. Across the state, cities have found that commercial corridors often present an ideal place to identify more large-scale sites suitable for multi-family housing construction. Moreover, these sites are often convenient to jobs and transit, thus creating economic and carbon-reduction opportunities, as well.

To solve our state's housing crisis, we need more housing that's affordable to residents across all income levels. This bill would incentivize not only the production of more housing for low-income households, but also more housing period. This sort of innovative approach to land use and streamlining is key to overcoming the state's deep lack of housing supply and affordability. Such creative approaches will be especially valuable in communities across up and down the state as they work to figure out how to accommodate expanded responsibilities under RHNA.

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Indeed, AB 115 would cease to apply in local communities once they rezone in alignment with their RHNA during the upcoming Sixth Cycle Revision of their Housing Element.

We thank you for introducing this bill and look forward to working to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Levin".

Jeffrey Levin
Policy Director