



September 17, 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 City of Hemet 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.

The City of Hemet appreciates the author's desire to include an alternative transit-oriented development plan; however, as currently drafted, the local government has the option to do this through an additional analysis in the local government's housing element or through the adoption of an ordinance with approval from the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). SB 79 would add additional requirements for state review, increasing workloads, and making it more likely that local governments will not get their housing elements or ordinances approved promptly.

Finally, the local flexibility provided in the measure is minimal at best. The bill does not provide exemptions for cities that have adopted plans to promote taller, denser residential development near transit in consultation with the community but fall short of the bill's rigid minimum requirements. The alternative plan would still be required to meet or exceed the required development near transit as determined by HCD across all transit-oriented development zones within the jurisdiction without accounting for infrastructure constraints, environmental hazards, or community design goals unique to each jurisdiction. For example, a community may want to distribute density around the jurisdiction due to its infrastructure capacity. However, they must still meet the minimum requirements of the bill, regardless of whether they make sense for the community or the design of the jurisdiction. In short, the flexibility is about how to meet the state's requirements – not whether those requirements make sense for the community.

For these reasons, the City of Hemet respectfully request your **Veto on SB 79 (Wiener)**.

Sincerely,



Jackie Peterson
Mayor

cc. The Honorable Scott Wiener
The Honorable Jeff Gonzalez
The Honorable Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh
Jesse Ramirez, Riverside County Regional Public Affairs Manager, jramirez@cacities.org
League of California Cities, cityletters@cacities.org

