



CITY OF MURRIETA

July 22, 2020

The Honorable Richard Bloom
Assembly Member, California State Assembly
State Capitol Building, Room 2003
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1279 (Bloom) High Opportunity Areas
Oppose Unless Amended (As amended 4/24/2020)**

Dear Assembly Member Bloom,

The City of Murrieta must respectfully oppose AB 1279 unless the measure is amended to address our key concerns. AB 1279, as amended April 24, 2020, would require jurisdictions that are deemed “high opportunity areas” to allow multifamily housing projects in greater height and density than existing zoning and planning documents otherwise would allow.

Housing affordability and homelessness are among the most critical issues facing California cities. Cities lay the groundwork for housing production by planning and zoning new projects in their communities based on extensive public input and engagement, state housing laws, and the needs of the building industry.

While addressing the housing affordability crisis facing California cities is critical, AB 1279 takes the wrong approach by mandating that jurisdictions with “high opportunity areas” ministerially approve multifamily housing projects with heights up to 55 feet and density of up to 120 units without environmental review or consistency with locally adopted zoning standards and state certified housing plans.

The City of Murrieta requests the following amendments in order to address our concerns and remove our opposition:

- Clearly define “high opportunity areas” in statute. As presently drafted, it is very difficult to determine which jurisdictions contain “high opportunity areas”.
- Establish fixed timelines for when “high opportunity area” maps will be updated.
- Allow environmental review of proposed housing projects except under limited circumstances.
- Establish a clear off ramp for jurisdictions to develop their own community lead housing production plan that is consistent with the goals and objectives of AB 1279, but are tied to the 6th Cycle of RHNA and the housing element process.



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Thank you for considering the above amendments. If you have any questions, or need more information, about the City's position, please contact Louie Lacasella, City Manager's Office at (951) 461-6008 or llacasella@MurrietaCA.Gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gene Wunderlich".

Gene Wunderlich
Mayor

Cc: Murrieta City Council
Senator Melissa Melendez
Erin Sasse, League of California Cities Public Affairs Manager
Members, Senate Committee on Housing