

# CALIFORNIA TENANT AND HOUSING JUSTICE GROUPS OPPOSE SB 50

January 22, 2020

Dear California Senators, Assembly Members and Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco and the below signed organizations, we are writing to firmly oppose SB 50 (Wiener). SB 50, even in its third iteration, signals more rent hikes, gentrification and displacement in marginalized communities and beyond. Incentivizing more speculation when [global capital entities are devouring our housing stock](#) at unprecedented rates will worsen an already devastating affordability crisis. Wall Street and hedge fund landlords are leaving thousands of units empty and turning homes for people into mere mechanisms for profit, which has pushed an increasing number of tenants into homelessness. The lack of truly affordable homes or substantive, enforceable tenant protections in SB 50 leaves too many vulnerable to the whims of the real estate market, which has undermined community stability for generations.

We believe it is crucial for exclusionary communities that benefited from the redlining of poor people and communities of color to contribute towards increasing the affordable housing supply in California. Our objections are rooted in SB 50's impact on communities of color and low/moderate income neighborhoods near transit, which will face higher rates of gentrification, displacement, and rising income inequality as a result of the bill. Senator Wiener's amendments claiming to give sensitive communities five years and cities two years to make alternative plans to SB 50's zoning deregulation, which advances a majority of market-rate units, are disingenuous if not accompanied by additional state funds to build a majority of deeply affordable units to suit the true housing needs of these areas.

These amendments do nothing to prevent landlords from harassing tenants out of their homes to capitalize on inflated rents accompanying luxury developments, which SB 50 would fast track. The California Apartment Association, an SB 50 sponsor and a major funder of anti-rent control campaigns, suggested AB 1482 would address this type of displacement. However, these rent gouging protections will not save our communities from SB 50's gentrifying pressures since it has implementation challenges, it leaves Costa Hawkins unchanged, it doesn't prevent harassment, and doesn't save tenants already on the verge of being priced out. Additionally, today's billionaire landlords' are able to hold units off the market for seven years or more, which undermines the bill's language meant to dissuade evictions related to demolitions. Given the lack of data collection and enforcement mechanisms around the state, the bill's purported tenant protections wouldn't truly protect the renters pressured to move and will do nothing for the renters impacted by rising rents due to gentrification.

It is unfortunate that, for the third time, Senator Wiener has failed to meet with tenant rights groups in his district or beyond who understand the pressures that low income communities are facing and the types of housing and protections they need. A bill that encourages the building of mostly market rate units, especially in cities that are [already meeting their luxury housing goals while underbuilding for all other income levels](#), cannot be called "an equity bill, an affordability bill, and a climate bill" as its [author touts](#). The rise in displacement, super-commuting and homelessness will continue unless our housing solutions tackle inequality, implement real rent control and develop deeply affordable housing for those who can't wait for market-rate housing to trickle down. If the state wishes to address the housing emergency, we request that they re-invest in social/public housing and let cities

expand renter protections by eliminating the Ellis Act and Costa-Hawkins. If the Legislature wishes to address restrictive zoning laws, it should consider measures like AB 1279 which has a much more targeted approach without the high costs to low-income tenants and gentrifying neighborhoods. We look forward to reviewing future proposals that truly address the need for equitable and sustainable affordable housing and real renter protections.

Sincerely,

Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco, SF

San Francisco Tenants Union, SF

Senior and Disability Action, SF

Dolores Street Community Services, SF

Affordable Housing Alliance, SF

Communities United for Health and Justice, SF

South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN), SF

Tenants and Owners Development Corporation (TODCO), SF

People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Justice (PODER), SF

Plaza 16 Coalition, SF

Coalition on Homelessness, SF

Causa Justa Just Cause, SF & Oakland

Oakland Tenants Union, Oakland

Poor Magazine/Homefulness Project, Oakland

The Village in Oakland #FeedThePeople, Oakland

Berkeley Tenants Union, Berkeley

First They Came for the Homeless, Berkeley

Alameda Renters Coalition, Alameda

Todos Santos Tenants Union, Concord

North Bay Organizing Project, Santa Rosa

Sonoma County Tenants Union, Sonoma County

Affordable Housing Network of Santa Clara County, San Jose

Serve The People San José, San José

Sacramento Tenants Union, Sacramento

Tenant Sanctuary of Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz Tenants Association, Santa Cruz

LA Community Action Network (LA CAN), Los Angeles

Chinatown Community for Equitable Development, Los Angeles

People Organized for Westside Renewal (POWER), Los Angeles

Coalition for Economic Survival (CES), Los Angeles

Los Angeles Tenants Union - (Baldwin-Leimert-Crenshaw, Hollywood, Mid-City, Northeast L.A., North Hollywood, Vermont y Beverly and Westside Locals), Los Angeles

Pasadena Tenant Justice Coalition, Pasadena  
Pasadena Tenants Union, Pasadena  
San Diego Tenants Union, San Diego  
San Diego Tenants United, San Diego  
Tenants Together, Statewide Coalition  
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE Action), Statewide Coalition  
Western Regional Advocacy Project, West Coast/Regional Coalition  
Housing Is A Human Right, Los Angeles\*  
Crenshaw Subway Coalition, Los Angeles\*  
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles\*  
California Reinvestment Coalition, CA\*  
California Environmental Justice Alliance, CA\*  
Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, CA\*  
Stolen Belonging Project , SF\*  
The Women's Building, women-led community space, SF\*

\*CA housing justice-oriented projects or orgs that work closely with some of the above groups who directly serve or represent a base of tenants or unhoused residents.

Sign on list last updated: Jan 29, 2020 at 5:00pm

**If your tenant group or org wishes to endorse this letter, please send the information to [leslie@hrccsf.org](mailto:leslie@hrccsf.org). The list will continue to be regularly updated until the vote in the Senate and Assembly.**