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February 17, 2021

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
President pro Tempore, California State Senate  
State Capitol Building, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **SB 9 (Atkins) Increased Density in Single-Family Zones  
Oppose Unless Amended (As Introduced 12/7/2020)**

Dear Senate President pro Tempore Atkins,

The City of Vista respectfully expresses an Oppose Unless Amended position on SB 9, which would require a local government to ministerially approve a housing development containing two residential units in single-family residential zones. Additionally, this measure would require local governments to ministerially approve urban lot splits.

Like all California cities, Vista faces challenges of housing affordability and homelessness. Affordably priced homes are out of reach for many people and housing is not being built fast enough to meet the current or projected needs of people living in the state. 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 your desire to pursue a housing production proposal is appreciated, unfortunately, SB 9 as currently drafted would not spur much needed housing construction in a manner that supports local flexibility, decision-making, and community input. State driven ministerial or by-right housing approval processes fail to recognize the extensive public engagement associated with developing and adopting zoning ordinances and housing elements that are certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

The City of Vista supports efforts that provide flexibility and give the City greater authority in meeting land-use planning and housing development requirements; this measure, in its current form, does not afford that flexibility.

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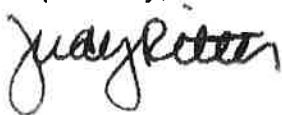
Vista requests the following amendments to address our concerns and remove our opposition:

- Clarify that a property owner using SB 9 is limited to constructing two residential units, not two residential units and additional accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on the same parcel;
- Require a housing developer to acquire a building permit within one year of a lot split, so that speculators do not sell lots and never build homes;
- Allow local governments to require adequate access for police, fire and other public safety vehicles and equipment;
- Prohibit developers from using SB 9 in very high fire hazard severity zones;
- Allow cities to determine a range of lot sizes suitable for SB 9 development projects;
- Ensure HCD provides Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) credit for production of SB 9 units;
- Allow local governments to take into account local conditions such as hillsides, lot dimensions, natural hazards, available infrastructure, etc. when approving or denying housing project applications;
- Allow local governments to continue to determine parking standards; and
- Ensure large-scale investors and builders do not exploit SB 9 provisions.

The City of Vista is committed to being part of the solution to the housing shortfall across all income levels and will continue to work collaboratively with you to spur much needed housing construction.

For these reasons, the City of Vista opposes SB 9 (Atkins) unless it is amended to address our concerns.

Respectfully,



Judy Ritter  
Mayor  
City of Vista

cc: Office of Senator Patricia Bates, Sarah.Couch@sen.ca.gov  
Office of Assembly Member Tasha Boerner Horvath, Celia.Mata@asm.ca.gov  
League of California Cities, cityletters@cacities.org