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**John Conley**

April 19, 2023

The Honorable Philip Ting  
State Capitol, Ste. 8230  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Ting,

The City of Vista regrets that it must **Oppose** your AB 480, which undermines the ability of local agencies to conduct appropriate economic development activities on properties they acquire or otherwise own, by expanding the scope of authority for Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to review "*any action to dispose of land*," which would include properties retained for agency use, properties declared "exempt surplus," and properties that local agencies are authorized by other laws to acquire and dispose of for economic development purposes.

The implementation of the Surplus Lands Act (SLA), including HCD's recent guidelines, has created immense delays and difficulties for local government agencies dealing with the control and disposal of their local properties. Regrettably, AB 480 would compound those difficulties by expanding state reviews and delays affecting properties retained for agency use and declared exempt surplus.

For example, the City of Vista made significant public investments by purchasing blighted commercial properties along the South Santa Fe commercial corridor and Highway 78 with the intention of generating much needed sales tax revenue and creating jobs for our residents from redevelopment of the sites to commercial uses. One of these parcels has been home to a BMW automobile dealership for over a decade. As the initial lease is expiring soon, negotiations have been stalled due to the over-reach of the State's Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) interpretation of the SLA to include **all** leases. It was never the intent of that legislation to subject every parcel owned by a local jurisdiction to the disposal requirements of surplus land. In fact, the SLA language does not include "leases". HCD's guidelines created new law by defining "disposition" to include leases. Economic development and job creation are important and integral uses for local municipalities. To subject parcels devoted to economic development and job creation to the requirements of the SLA is a monumental over-reach by HCD and the antithesis of the existing state law known as the Economic Opportunity Act.

Rather than expanding the scope of the SLA, the Legislature should thoroughly evaluate the difficulties, bureaucratic delays, and unintended consequences caused by implementation of the existing law on local agency activities. The Legislature should also address unresolved conflicts with other laws and state policy priorities the Legislature has enacted like the Economic Opportunity Act that affect the disposal of local agency property.

For these reasons, the City of Vista regrets that it must respectfully **Oppose** AB 480. Please feel free to contact me or Larry Vaupel, Director of Economic Development at (760) 643-5244.

Sincerely,



John Franklin  
Mayor

cc: Senator Catherine Blakespear, [Fernando.a.hernandez@sen.ca.gov](mailto:Fernando.a.hernandez@sen.ca.gov)  
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Gurbax Sahota, Chief Executive Officer, California Association for Local Economic Development