



Erika Pulst <erika.pulst@lacity.org>

CF 14-0057-S8; SDU Repeal (OPPOSE)

John Given <john@johngiven.com>
To: Erika.Pulst@lacity.org
Cc: Brian.Walters@lacity.org

Mon, Aug 22, 2016 at 1:24 PM

Dear Council President Wesson and Honorable Councilmembers:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed SDU repeal, scheduled to be heard at City Council tomorrow, August 23.

The offered justifications for the action include that it is necessary to comply with an LA Superior Court order, necessary to provide relief to homeowners who received permits for SDU's in reliance on the City's previous administrative process, and needed to allow for development of additional affordable housing throughout the City. None of these justifications holds up under serious scrutiny.

Stripping hillside and other protections by moving to a state default standard is a one-size-fits-all approach representing another in a long series of giveaways to speculative development in our City's residential areas. There is no indication that such a change is needed to promote affordable housing. Both evidence and logic suggest that allowing larger SDU's actually works against affordable housing: increasing the cost of production for larger units would cause sale and rental prices for those units to increase. Moreover, it is abundantly clear that residential real estate speculation is one of the major barriers to affordable housing in Los Angeles. See, e.g., Dick Platkin, *Los Angeles: Neighborhood Groups Can Make Affordable Housing Happen ... Here's How*, CityWatch (Oct. 19, 2015), available at: <http://www.citywatchla.com/index.php/archive/9803-los-angeles-neighborhood-groups-can-make-affordable-housing-happen-here-s-how>.

The repeal would also be contrary to previous action by the Council in support of recognition and protection of wildlife corridors in the Santa Monica Mountains (see Council File 14-0518, adopted *unanimously* by the Council on April 22, 2016). As National Park Service Superintendent David Szymanski wrote in support of that motion: "During approximately 15 years of research in the Santa Monica Mountains, the NPS has identified increasing urbanization and habitat fragmentation as one of the key challenges to protecting local wildlife and a functioning ecosystem. The proposed [wildlife corridor] ordinance would support NPS goals and objectives to protect open space and provide for wildlife movement throughout the Santa Monica Mountains and the greater vicinity." The repeal would increase hillside area habitat and wildlife corridor fragmentation by allowing potentially millions of additional square feet of development in our City's hillside areas on a by-right basis with no environmental review whatsoever.

Moreover, the action is *not* exempt from CEQA (see my June 6, 2016 letter to the Council File, available at: http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2014/14-0057-s8_pc_06-6-16.pdf (beginning at p.2 of the linked file)).

I urge the City to reject the repeal.

Sincerely,

John Given
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