



June 25, 2025

Assemblymember Matt Haney, Chair  
Housing and Community Development Committee  
1021 O Street, Room 8620  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 79 (Wiener) Housing Development: Transit Oriented Development – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Matt Haney and Committee Members:

On behalf of NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) and NRDC Action Fund, we are writing to support SB 79, which will help alleviate California's acute housing shortage by providing Californians with more choices to live in walkable communities near public transit. The bill accomplishes this by establishing state standards for transit-oriented zoning around qualifying transit stops—especially train stations.

The shortage of affordable housing in California is decades in the making. A failure to allow adequate housing—including low- and very low-income housing—near public transportation has contributed to displacement, longer commutes, more vehicle miles traveled, increased greenhouse gas emissions, loss of open space, and worsening urban sprawl. Furthermore, exclusionary zoning approaches have for decades made the construction of multifamily housing illegal, undermining affordability, exacerbating inequity by limiting access to opportunity, and driving sprawling land use patterns that harm both natural ecosystems and public health.

Still, this is a complex arena for state policy-making, especially with respect to striking an appropriate balance in both unlocking private investments in market rate development while maximizing low- and very low-income housing construction to leverage the access-to-opportunity benefits of transit-oriented housing while mitigating gentrification and displacement risks. We appreciate your office's commitment to continued discussions with affordable housing organizations, especially those with expertise in the development of low- and very low-income affordable housing. This coordination is critical to avoid undermining existing affordability requirements and incentives—including by ensuring harmonization with existing state Density Bonus Law incentives and local inclusionary zoning policies.

SB 79 could be a pathway to ensure equity and provide access to affordable housing by addressing existing disparities, reducing systemic barriers, and improving outcomes for communities facing housing insecurity. To that end, we hope that very low-income and low-income thresholds are managed in a way that centers equity, affordability, and provides fair access to affordable housing for all Californians. Establishing a stronger statewide floor for affordable housing requirements would ensure that jurisdictions without local inclusionary requirements help address state affordable housing needs and would help ensure the law does not inadvertently accelerate gentrification or displacement in transit-rich neighborhoods.

Housing development near public transportation is a necessary tool to achieve California's climate goals. By offering more people the opportunity to walk and use transit for their daily trips, we can reduce traffic and tailpipe pollution. SB 79 will ensure that local governments provide adequate zoning to enable more dense, walkable communities, while still providing appropriate local flexibility for implementation.

We thank you for your leadership in making California more affordable and accessible, while keeping us on track to meet our climate goals.

Sincerely,

*Zak Accuardi*

Zak Accuardi  
Director, Mobility Choices

*Victoria Rome*

Victoria Rome  
CA Government Affairs Director