



CITY OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA

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June 29, 2021

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Housing Committee
State Capitol, Room 2209
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 215 (Chiu): Housing Element. Regional Housing Need. Relative Progress Determination - Notice of Opposition

Dear Senator Wiener,

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita must respectfully oppose AB 215, which would create new and unnecessary mandates and a mid-cycle housing element review process. As you know, the 2019 Budget Act included language declaring it was the State's intent to incentivize jurisdictions to create prohousing environments at the local level through the form of additional points when applying for competitive housing and infrastructure grant programs. Specifically, the language directed HCD to promulgate emergency regulations no later than July 1, 2021, to establish a prohousing designation program. Before allowing the program to begin implementation, AB 215 turns what was intended to be an incentive program into a mandatory requirement for cities and counties to adopt state-supported one-size-fits-all policies and strategies.

Similarly, AB 215 imposes a new mid-cycle housing element review process which is unnecessary. In cases where a lack of housing construction is related to a jurisdiction failing to meet its housing element obligations, several recent changes in the law have given the State several new enforcement tools. Rather than create a new mid-cycle housing element review process, the State should remain focused on using the tools in existing law to promote compliant Housing Element adoption and implementation.

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita is committed to helping the State meet its housing goals; however, we cannot support the transition of an incentive-based approach to a mandatory HCD program. For these reasons, the City of Rancho Santa Margarita opposes AB 215.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Cervantez
City Manager
City of Rancho Santa Margarita

cc: The Honorable David Chiu
The Honorable Patricia Bates
Tony Cardenas, Orange County Division, League of California Cities(via email)
League of California Cities, cityletters@cacities.org

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