August 28, 2020

The Honorable Buffy Wicks,
Assembly member, 15th District
State Capitol, Room 5160
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re:  AB 725 (Wicks) General plans: housing element: moderate-income and above moderate-income housing

City of Beverly Hills- OPPOSE

Dear Assemblymember Wicks,

On behalf of the City of Beverly Hills, I write to you in respectful OPPOSITION to AB 725, your measure to establish new minimum density requirements on a portion of sites identified by a city in its housing element to comply with its share of the regional housing need for moderate- and above moderate-income housing.

Current law requires local jurisdictions to identify adequate sites for housing at all income levels—very low, low, moderate, and above moderate income. Each local jurisdiction must also ensure that its housing element makes enough sites available to accommodate its share of the regional housing need assessment (RHNA), which is an estimate for various regions in the state that is developed by the State Department of Finance and the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

If a city or county does not have enough sites within its existing inventory of Residentially zoned land to accommodate its share of the regional housing needs, it must adopt a program to rezone land within the first three years of the planning period. Every city and county must submit a report to HCD and the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research annually on its implementation and progress towards meeting its RHNA amount and removing governmental obstacles to housing development.
The City of Beverly Hills has long supported the preservation of local control, as localities are best suited to address the needs of local constituents. We work hard to ensure the City’s growth is well planned. This bill would override local discretionary land use authority and prevent municipalities, like ours, from best serving our communities.

Additionally, lowering the required percentage of affordable units from 40 percent to 20 percent will incentivize the development of moderate-income units at the expense of low- and very low-income households. This will further exacerbate the state’s housing crisis and fail to address housing affordability for California’s lower-income households.

California must enact legislation that encourages the development of all types of housing. California’s housing shortage remains a classic example of a supply-demand mismatch that is driving home and rental prices to all-time highs.

For these reasons, the City of Beverly Hills must respectfully OPPOSE AB 725.

Sincerely,

Lester J. Friedman
Mayor, City of Beverly Hills

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Members and Consultants, Assembly Housing Committee
The Honorable Ben Allen, 26th Senate District
The Honorable Richard Bloom, 50th Assembly District
Andrew K. Antwih, Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange