July 27, 2020

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
California State Senate, 39th District  
State Capitol, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814  

Re:  SB 1120 (Atkins) Subdivisions: Tentative Maps.  
     City of Beverly Hills – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Atkins,

On behalf of the City of Beverly Hills, I write to you in respectful OPPOSITION to your SB 1120, which would require cities and counties to ministerially permit a duplex located on a parcel zoned for single-family housing, or the subdivision of a parcel zoned for residential use into two equal parcels.

The City of Beverly Hills has put forth a great amount of time and effort into ensuring that the City's growth is well-planned and takes the City's future housing needs into account. The City strongly believes in the preservation of local control over zoning as localities are best suited to aptly address the needs of local constituents.

SB 1120 would eliminate single-family zoning by requiring the ministerial approval of duplexes and parcel splits in these areas, even if local officials and residents object. According to a Redfin study released last November, a majority of Americans still want a single-family home, even if it means sacrificing proximity to work. Over time, this bill would cause the supply of single-family homes to diminish due to conversions to duplexes. This would negatively impact prices for the rest of the state’s single-family dwellings which would make it more difficult for residents to attain their own home. Additionally, this bill would override local land use plans and regulations and eviscerate decades of careful planning.

The one-size-fits-all approach in SB 1120 fails to take into account the role that local governments’ discretionary land use authority plays in ensuring that public safety is maintained. Portions of Beverly Hills are in the “Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone” and increased density in these and nearby areas has the potential to negatively impact evacuation efforts in the event of a wildfire. SB 1120 does not provide any protections for local governments that wish to limit overly dense development in areas that pose such a safety risk. The bill also fails to take into account the additional costs associated with expanding local emergency services to maintain the public’s safety and ensure these vital services are not negatively impacted due to the increase in population.
The City of Beverly Hills has long supported the preservation of local control, as localities are best suited to aptly address the needs of local constituents, which this bill would further erode. This proposal overrides local discretionary land use authority and prevents municipalities like ours from best serving our communities. For these reasons, the City of Beverly Hills must respectfully OPPOSE your SB 1120. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lester J. Friedman
Mayor, City of Beverly Hills

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