June 1, 2016

Honorable Senator Richard Roth,
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #4
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: 916-323-8386

Honorable Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #4
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Governor's By Right Housing Proposal
Notice of Opposition

Dear Honorable Chairs Nazarian and Roth:

The Board of Directors of the Palos Verdes Homes Association and the members of the Palos Verdes Art Jury vigorously oppose the recently released proposal by the Governor to pre-empt local discretionary land use approvals of specified housing developments. Having all such approvals be considered “ministerial” actions, means eliminating opportunities for public review, project-level environmental review and restricting design review that have been found to be critical to effective community planning. We believe that such fundamental policy changes should not be rushed through as a budget proposal, but merit extensive review by the appropriate policy committees in a deliberative fashion to ensure that local interests/controls are adequately addressed.

The Palos Verdes Homes Association was established in 1923, prior to the formation of the Cities of Palos Verdes Estates and Rancho Palos Verdes. Since that time and after the formation of the respective cities, development has been guided by the “Protective Restrictions of Palos Verdes” established by covenants in deed for each Association lot. These CC&Rs are managed by The Palos Verdes Homes Association and require review of all commercial and residential development by an independent architectural review board, the Palos Verdes Art Jury. The Art Jury convenes weekly for plan reviews. Through these and over the counter actions by staff, submittals receive expedient reviews.

There are 5568 properties under PVHA jurisdiction in Palos Verdes Estates and the Miraleste area of Rancho Palos Verdes. Many of these property owners chose to live here because of the Protective Deed Restrictions referred to above, and have the expectation that the PVHA and the Art Jury would continue their work. Bypassing or restricting this design review process is both short-sighted and misguided. Communities can be improved through good design that enables a new structure to sustain community character and homeowner satisfaction levels.
Eliminating opportunities for review of these major development projects goes against the principles of local democracy and public engagement. While it may be frustrating for some developers to hear concerns about aesthetics, setbacks, preservation of parklands, traffic, parking and other development impacts, those affected by such projects have a right to be heard. Bypassing this process will inevitably increase public dissatisfaction in government.

While we are not opposed to affordable housing, this proposal is not the way to encourage it. Crippling local discretion to facilitate fast tracking of affordable housing projects is faulty logic.

Fast tracking this proposal - restricting design, environmental review, and enabling zoning changes, variances, and CUP's without local input and review would be catastrophic to our community and undermine the important role of the PVHA and Art Jury.

Our members rely on The Palos Verdes Art Jury and the Homes Association to protect and support the architectural character and open space that its founding fathers envisioned.

On behalf of the residents we represent who deserve a voice in the future shape of their communities, the Palos Verdes Homes Association and Art Jury respectfully states our opposition to this measure.

Sincerely,

Philip J. Frengs, Board President
Palos Verdes Homes Association

Donald E. Hendrickson, President
Palos Verdes Art Jury

cc: Assembly Member David Hadley
    Senator Ben Allen
    Palos Verdes Estates City Council
    Palos Verdes Homes Association
    Jeffrey Klieman, League of California Cities
    Dan Carrigg, League of California Cities