

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: April 10, 2025

PREPARED BY: Anthony J. Mejia, City Clerk

SUBJECT: LETTER OF OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 79 (WIENER) – TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the issuance of a letter of opposition to Senate Bill 79 (Wiener) relating to transit-oriented development.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The League of California Cities is encouraging cities to submit letters opposing SB 79, which would grant significant land use authority to transit agencies without requiring the production of housing, affordable or otherwise. SB 79 would mandate that cities ministerially approve residential and commercial projects up to seven stories in height and 120 units per acre within a half-mile of transit stops, regardless of local zoning, infrastructure capacity, or community input.

The bill would also grant transit agencies unlimited development authority on land they own or have easements on, extending beyond designated transit corridors.

Palm Desert has a certified Housing Element and is actively working to facilitate housing production consistent with community needs, desert-sensitive design, and infrastructure capacity. SB 79 would undermine these efforts by imposing one-size-fits-all development mandates that conflict with the City's General Plan, community vision, and local infrastructure limitations.

The ad hoc City Council Subcommittee on Legislative Affairs, comprised of Mayor Harnik and Mayor Pro Tem Trubee, has reviewed SB 79 and supports submitting a letter of opposition. A draft letter, consistent with the League of California Cities' recommended format and tailored to address Palm Desert's unique circumstances, is attached for the City Council's consideration. As there is no immediate deadline for submittal, staff has scheduled this item for City Council action prior to issuing the letter.

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this action.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Senate Bill 79
2. League of California Cities – Opposition Letter
3. Draft Letter of Opposition