

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: August 28, 2025

PREPARED BY: Anthony J. Mejia, City Clerk

SUBJECT: RATIFICATION OF LETTER OPPOSING SENATE BILL 445 (WIENER) –
SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION PROJECT DELIVERY REFORM ACT

RECOMMENDATION:

Ratify the issuance of the letter opposing Senate Bill 445 (Wiener) – Sustainable Transportation Project Delivery Reform Act.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Senate Bill 445 (Wiener), the Sustainable Transportation Project Delivery Reform Act, would establish a new, state-controlled permitting and coordination framework for sustainable transportation projects, bypassing many existing local processes. Specifically, the bill would:

- Authorize the Secretary of Transportation to waive locally adopted standards and conditions imposed by cities or utilities;
- Require cities and other local agencies to publish and comply with detailed permitting standards and strict timelines, regardless of local staffing capacity or procedural needs;
- Impose a prescriptive, multi-stage coordination process for project design and delivery, limiting local flexibility;
- Establish a binding dispute resolution process managed by the state, allowing project proponents to override local decisions in cases of disagreement.

On July 10, 2025, the City submitted a letter opposing the bill. The letter outlines concerns related to local control, administrative burden, coordination with utilities, and implications on public infrastructure and charter city authority.

The ad hoc City Council Subcommittee on Legislative Affairs, comprised of Mayor Harnik and Mayor Pro Tem Trubee, reviewed and approved the letter in advance of formal ratification by the City Council.

Legal Review:

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

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with the issuance of this letter.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. SB 445 Bill Text
2. SB 445 Legislative Analysis
3. Letter of Opposition to SB 445