



MAYOR REXRICHARDSON

February 13, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Umberg
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 6530
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 91 (Umberg)—California Environmental Quality Act Exemption: Supportive and Transitional Housing: Motel Conversion

Dear Senator Umberg,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach, I write in support of SB 91. In 2019, Long Beach was proud to sponsor legislation to exempt interim motel housing projects from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), to allow for expedited conversion into much-needed housing for vulnerable individuals and families. SB 91 would extend this streamlining indefinitely, helping Long Beach and other communities address the growing need for supportive and transitional housing.

SB 91 is consistent with the City's support for policies and initiatives that promote the development of affordable and accessible housing. The City is committed to addressing barriers to affordable housing and services to Long Beach residents. The City has supported the development of 530 new interim housing units and another 600 new affordable housing units over the past five years, and has prioritized the acquisition and development of housing for people experiencing homelessness by opening a year-round bridge housing facility with 125 beds, purchasing four hotels along with the County through Project Homekey, and setting up more than 30 modular shelter units. Despite these efforts, individuals experiencing homelessness and families that are precariously housed continue to face significant barriers to housing, and there has been a 77 percent increase in homelessness in Long Beach since 2017.

On January 10, 2023, Long Beach declared an emergency on homelessness, which among other things expedites the City's permitting and review process for development projects related to addressing homelessness. SB 91 would advance the City's actions to facilitate the production of supportive and transitional housing while also improving public safety outcomes in our communities. Continuing to exempt motel conversion projects from CEQA, as SB 91 proposes, would facilitate the production of new supportive and transitional housing. This legislation has the added benefit of reducing negative externalities of nuisance motels. SB 91 is a pivotal step forward in addressing the statewide housing crisis.

Given these reasons, the City of Long Beach is proud to support SB 91.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mayor Rex Richardson
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, State Senate, 33rd District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 65th District
The Honorable Josh Lowenthal, State Assembly, 69th District

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