



March 11, 2021

Hon. Scott Wiener, Chair
Senate Housing Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: OPPOSE SB 6 (Caballero) as amended 3/8/21

Dear Chairman Wiener,

Livable California, a 501(c)4 non-profit organization, provides policy education affecting all Californians and represents over 10,000 followers committed to critical aspects of state policy at the local level. We support affordable housing.

Senate Bill 6, (amended from last year's version known as Senate Bill 1385), appears to focus on severely underperforming "traditional" shopping centers. Without a minimum lot size for "neighborhood lot," SB6 reaches into working-class neighborhoods with commercial corridors.

Due to its continuing fast-track, we are **OPPOSED** for the following reasons:

1. The **impact of COVID-19** on commercial corridors, malls and shopping centers has been overwhelming. While the State may be opening up, the loss of business/retail will further retard recovery at the local level because of sales/business tax, and jobs losses. Furthermore, many commercial corridors are highly prized by hard working working-class residential neighborhoods for their walkable accessibility.
2. It is a **one-size-fits-all** bill without regard to local conditions and only respects local zoning when surrounding densities are permitted at a higher level than the dictates of the bill itself. We say this fully aware of the multiple exclusions listed in the bill.
3. It **promises compliance with objective local standards, CEQA and public hearings, then undercuts them all**. SB 6 requires lower parking standards and it mandates approval by cities. This will rightly cause confusion as businesses/residents go through a public process only to find out their positions do not matter. This is bad government.

4. **Assistance for remaining commercial tenants is non-existent.** The few remaining commercial tenants that will be displaced on a site subject to SB 6 will receive no assistance, only a notice. Small businesses are part of the neighborhood commercial ecosystem. This needlessly aggressive bill does not protect locally-owned businesses in any way.

5. A recorded Deed Restriction to hold housing units affordable for between 45 and 55 years is a great goal. **The enforcement of a recorded Deed Restriction is next to impossible in California's cities, as they do not routinely review nor qualify tenants or homebuyers.** It is self-enforcing, but cities cannot be expected to enforce it. Deed restrictions require monitoring, most cities are desperately trying to balance their budgets and do not monitor what will be essentially good-faith private transactions. We believe that meaningful affordable housing must be accompanied by meaningful and enforceable review. SB 6 fails to provide that.

6. Finally, the **new modification procedures are complicated and micromanage** the process of modifying the original project. Why didn't the Bill simply require a Vesting filing? At the local level, communities will once again find that the State is controlling local decisions.

We remain available and prepared to meet at the convenience of the author and members of the Senate Housing Committee to clarify remaining issues. At this time, we **OPPOSE** SB6.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of Livable California

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Hall", written over a horizontal line.

Rick Hall, President
T Keith Gurnee, Member
Carey White, Member
Isaiah Madison, Member