



April 9, 2021

The Honorable Scott Wiener
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5205
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 9 (Atkins) – Housing Development: Approvals - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Wiener,

MidPen Housing Corporation strongly supports Senate Bill 9, which would promote small-scale neighborhood residential development by streamlining the process for a homeowner to create a duplex or subdivide an existing lot into all residential areas. MidPen Housing is one of the nation's leading nonprofit developers, owners and managers of high-quality affordable housing and onsite resident services. Since MidPen was founded in 1970, we have developed over 100 communities and 8,000 homes for low-income families, seniors, including homeless families and individuals and those with supportive housing needs throughout Northern California. Specifically, SB 9 requires that qualified applications to a local government to create a duplex or subdivide an existing residential parcel be approved ministerially without discretionary review. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, nearly 800,000 units could be developed by adding units in existing single-family zones. Per their projections, an additional 600,000 units could be developed in just three counties alone by building housing on small lots near existing residential development. These small-scale development policies build upon successful state housing measures like the promotion of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), which grew to comprise one-fifth of all new housing stock in Los Angeles in just two years, increasing critically necessary housing supply. Additionally, this policy leverages valuable but previously untapped resources, such as developed but underutilized land, while building valuable equity for homeowners.

California's continued housing shortage is a major source of stress on the state's economic recovery and fiscal health, as well as its social welfare, medical and public safety systems. The severe mismatch between demand and available housing supply disproportionately impacts the state's lowest-income families and puts them at greater risk for housing instability and homelessness, while lowering their chances for upward mobility. Also, the effects of the pandemic continue to highlight disparities in our state. Essential workers are more likely to live in overcrowded housing, which is linked to an increased risk of contracting (and dying from) the disease. Among households facing COVID-related loss of income, half were already struggling to afford rent pre-COVID and now face eviction, housing instability, and homelessness.

SB-9 (Atkins) strikes an appropriate balance between respecting local control and creating the environment and opportunity for small-scale neighborhood development that benefits the broader community. For these reasons, MidPen Housing Corporation strongly supports SB-9 (Atkins) and encourages the Legislature to pass this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew O. Franklin".

Matthew O. Franklin
President & Chief Executive Officer
MidPen Housing Corporation

Cc:

Nevada Merriman, Director of Policy
MidPen Housing Corporation