

AGENDA TITLE:

Consideration and possible action to authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of expectations to the League of California Cities.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:

- (1) Authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of expectations to the League of California Cities that it support legislation that fulfills its mission and oppose all legislation that erodes local control in housing and planning and zoning decisions.

FISCAL IMPACT: None

Amount Budgeted:	N/A
Additional Appropriation:	N/A
Account Number(s):	N/A

ORIGINATED BY: McKenzie Bright, Administrative Analyst *MB*
REVIEWED BY: Karina Bañales, Deputy City Manager *KB*
APPROVED BY: Ara Mihranian, AICP, City Manager *AM*

ATTACHED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

- A. Draft letter to the League of California Cities (page A-1)
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BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The League of California Cities, now branded “Cal Cities,” was founded in 1894 for the purpose of reviewing legislation and advocating for the common interest of California cities. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes is a longstanding member of Cal Cities and supports its stated mission, “To expand and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy to enhance the quality of life for all Californians.” However, discussions with the California Association of Local Electeds (CALE) reveal that many cities share the City of Rancho Palos Verdes’ frustration with Cal Cities’ recent failure to follow that mission as it relates to housing policy. Specifically, Cal Cities has not opposed several bills before the state Legislature that would limit local land use authority, such as SB 902, which would have limited local land use authority related to housing in “jobs-rich” areas, and SB 1120, which would have required the ministerial

approval of housing units containing two residential units. The City Council opposed both bills on July 7, 2020 and August 4, 2020, respectively.

It is anticipated that the state Legislature will consider a record number of such bills this session. For this reason, CALE suggests that cities consider sending a letter of expectations that Cal Cities support legislation that fulfills its mission to expand and protect local control for cities and to oppose all legislation that erodes local control in housing, planning and zoning decisions. Clearly articulating the City's position at the onset of the legislative session is intended to improve collaboration and to build a stronger relationship with Cal Cities moving forward.

To ensure that the League of California Cities supports legislation that fulfills its mission to expand and protect local control for cities and oppose all legislation that erodes local control in housing, planning and zoning decisions, Staff recommends the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of expectations, as drafted, or with revisions, to Cal Cities.

ALTERNATIVES:

In addition to the Staff recommendation, the following alternative actions are available for the City Council's consideration:

1. Identify revised language to add to the letter.
2. Do not authorize the Mayor to sign the letter.
3. Take other action, as deemed appropriate.

February 2, 2021

Via Email

Carolyn Coleman, Executive Director
League of California Cities
1400 K Street, 4th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

**SUBJECT: City of Rancho Palos Verdes: League of California Cities Advocacy
For Local Land Use Authority**

Dear Ms. Coleman:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes to express a desire for the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) to reaffirm its mission to expand and protect local control for cities. Specifically, we are concerned with how Cal Cities has engaged with the Legislature and the Newsom Administration on housing-related legislation.

The Mission Statement of Cal Cities is “To expand and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy to enhance the quality of life for all Californians.” We are concerned that Cal Cities has fallen behind on this mission when it comes to recent housing policy. Last year, for example, the Legislature considered a number of housing bills that eroded local decision-making authority, such as SB 902 and SB 1120, but Cal Cities failed to oppose these and other bills. We respectfully request that Cal Cities honor its mission to expand and protect local control.

As locally elected officials, my colleagues and I represent our residents and voters in closest proximity to the issues directly affecting our jurisdictions and our role in local land use decisions is essential for ensuring viable and effective projects. While we appreciate the intent of the Legislature to ensure that all Californians have access to affordable housing, it must not come at the expense of local accountability and oversight. Certain proposed land use legislation apparently seeks to vilify local jurisdictions acting in good faith to address the issues in the context of the specific needs, viewpoints and requirements of local communities.

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes resides within a Cal Fire-designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Local land use authority must be maintained in order to ensure residents in future housing developments have appropriate means of egress in the event of a wildfire or other natural disaster. Adding the density proposed by much of recent legislation without the necessary local oversight may result in evacuation delays. Additionally, many Rancho Palos Verdes residents leave the City for work. Adding

Executive Director Coleman

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density will increase traffic congestion in our City as well as neighboring cities. Local land use authority and full CEQA review processes are necessary to ensure development projects meet all standards to best serve our communities and have mitigated any adverse effects. Therefore, it is essential that Cal Cities represent the interest of its members to protect and expand local control for cities, the very reason why cities incorporated.

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes has long supported the League and appreciates its many education and advocacy efforts. In 2021, we strongly encourage the League recommit to its groundbreaking role of aggressively defending local authority, especially in the area of local land use. Thank you for your time and consideration of the concerns raised here.

Sincerely,

Eric Alegria

Mayor

cc: Jeff Kiernan, League of California Cities
Meg Desmond, League of California Cities
Rancho Palos Verdes City Council
Ara Mihranian, City Manager
Karina Bañales, Deputy City Manager