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Supervisor Gordon Mar takes stand against SB 50, opposing upzoning without community input or benefits

San Francisco - Supervisor Gordon Mar has authored a resolution opposing Senator Scott Wiener’s SB 50 -- which would increase zoning density and heights across most of San Francisco without increasing requirements for affordable housing or community benefits -- unless it’s amended to address broad concerns from community members and affordable housing developers.

“SB 50 is a giveaway to private interests and developers without listening to, protecting, or meeting the needs of our community,” said Mar. “We are not simply in a housing crisis -- we are in an affordability crisis, and SB 50 is not the answer to truly affordable housing.”

The state bill is a re-tooled version of last year’s controversial SB 827, which similarly sought to increase heights and density across San Francisco, and failed in committee after prompting widespread opposition from San Francisco elected officials and community groups.

While the bill includes a five-year deferral for “sensitive communities”, it does not allow San Francisco to define those communities or make adjustments as gentrification expands to new areas, and those communities would still be subjected to the full effects of the law after the deferral period ends.

“I support increasing density near transit, including in the Sunset, but we need the opportunity to plan for our own neighborhoods with permanently affordable housing, more open space, and more robust community benefits. If we loosen zoning restrictions and increase land values, we must demand that developers meet the needs of the community”, said Mar.

“Working with families on the West Side, we know parents fear their kids will never be able to afford to live in the city they call home. We want opportunities for families, students, immigrants, and seniors, especially if they’re low income”, said James Huynh, an organizer with the Housing Rights Committee. “For that to happen, we need to build housing that’s affordable for everyday hardworking people -- and SB 50 and trickle-down-housing won’t.”
Mar has focused on increasing affordable housing on the West Side, including at this Tuesday’s Board of Supervisors meeting, when he questioned why no projects eligible for neighborhood preference program participants were built in the Sunset, despite there being over 5000 applicants there. Mar also co-sponsored legislation with the Mayor to waive fees on ADUs and 100% affordable housing projects.

“As currently written, SB 50 undermines the ability of the people of San Francisco to plan for the well-being of our neighborhoods, our environment, and the public good”, said Mar. “It’s bad on principle, it's bad policy, and unless SB 50 is amended to address these concerns, I cannot support it.”

Mar’s resolution is co-sponsored by a majority of the Board of Supervisors, including Supervisors Rafael Mandelman, Norman Yee, Sandra Lee Fewer, Aaron Peskin, Shamann Walton, and Hillary Ronen.