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Supervisor Gordon Mar’s Resolution Opposing SB 50 Gains Supermajority Co-Sponsorship and Committee Support

San Francisco - Supervisor Gordon Mar’s resolution opposing SB 50 unless amended to address concerns from community and affordable housing advocates gained another co-sponsor and a positive recommendation from the Government Audit and Oversight Committee on Thursday. SB 50 would increase housing density and zoning heights across San Francisco without increasing affordability requirements or community benefits from the private developers who would benefit from the bill. With a positive recommendation from the Government Audit and Oversight committee, Mar’s resolution moves forward to the full Board of Supervisors for a vote this Tuesday, where it is already sponsored by a veto-proof supermajority.

“When we upzone, we add value to land. And SB 50 does that without asking for anything in return in the form of increased affordability requirements or community benefits here in San Francisco. It’s a giveaway to private developers,” said Mar. “That added value makes the land more expensive, making it even harder for us to move forward with 100% affordable projects, which is what we need to be doing.”

During lengthy public comment on the resolution, the vast majority of speakers supported Mar’s resolution, highlighting the negative impacts SB 50 would have on housing affordability, gentrification, and displacement, including representatives from Senior and Disability Action, Chinatown Community Development Development Center, the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, and the South of Market Community Action Network.

“One of the main reasons I decided to run for the Board of Supervisors was to ensure my daughter and all of our children will be able to afford to live in the City they’re growing up in -- and I’m listening to everyone who came out today to speak on this important issue,” said Mar, who went on to cite ideas offered by the public for amending SB 50, including limited its impacts to 100% affordable housing projects.

Though San Francisco leads housing production in the region, it would be the municipality most impacted by SB 50. According to the Planning Department’s pipeline report, San Francisco has already met 94% of above moderate income housing needs through 2022, while meeting less than 30% of moderate, low, and very low income housing needs. In addition, a residential nexus study commissioned by the City showed that for every 100 above moderate income units built, additional demand is created for between 25 and 43 moderate and low income units through the
consumption habits of wealthy residents, who frequently shop, dine, and do other things that require working class labor.

“By creating these giveaways for private developers, not only are we not focusing on the affordable housing we should be, we’re making that housing more expensive to build, and we’re actually exacerbating the affordability crisis we’re trying to address, as luxury development gentrifies more of our City,” said Mar. “Trickle-down housing doesn’t work. We are not simply in a housing crisis, we are in an affordability crisis. In a city with more vacant homes than homeless people, where luxury condos are proportionally overproduced and affordable units under-produced, this crisis can’t be framed simply as a problem of housing supply and demand that is solved by giving developers more carte blanche control over development. It’s a problem of equity and access. Real solutions must give residents a voice in the decisions that impact our lives.”