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Newsletter Number 16

SHELF LIFE

neighborhoods, grocers, seniors

Affordability, Safety, and Local Accountability **WAKECA.ORG**

MONDAY CALL — GUEST SPEAKER

Assemblymember Damon Connolly

DISTRICT 12 — MONDAY, AUGUST 3

Assemblymember Damon Connolly will join us Monday for a conversation about the future of California housing and environmental policy.

We'll ask about efforts to address the consequences of AB 130 and SB 131 — and current legislation to restore CEQA to advanced manufacturing and other sensitive areas. We'd also like his thoughts on the Chamber's Prop 45, another effort to weaken CEQA. The larger question: What can residents, local leaders and state lawmakers do to move California housing policy in a more positive direction — one that produces needed affordable housing while protecting safety, environmental review and public accountability?

Connolly has often taken an independent approach to housing, wildfire and environmental legislation. His record includes opposition to SB 423, SB 79, and SB 610; he also chairs the Assembly Select Committee on Wildfire Prevention.

His record demonstrates a willingness to think independently and to engage seriously with the consequences of state policy — and where it goes next.

Have a question for Assemblymember Connolly? Please submit it in advance so we can include as many community concerns as possible in Monday's discussion. Info.WAKEUPCA@gmail.com

WAKE UP ZOOM

Monday, August 3 • 5:00 PM

REGISTER FOR THE ZOOM

Already registered once? Look for the confirmation link Zoom emailed you — you can reuse that same link every time. No need to register again.

PROJECT WATCH

Losing a Grocer, Getting a Monolith



Same developer as the Marina Safeway—with no plans to bring back the grocery store

In April, Align Real Estate filed a preliminary application to replace the one-story Trader Joe's — the first in California to unionize, with 120 employees — on College Avenue in Oakland. The 1.5-acre site would hold towers of 31 and 25 stories, rising 352 and 294 feet. Rockridge, a walkable neighborhood of shops and low slung homes, will be dwarfed. The developer says the store, one of the few walkable full-service groceries left in the neighborhood, will not return.

This is 415 units of market-rate senior housing: 371 independent living, 18 assisted living, and 26 memory care. The massive size reflects the combined effects of several state housing and streamlining laws, including Density Bonus Law, SB 35, SB 330, and the expanded CEQA exemptions of AB 130. At a July town hall, Councilmember Zac Unger told a packed room that the Council could not stop it, though **community organizations are trying**.

These towers sit in one of the state's highest shaking-hazard zones, near the Hayward fault. A major earthquake could cut elevator access, complicating evacuation of seniors, especially assisted-living and memory-care residents. There is no evacuation assessment in publicly available application materials.

*Rendering by Solomon Cordwell Buenz, submitted to the City of Oakland by Align Real Estate. Storefront photo: Google Street View, © 2026 Google. More on the opposition: **Upper Broadway Advocates** and **Two Terrible Towers**, a working brief drawn from the developer's own filings. Seeing something like this in your town? Send it to **Info.WAKEUPCA@gmail.com***

REFLECTIONS ON LAST WEEK

What the Meeting Photo Revealed

Several hundred neighbors turned out for the Marina Safeway town hall. Ten million people saw the room.

Last Monday we focused on the Marina Safeway project in San Francisco. Lori Brooke reported on the meeting she'd co-convened with District 2 Supervisor Stephen Sherrill, which was heavily attended by residents from the largely multifamily neighborhood. A video presentation showed the project's scale from the air and how it would affect residents and tourists who heavily use the area, adjacent to a national park.



Laura Waxmann @laura_waxee · 7/23/26

Hundreds of #SanFrancisco Marina residents turned out this evening for townhall on controversial @Safeway housing plan, which would place what for many is an uncomfortably tall, 22 & 18 story project at the low-slung neighborhood's waterfront.

@sfchronicle



817

1.1K

2.1K

10M



Screenshot of the post by San Francisco Chronicle reporter Laura Waxmann, July 23. [View it on X](#)

The unexpected result: The *San Francisco Chronicle* covered the meeting, and its reporter posted a photo of the room. That post has now passed **10 million views on X**. It wasn't the story that traveled — it was the picture. Where we saw a packed room of engaged community, others saw something different. The response was dominated by commenters who treated opposition to the project as selfish resistance to housing and framed the residents' age as evidence that their concerns should not matter. Many comments were explicitly ageist. One: "You're gonna be dead in three years anyway, so why would you care?"

This was an important moment for us. We didn't dwell on the cruelty of the comments so much as what it revealed:

1. The fight is increasingly being framed as a generational battle. In that frame, the shared interests of people of every age disappear, and stewardship no longer counts for anything.
2. We've been too slow to use social media — not to argue with trolls, which is a waste of time, but to establish a credible narrative of our own. Our silence there reads as a concession. We will remain invisible until we actively engage.

To create narrative change we need to occupy that social media space, as uncomfortable as that may be. We'll need to hire professionals to manage and create content, keeping our messaging flowing on a regular schedule, and we can support that work with a volunteer rapid-response team whose members add factual, thoughtful perspectives to public conversations. The goal is to engage and educate a much larger audience by correcting misinformation, adding missing context, and offering a credible alternative perspective. This will require funding, and social media engagement will be a topic of an upcoming meeting.

SAVE THE DATES

Monday, August 3 · Assemblymember Damon Connolly

Monday, August 10 and 17 · Topics TBD

Monday, August 24 · Architectural Preservationist Bridget Maley

On break Monday, August 31 and Monday, September 7

Why WAKE UP now?

Most people learn about state housing laws when the bulldozers show up. WAKE UP CA not only educates about what's going on, we're connecting groups and creating a movement to push back. We need common sense policy to fix our actual crisis — a critical shortage of housing that is affordable. Until we do, these massive market-rate structures will continue to defy planning and just drop into any neighborhood, regardless of impacts.

SUPPORT THE WORK

As we grow, so do our expenses

Your donation directly impacts our ability
to continue to do this work.

DONATE TO WAKE UP

WAKE UP CALIFORNIA is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization. Contributions are not tax deductible as charitable contributions.

— Amy Kalish, President and Co-Founder

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