

From: WAKE UP CALIFORNIA amylkalish@249826007.mailchimpapp.com
Subject: WAKE UP CA Newsletter 18 - August 16, 2026
Date: Aug 16, 2026 at 10:59:06 AM
To: amylkalish@gmail.com



Newsletter Number 18

FILLING CANYONS NARROWING STREETS

Communities North and South
fight for livability

www.wakeca.org

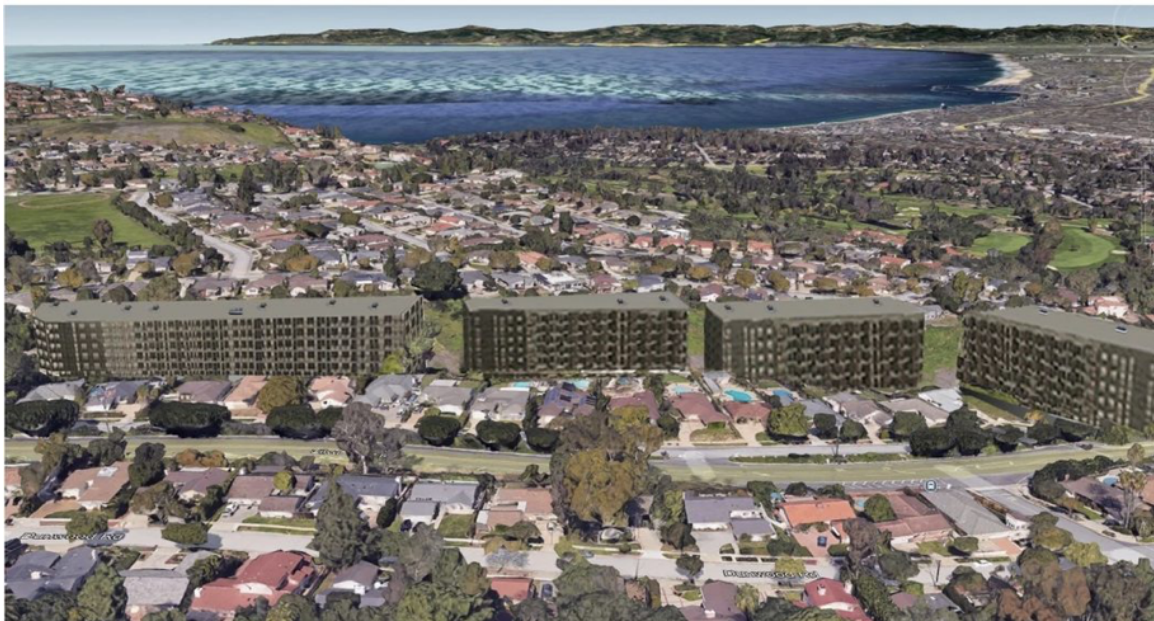
Affordability, Safety, Environmental Quality, and Local Accountability

You can't un-wreck your city — or your state.

IN THE FIELD

Silver Spur Canyon: 471 Units, 11 Stories

Dubious distinction: the biggest builder's remedy in the state



*Massing study showing the scale of the proposal against the one-story homes below it.
Prepared by Neighborhood Voices of Silver Spur; base imagery Google Earth, © 2026*

Google.

The **Silver Spur Canyon** project at 5323 Ironwood Street in Rancho Palos Verdes is the biggest builder's remedy project proposed for a single-family-residence-zoned lot in the state of California. At **471 units and 11 stories tall**, it threatens to dominate this entirely single-family home neighborhood.

Proposed for a previously undeveloped canyon, plans call for the movement of millions of cubic feet of dirt to level the site. The huge number of additional people and cars threaten to overwhelm residential streets and to upend any urgent evacuation, including that of the neighborhood elementary school.

Over 400 neighbors have come together to fight this development. **[Follow their work at savethecanyon.net.](#)**

Mike Peterson, President of Neighborhood Voices of Silver Spur, joins us on **Monday** to discuss the project, how it would affect the area, and the neighborhood response.



The canyon as it is today, with homes at the rim on every side. A church and a preschool sit just above the frame; the site is reached only by residential streets. Aerial imagery: Google Earth, © 2026 Google.

Even where buildings meet code and roads accommodate emergency apparatus, evacuation risk almost never blocks a project. State law allows denial only for impacts that are unavoidable — and if any mitigation exists, the impact isn't unavoidable.

When 471 units can go into a canyon with no evacuation capacity analysis, and the analysis two state laws required is ignored, that's a problem.

Housing element non-compliance carries decertification and penalties.
Safety element non-compliance isn't

enforced.

Why it matters: The “carrots for developers and sticks for cities” analogy holds true. Valid safety concerns for current and future residents are trumped by the “housing crisis.”

ALSO IN THE FIELD

Berkeley: Trying to Keep Hopkins Street Livable

Concerns overridden.



Hopkins Street as it is now: usable for everyone.

About a mile of barrier-protected bike lanes will be installed on Hopkins Street in Berkeley, dramatically narrowing the street and eliminating an estimated **145 parking spaces**. Concerns about the impact on parking, commerce and emergency vehicle response times were overridden by the city council.

Donna DeDiemar, fifty-year resident of Berkeley and a former small business owner, will join us to describe the radical changes underway in

Berkeley, and the fight to keep Hopkins Street livable that her community just went through. Donna is co-founder of [**Friends of Hopkins Street**](#) and [**Build a Better Berkeley**](#).

ACROSS CALIFORNIA

When Local Projects Become Statewide Issues

Understanding Builder's Remedy, stacked housing laws, and what communities can do

Across California, communities are seeing huge development projects pop up in their neighborhoods. Residents often assume it's a local question: how did this project get approved, and what can our city do about it?

But, as recent projects we've covered in San Francisco, Menlo Park, Pacific Beach and now Rancho Palos Verdes demonstrate, the answer reaches far beyond city hall.

A growing number of state housing laws — including Builder's Remedy, SB 330, density bonus provisions and AB 2011 — can interact in ways that significantly affect local planning decisions. The result can be complicated, difficult for residents to follow, and potentially costly for cities.

The good news: communities are beginning to connect the dots.

HELP US CONNECT THE DOTS

WAKE UP CALIFORNIA is building a network of communities.

If your community is navigating a major development project with

confusing state housing laws, we want to hear from you. Keep your documents — letters, applications, legal opinions and agency responses are hard to find later.

You can help us stock our resource library (pictures welcome). Our goal is to find approaches that work, track common issues, share legal and legislative research, and bring community voices to the Legislature.

Send to: info.WAKEUPCA@gmail.com

NOTES FROM LAST MONDAY

For explanations of the complicated topics mentioned, see our blog post: [**When Local Projects Reveal Statewide Problems**](#).

Included: stacked density bonuses, vesting rights, why we need a statewide standard checklist for AB 2011, and what the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) covers in environmental review and historic properties.

IN THE PRESS

San Diego to San Francisco

In the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, **Karen Ventimiglia** and **Marcella Bothwell** of Neighbors for a Better California made the case against the 23-story Turquoise Tower in Pacific Beach — a project in which most of the units are visitor accommodations rather than housing, and only a fraction of the residences would be deed-restricted affordable.

Opinion: We need affordable housing. Turquoise Tower is mostly a hotel.

And in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, our letter to the editor responded to **“These Bay Area suburbs are the furthest behind on their housing goals”** (Bay Area, July 5).

LETTER TO THE EDITOR · SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

The story’s chart ranks cities by a single number — permits compared to the state’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation determination. That’s misleading; it implies cities simply need more of what they’re already building.

They don’t. The state goal isn’t one target; it’s four, divided among very-low, low, moderate and above-moderate income tiers. A jurisdiction could reach 100% on the chart and still be out of compliance if it is behind on some affordability tiers.

That’s already happening statewide. Luxury housing pencils out and accounts for the vast majority of new construction, while the affordable tiers — which can make up over 60% of the state’s goals — fall further behind.

This isn’t cities failing to try. They could approve every project and still fail under this framework.

As Turner Center for Housing Innovation’s David Garcia acknowledged in the story, streamlining alone cannot overcome economic reality. Developers won’t build at a loss, and public subsidies at the necessary scale don’t exist.

Readers deserve to see progress against all four affordability targets — and ask why the state penalizes cities for failing to meet mandates it knows today’s market cannot deliver.

— Amy Kalish, President, WAKE UP CALIFORNIA, Mill Valley

■

WAKE UP Zoom

Monday, August 17 · 5:00 PM

Mike Peterson — Silver Spur Canyon,
Rancho Palos Verdes

Donna DeDiemar — Hopkins Street, Berkeley

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.

SAVE THE DATES

Monday, August 17 · Mike Peterson, Rancho Palos Verdes
Donna DeDiemar, Berkeley

Monday, August 24 · Historic Preservationist Bridget Maley

Monday, August 31 and **Monday, September 7** · **ON BREAK**

Why WAKE UP now?

Most people learn about state housing laws when the bulldozers show up. WAKE UP CA helps you understand the laws, legislation and decisions earlier — while the plans are still being made, and you still have agency to influence them.

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 Founder***

Affordability, Safety, Environmental Quality, and Local Accountability

WAKE UP CALIFORNIA · [35 Miller Avenue, #574, Mill Valley, CA 94941](#)

A volunteer-run 501(c)(4) nonprofit

wakeca.org · info.WAKEUPCA@gmail.com · [Unsubscribe](#)

