



MEMORANDUM

TO: MAYORS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS OF CALIFORNIA CITIES

FROM: CITY OF MURRIETA MAYOR PRO TEM, RON HOLLIDAY AND COUNCIL MEMBER LORI STONE

SUBJECT: PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON LOCAL HOUSING AND LAND USE AUTHORITY FOR LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES 2026 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

DATE: JULY 24, 2026

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

California cities are responsible for planning residential growth, adopting general plans and zoning regulations, reviewing development proposals, and providing or coordinating the infrastructure and public services necessary to support new housing. These responsibilities include streets, water and wastewater systems, public safety, parks, transportation, schools, and other facilities that directly affect whether residential development can be accommodated safely and sustainably.

Increasingly prescriptive state housing laws, however, have continued to reduce local discretion by overriding locally adopted plans, zoning standards, development requirements, administrative review processes, and public review processes that have ensured the health, safety, and welfare of our communities. These mandates frequently fail to account for substantial differences among communities, including infrastructure capacity, water availability, wildfire risks and other environmental constraints, fiscal impacts, public service demands, and locally established planning priorities. The State has also continued to impose new planning and development obligations without providing adequate funding for implementation or the infrastructure needed to support additional housing. Although these measures are often presented as solutions to housing affordability, many focus primarily on increasing development capacity or limiting local review without delivering affordable housing.

In preparation for the 2026 League of California Cities General Assembly, to be held September 25, 2026, the City of Murrieta proposes for consideration a resolution asking the League of California Cities to establish a statewide working group to evaluate and advance a constitutional amendment or other legislative, policy, or ballot-based strategy to restore and strengthen local authority over housing and land-use decisions. The working group would conduct appropriate legal, fiscal, and policy analyses; engage cities and other stakeholders; identify shared statewide priorities; build a coalition in support of meaningful local-control reforms; and pursue implementation of its recommendations. Those recommendations could include legislation, changes to statewide policy, litigation strategies, or development of a future ballot initiative.

As the primary statewide organization representing California cities, the League of California Cities is uniquely positioned and qualified to lead an effort of this significance. The League's established policy, legal, legislative, communications, and advocacy networks provide the structure necessary to convene municipalities throughout the state, evaluate the legal and fiscal implications of potential strategies, build consensus among member agencies, engage key stakeholders, and coordinate directly with the Legislature and other statewide decision makers. These capabilities are unique to the League and would allow the development and advancement of a coordinated proposal supported by a broad cross-section of California cities.

Leadership by the League would also help ensure that any constitutional amendment or alternative strategy reflects the collective interests of municipalities across California, rather than a single city or region. The League's involvement would provide credibility, organizational capacity, and statewide reach necessary to build a durable coalition, communicate the need for reform, and pursue a viable strategy to restore and strengthen local land-use authority over housing and land-use decisions to cities.

BACKGROUND

The proposed resolution recognizes that the State has an appropriate role in establishing broad statewide housing goals and enforcing constitutional and civil rights, fair housing requirements, building and life-safety standards, and generally applicable environmental protections. It does not seek to eliminate statewide housing planning or relieve cities of their responsibility to accommodate housing for all income levels.

Instead, the resolution seeks to establish a more balanced framework that preserves meaningful local decision-making. It would protect cities from state actions that compel approval of developments inconsistent with locally adopted requirements, override local zoning or density standards, or invalidate local housing and land-use decisions when a city has planned in good faith to accommodate its regional housing needs allocation and maintains adequate capacity for housing at all income levels.

Local elected officials are directly accountable to the residents who experience the effects of development decisions and are responsible for balancing housing production with infrastructure, public safety, environmental protection, fiscal sustainability, and community needs. Restoring local authority would allow cities to determine how statewide housing objectives can be implemented in a manner that reflects local conditions and priorities while continuing to support responsible housing production.

The proposal does not require Cal Cities to immediately sponsor a specific constitutional amendment or ballot measure. Rather, it establishes a flexible statewide process through which Cal Cities can evaluate available options, develop legally and fiscally sound recommendations, and identify the most effective strategy for restoring and strengthening local control. Support from cities and city officials would demonstrate statewide interest and allow the resolution to advance through the Cal Cities policy resolution process.

ATTACHMENT

- 1) Proposed Cal Cities Resolution Calling for the Restoration and Strengthening of Local Authority Over Housing and Land Use Decisions.
- 2) Letter of Support for the Resolution