

July 15, 2019

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable David Rabbitt
Supervisor, County of Sonoma
President,
Association of Bay Area Governments
375 Beale Street, Suite 700
San Francisco, CA 94105

The Honorable Jesse Arreguin
Mayor, City of Berkeley
Vice President,
Association of Bay Area Governments
375 Beale Street, Suite 700
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: 2021 Regional Housing Needs Allocation Process

Dear President Rabbitt and Vice-President Arreguin:

The Bay Area has an exciting opportunity to ensure that everyone in the region has an affordable place to live within reach of high-quality schools, jobs, public transit, and more. The upcoming Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process can make this vision a reality. A successful RHNA, together with enforcement and accountability mechanisms, can help *all* cities and counties become places with homes affordable to all incomes in tandem with community resources, fewer cars on the road (lowering VMT and GHG emissions), protected open space, a thriving economy, and a more equitable development pattern for the region.

The RHNA and Housing Element systems are California's primary tools to ensure that housing is built in all cities to meet the needs of all economic segments of the community. The state recognizes that getting affordable housing built requires cooperation among all levels of government and with the nonprofit housing community, as well as support from the private sector. Making sure that every city in the region plans for a true fair share of the regional housing need is essential to lay the literal groundwork for new housing. While adequate funding for affordable housing - from federal, state, regional and local sources - is also critical to make sure that homes affordable to low and moderate income households actually get built, we must also ensure that every city - and particularly those which historically have excluded or failed to accommodate affordable housing - provide adequate zoning at appropriate densities for multifamily development. There has never been a more critical time for the Bay Area to renew and strengthen our commitment to this collaboration.

We, the undersigned members of the 6 Wins for Social Equity Network and our allies, are excited to work with Bay Area Metro and local jurisdictions to ensure that the RHNA process increases housing affordability and availability in *all* cities and counties in our region. To achieve this outcome

and comply with state law, we ask Bay Area Metro to make the following commitments at the outset of the process:

1. **Transparency, Inclusion, and Accountability.** The RHNA process must engage and be accessible to low-income communities, people of color, and others who are most heavily burdened by the lack of affordable housing and adequate housing choices. Some essential initial steps to achieve this objective include:
 - a. The Housing Methodology Committee selection process should be transparent and inclusive. Stakeholder representation must not be limited to members of the Regional Planning Committee, many of whom do not have housing expertise. Instead, there should be a broader process for solicitation, nomination and selection of community stakeholders including community based organizations, affordable housing developers, academics, and others who work on housing equity.
 - b. A meaningful percentage of Housing Methodology Committee members should be people and organizations representing low-income communities, renters, people of color, seniors and other people on fixed incomes, communities impacted by gentrification, affordable housing developers, and fair housing experts. This is consistent with the new requirement that all Councils of Government diligently seek participation from members of protected classes in the RHNA process. Gov. Code § [65584.04\(d\)](#). A purely advisory community outreach process that does not include seats at the table would not be adequate participation.
 - c. Major steps in the RHNA methodology process, such as the survey of jurisdictions and any engagement with the state about the region's overall housing allocation, should be brought to community stakeholders for input before action is taken.
2. **Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH).** In 2018, California became the first state to require our public agencies to affirmatively further fair housing by passing AB 686 and AB 1771. State law now requires Bay Area Metro to ensure that the RHNA methodology and outcomes affirmatively further fair housing. Gov. Code § [65584\(d\)\(5\)](#). This will require the RHNA methodology to include an explicit analysis of racial segregation and that the ultimate RHNA distribution breaks down barriers to entry for low-income people of color in high-resource jurisdictions.
3. **Accurate and Complete Data.** A variety of statutory factors must be included in the RHNA process, including several new data points such as jobs-housing fit and overcrowding. Gov. Code §§ [65584.01\(b\)\(1\)](#), [65584.04\(e\)](#). The RHNA process must incorporate these new factors in a robust way, and doing so will lead to a more holistic regional plan to meet housing needs in every neighborhood. A RHNA that over-relies on Priority Development Areas or other geographies self-selected by local jurisdictions would

likely violate the statute and thwart the purposes of the RHNA. Such an approach is not required to achieve consistency with the Sustainable Communities Strategy (Plan Bay Area).

We look forward to working with Bay Area Metro staff and board members throughout the RHNA process to ensure that these principles are put into practice. Together we can achieve a RHNA distribution that responds to the housing affordability crisis, lays the groundwork for planning and funding for affordable housing in all communities, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and increases opportunity for everyone.

Sincerely,

Jason Tarricone and Daniel Saver, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA)

Jeff Levin, East Bay Housing Organizations

Justine Marcus, Enterprise Community Partners

Amy Hartman, Greenbelt Alliance

Evelyn Stivers, Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County (HLC)

Debra Bernstein, Monument Impact

Amie Fishman, Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH)

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Michael Lane, Silicon Valley at Home (SV@Home)

Rev. Earl W. Koteen, Sunflower Alliance

Leslie Gordon and Bob Allen, Urban Habitat

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