

June 15, 2016

Honorable Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #4  
State Capitol, Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: 916-319-2199

Honorable Assembly Member Richard Roth  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #4  
State Capitol, Room 5019  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: 916-323-8386

Dear Honorable Chairs Nazarian and Roth,

The Town of Ross opposes the recently released proposal by the Governor to pre-empt local discretionary land use approvals of specified housing developments by having all such approvals be considered “ministerial” actions, meaning eliminating opportunities for public review, project-level environmental review and design review.

The Town of Ross believes that such fundamental policy changes should not be rushed through as a budget proposal, but merit extensive review by the appropriate policy committees in a deliberative fashion.

Eliminating opportunities for public review of these major development projects goes against the principles of local democracy and public engagement. While it may be frustrating for some developers to hear concerns about traffic, parking and other development impacts, those affected by such projects have a right to be heard. Not having such outlets will increase public distrust in government.

The Town’s tenets of incorporation include preservation of Ross’s small-town character, maintenance of architectural diversity, preservation of historic resources, and protection of environmental resources. Accordingly, the Town’s General Plan (adopted 2007) includes many policies and programs that address land use, densities of land uses, and excellence in community design (e.g., mass, scale, design, and neighborhood compatibility). Community acceptance can be improved through a discretionary design review process, thus ensuring good design that enables new development to match the Town’s well established community character. Avoiding or restricting design review is also short-sighted and would compromise the existing land use development patterns of the Town.

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For over a century, the Town of Ross has respected and administered an open and transparent public review process for all development projects in order to protect and maintain the bucolic character of this community. Enacting this law would erode the community's trust in the local government and the police powers bestowed upon our Town that are intended to protect the Town of Ross' community character and environmental resources. Furthermore, the Town is concerned that the law is being used to diminish and compromise its local control of land use development.

In closing, the Town of Ross concludes this proposed law would undermine the local public review process, which is very critical to the success of a development project in our community. Therefore, on behalf of the residents we represent who deserve a voice in the future shape of their community; the Town of Ross respectfully opposes this measure.

Sincerely,

Katie Hoertkorn  
Mayor

Joe Chinn  
Town Manager

cc: Senator Mike McGuire  
Assembly Member Marc Levine  
Nancy Hall Bennett, League of California Cities, [nbennett@cacities.org](mailto:nbennett@cacities.org)  
Dan Carrigg, League of California Cities, [CarriggD@cacities.org](mailto:CarriggD@cacities.org)  
Town of Ross Town Council Members