

ALBANY CALIFORNIA



CITY OF ALBANY
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ALBANY, CA 94706
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June 17, 2024

The Honorable Christopher Ward, Chair,
Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
California State Legislature
1020 N Street, Room 156
Sacramento, CA 94293

Re: SB 721 (Becker) - The Student Housing Development Act – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Ward:

On behalf of the City of Albany City Council, I am writing in strong support of SB 721 (Becker), which would implement recommendations from the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to clarify that jurisdictions can report suite-style housing on their Annual Progress Report (APR).

The City of Albany is located three miles from UC Berkeley. It is home to University Village, which is a 973-unit student housing multi-family apartment complex, primarily serving students with children. In addition, a 289-unit apartment building primarily serving first year graduate students is currently nearing completion. The 289 units under construction constitute 26% of the City's eight-year RHNA allocation. Without legislative action, the City will not be able to count the project as meeting the City's housing needs.

Thus, while the development of student housing serves legitimate Albany residents, and addresses a real housing need, the city does not receive credit for accommodating students. It should be noted that HCD is generally permissive of considering other types of group housing, such as single room occupancy housing and senior housing for example, as counting towards RHNA. As the campus expands enrollment in the future, it is reasonable to expect that more students will wish to live in Albany, and the City should receive credit for an increase in housing serving student needs. If credit is not received, the City may be perceived unfairly for not addressing or supporting the housing needs of the community, which may affect future funding opportunities from the State.

Sincerely,

John Miki
Mayor