

# DRAFT

Dear President and Members of the Board of Directors:

We are writing to ask that the League once again revisit and formulate a lobbying effort toward the legislature, governor, and the public on the topic of state mandates. Currently, our budget, and most likely, that of numerous other cities is being impacted by state mandates. At our July 6, 2009 meeting, we were confronted with the consequences of two mandates.

The first mandate involved an unfunded state mandate regarding sewer overflow plans that had been passed through from the Environmental Protection Agency. While we all want clean water, we have been proactive in our sewer management system. As a result of the mandate, the staff was requesting a financial consultant, whose lead staff person regularly receives \$215 per hour for services; other personnel fees range downward to \$95 per hour, and expenses are charged at cost plus 10 percent. These fees appear to be the going rate, even in these tough economic times when most cities are making deep budget cuts. Thus our first request is that the League again strenuously lobby for no unfunded mandates.

The second mandate involved the housing element of our general plan. The state in its wisdom decided how many units should be built in each region, and in our case the Association of Bay Area Governments was required to decide how much was "fair" for each city. In the case of Albany that was 276 units for our 1 ½ square miles of mostly developed land, this in spite of the fact that new units already built are sitting idle. Of course, some cities are in even more dire straits with numerous foreclosures. The mandate is for seven years, which is too long a period without review. If there had been review, the poor economy, the huge number of foreclosures, and the lack of ready credit could have been taken into account so that a reasonable, rather than unreasonable, number of units could have been solicited. Thus we believe that mandates that are imposed must be reviewed at least every two years and should sunset within a specified number of years.

The Albany City Council urges the League to oppose any existing or potential unfunded mandates, and to support a more realistic approach to the housing allocation requirements mandated upon cities.

Sincerely,

Marge Atkinson  
Mayor