



June 8th, 2022

Assembly Local Government Committee
Legislative Office Building
1020 N. Street, Room 157
Sacramento, CA 95814

Submitted via Online Portal

Re: OPPOSE Senate Bill 1373 (as amended May 31, 2022)

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

The United Neighbors in Defense Against Displacement (UNIDAD) Coalition writes to express our opposition to Senate Bill 1373. This bill undermines important state laws aimed at increasing the affordable housing supply by using public land for the public good.

UNIDAD is a coalition of residents and organizations in South Central LA dedicated to keeping families in their homes and improving the health and economic well-being of low-income communities of color through responsible development. We recognize that structural racism linked to housing, policing, land use and employment policies have caused great harm to Black, Latino, Native, Asian, immigrant and low-income communities. UNIDAD works to reverse these harms by promoting healthy and equitable neighborhoods through planning and land use that is rooted in community.

SB 1373 amends the Surplus Land Act, an important state law that promotes using publicly owned land for affordable housing and other community serving uses. The city of Los Angeles is facing an extreme housing crisis, and Black and brown communities like South Los Angeles are disproportionately suffering from gentrification and a severe lack of affordable housing. The amendments proposed by SB 1373 allow the City of Los Angeles and the former redevelopment agency, CRA/LA, to continue their plans of using valuable public land for gentrifying development. For example, the City is currently negotiating the sale of a parcel of land that is the former site of the Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Regional Branch library (the “Bethune site”), named after a prominent leader in the civil and women’s rights movements. After promising for several years that the Bethune site would be used for desperately needed affordable housing, the City abruptly changed course and is now supporting the sale of publicly owned land to a luxury hotel developer. However, it has been almost three years since the City changed course, and the developer does not have any of the entitlements for the project. In fact, on March 25, 2022, a City Zoning Administrator denied the developer a requested Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Review, effectively delaying and/or ending the proposed development.

The state legislature should be focused on pushing local jurisdictions to address the affordable housing crisis with the resources at their disposal, instead of supporting development projects



that bring little community serving value to low-income communities of color. As a result, we respectfully oppose SB 1373.

Sincerely,

UNIDAD Coalition

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