February 28, 2020

Assemblymember Laura Friedman
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SUPPORT for Assembly Bill 1907 (Santiago)

Dear Chair Friedman,

On behalf of [insert organization], I write in support of Assembly Bill 1907 (Santiago). Our organization (insert a couple sentences about the mission of the organization and the clients that you serve). Because of this work, we believe that AB 1907 represents a strong step forward in addressing the homelessness and housing crisis that California faces.

Los Angeles County is experiencing both an affordable housing crisis that leaves hundreds of thousands of Angeleno households struggling with housing insecurity, as well as a homelessness crisis that threatens the health and safety of thousands more residents without housing. According to the 2019 Greater Los Angeles Homelessness Count, there are nearly 59,000 people experiencing homelessness on any given night in Los Angeles County, 75% of whom are unsheltered and residing in tents, makeshift shelters, vehicles, or entirely exposed to the elements.

(add more about the clients you serve and challenges they face in accessing shelter beds/supportive housing/affordable housing).

There is an urgent need to bring permanent housing solutions to this population, such as supportive and affordable housing. There is a corresponding need for shelter resources to meet the needs of the unsheltered population and create an appropriately scaled homeless system that quickly moves people off the streets, into shelter, and subsequently into housing. Los Angeles must open both housing and shelter with alacrity to bring our neighbors inside.

In addition, the shortage of affordable housing continues to push more households into homelessness, even as more resources bring a rising number of households off the streets. According to the California Housing Partnership, over 550,000 Los Angeles County households pay over 50% of their income on rent. Nearly 90% of those households are very low income or below, leaving them at risk of homelessness. Los Angeles will not address homelessness in the long term without finding affordable housing solutions for these thousands more households that are at risk of losing their homes.

AB 1907 would complement both short-term immediate solutions along with long-term sustainable strategies to address homelessness. In the short term, AB 1907 would remove barriers to opening new shelters statewide, protecting the health and safety of vulnerable Californians and giving them access to case management and services to facilitate their path back into housing. In the long term, AB 1907 would clear the way to create more housing for the most acutely vulnerable by removing barriers to siting supportive housing. Finally, AB 1907 would help California solve its long-term housing challenges by removing obstacles to affordable housing development. Few tools are as effective a homelessness prevention measure as an available affordable housing unit.
We appreciate the ongoing leadership at the state level to create a more affordable California for our neighbors. We hope you will support AB 1907 and look forward to working with you in the weeks and months ahead to advance housing stability for all Californians.

Sincerely,

(insert name of Executive Director/Policy Director/Relevant Staff)
(Title of Staffer)

cc:
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