



CITY OF COVINA

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August 18, 2026

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: State Housing Mandates and Their Impact on the Covina Community

Dear Governor Newsom,

The City of Covina shares the State's commitment to addressing California's housing crisis, and we have worked in good faith to meet our Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) obligations. But the cumulative effect of years of State housing legislation has steadily removed the discretion our City needs to responsibly manage growth and has left our community without a meaningful voice in projects that will permanently reshape their neighborhoods.

Over the past several years, the State has enacted a series of laws that streamline housing approvals, limit environmental review, and narrow the grounds on which a city may deny or condition a qualifying project. Taken individually, each law was framed as a targeted fix. Taken together, they have shifted approval authority away from local government and toward a ministerial, by-right process. When paired with the threat of the Builder's Remedy for jurisdictions still finalizing Housing Element compliance, cities like Covina are left to approve projects as a matter of law, regardless of the concerns our residents raise.

This is not a hypothetical concern for Covina; it is happening right now. Three separate affordable housing projects are actively moving forward in our community under this State framework: the State-owned property at 2nd Avenue and Italia Street, proposed as senior affordable housing; the Covina Methodist Church affordable housing site at San Bernardino Road and Hollenbeck Avenue; and the Saffron Covina affordable housing project on Cypress Street, just east of Grand Avenue in unincorporated Los Angeles County. Construction fencing has already been installed at the State-owned site, a visible sign to residents that a project is underway that they know little about.

A common thread among all three projects is that the developers have conducted little to no public outreach to inform neighbors and the broader community about what is being proposed. Under the ministerial approval pathways created by State law, the City has limited to no discretionary

authority to require that outreach, and limited ability to condition approval on it. The result is that Covina residents are learning about significant changes to their neighborhoods only after the fact, through fencing at a job site rather than through a public process, and are, understandably, looking to their local government for answers we are increasingly unable to provide.

Governor, Covina is committed to doing its part to help solve California's housing shortage. What we are asking for is not a retreat from that goal, but a partnership that restores a role for cities and residents in shaping how that growth happens. We respectfully urge your administration to pause and reassess the cumulative effect of these ministerial approval laws, and to consider measures, such as baseline community outreach requirements for developers utilizing these State exemptions, that would allow housing production to continue while restoring public trust in the process.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and welcome the opportunity to discuss how the State and the City of Covina can work together to better serve our shared constituents.

Respectfully,

Hector Delgado
Mayor
City of Covina

CC: Honorable Susan Rubio, Senator, 22nd District
Honorable Blanca Rubio, Assemblymember, 48th District