**Date**

**Address**

**Protect Public Safety and Vote NO on SB 897**

Dear Assemblymember (Enter name)

As the local building official for name of jurisdiction I have serious public safety concerns about SB 897 (Wieckowski). As currently written, this bill would prohibit our local departments from designating an R Occupancy change under the local building code for a newly constructed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). R Occupancies have significant fire life safety standards that must be complied with to protect the public from harm should a fire occur in the structure. These standards include more stringent requirements for fire sprinklers, fire separation distance, and smoke alarms. As the first line of defense for residents in a fire, these are important requirements that must be complied with to protect public health and safety.

Under current law, if a homeowner adds an ADU or other habitable space to a primary structure, local jurisdictions can enforce and require necessary safety upgrades to reduce the impact of fires in the built industry. However, this bill would remove the ability of my department to enforce these regulations and could cause undue harm or death if the residence is not up to date to current code. My department and I support the amendments brought forward by California Building Officials (CALBO) that a newly constructed ADU cannot designate an R Occupancy change under the local building code, **unless the local building official or enforcement agency determines based on substantial evidence that an occupancy change is necessary to protect the public health and safety of the occupants.** I strongly urge the legislature and author to amend the bill and include this language or to vote No on the bill so we can continue to protect residents living in ADUs from harm.

Additionally, this bill would prohibit a local agency from denying a permit for a newly constructed ADU if it is not in compliance with building code violations that are not necessary for public health and safety. The current language could have unintended consequences for California’s efforts to address climate change as California looks to greener, more energy efficient built industry and to achieve our green energy goals.

Based on the current language of the bill, newly constructed ADUs could ignore energy efficiency standards and the California Green Building Standards Code. If California wants to further our climate change efforts, our built industry must continue to adapt and use the newest technology to reduce our carbon footprint in the built industry. One way California has done this is through new energy efficiency standards, solar photovoltaic requirements, electric vehicle charging station requirements, and numerous other standards that focus on furthering a greener built industry. By eliminating the requirement of new ADUs to comply with these cost-efficient standards, California will continue to struggle with reducing emissions in the housing industry.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote “NO” on SB 897. CALBO and my jurisdiction strongly support efforts to increase the construction of ADUs in California to help address our housing crisis, however this must be done in a safe and feasible manner. Unfortunately, SB 897 will put California citizens in ADUs at risk if the structures are not up to code and a fire occurs in the structure. My mission as your local building official is to protect our communities from harm and this bill would remove one of the many ways, we continuously protect the health and safety of the public in the built industry. Thank you for your consideration and for voting “NO” on SB 897.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name

Title

Jurisdiction