



SIERRA CLUB
SAN FRANCISCO BAY

NORTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY GROUP

ALAMEDA ALBANY BERKELEY EMERYVILLE OAKLAND PIEDMONT SAN LEANDRO

February 23, 2021

Mayor Jesse Arreguín
Members of the Berkeley City Council
SUBMITTED VIA E-MAIL

RE: CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT: Resolution to End Exclusionary Zoning in Berkeley

Dear Mayor Arreguín and Members of the Berkeley City Council,

The Sierra Club wishes to express its conceptual support for the Resolution to End Exclusionary Zoning in Berkeley that is before you tonight. As every municipality in the nation grapples with its history, Berkeley is no exception. We recognize that while the causes of today's housing affordability crisis are myriad, there is considerable evidence that, as the item states, "[s]ingle family residential zoning has its roots in racist exclusionary zoning policy and leads to racial and economic segregation."

We are in full agreement with this statement by Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune: "Adequate shelter is a basic human right, yet here in the richest country in the world, a shocking percentage, even of fully employed people, can't afford it or find it straining their budgets to the breaking point. One obvious solution is to build more housing, and the Sierra Club strongly agrees with that goal. But we need to do more than just build -- we need to do it in a way that's both forward-thinking and equitable. That might make it more challenging to agree on housing solutions, but the extra effort is worth it..."¹

We have been following with interest Sierra Club-supported efforts to reimagine zoning policy – such as in Minneapolis² and Seattle³ – to meet the needs and values of the twenty-first century. Should this resolution pass and move into the realm of policy-making, we look forward to working with the City Council and stakeholders from across Berkeley to ensure that such a policy is achieved in a way that preserves housing affordability, tenant protections, and other long-standing Sierra Club policies.

Tonight's vote is limited to an overarching resolution – a statement of our collective values. We proudly express our conceptual support for this resolution. Thank you for your consideration!

Respectfully,

Igor Tregub, Chair
Sierra Club Northern Alameda County Group

¹ <https://www.sierraclub.org/michael-brune/2019/01/affordable-housing>, January 31, 2019

² <https://www.sierraclub.org/minnesota/blog/2019/01/bold-new-plan-for-city-lakes>, January 17, 2019

³ <https://www.sierraclub.org/washington/blog/2020/07/most-things-are-made-for-whom>, July 1, 2020