



**SIERRA
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Northern Alameda County Group

(Alameda-Albany-Berkeley-Emeryville-Oakland-Piedmont-San Leandro)

2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite I, Berkeley, CA 94702

510-848-0800 (voice) • 510-848-3383 (fax)

July 2, 2013

Dear Mayor and Members of the Berkeley City Council,

On behalf of the Sierra Club, I am re-transmitting our letter in support of the June 4 version of the Demolition Ordinance. Though the Sierra Club did not revise it to respond to the recent changes in the language, we feel that the language before you tonight is no longer consistent with our positions on affordable housing and greenhouse gas reduction. Therefore, we strongly urge you to either adopt the version offered by Planning Staff on June 4 or continue the matter onto a future agenda, thereby giving us the opportunity to work with you and improve the current proposal.

Respectfully,

Igor Tregub

Conservation Chair

Sierra Club Northern Alameda County Group



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June 4, 2013

Mayor Tom Bates and Members of the Berkeley City Council
City of Berkeley

Re: Support for Item 24: Zoning Amendments to BMC Chapter 23C.08 – Demolition and Dwelling Unit Controls

Dear Mayor and Members of the Berkeley City Council,

The Sierra Club has reviewed Item 24 (Zoning Amendments to BMC Chapter 23C.08 – Demolition and Dwelling Unit Controls) on tonight's City Council agenda and supports the language proposed by staff with one clarifying change described below. We believe that the protections included in the ordinance are critical to preserving affordable housing, which is a critical component to the implementation of a Sustainable Communities Strategy as set forth under SB 375.

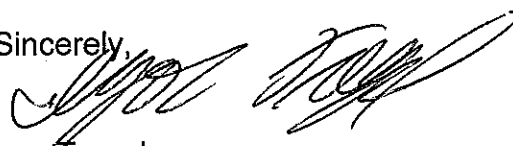
Due to the energy-intensive methods involved in the demolition and construction process, the Sierra Club generally supports the preservation of existing housing stock unless findings can be made that deem such preservation infeasible. The Sierra Club also has a longstanding policy of supporting the provision of affordable housing in new multi-family buildings at the maximum feasible affordability level.

We understand that the proposed ordinance would allow for the construction of new housing and believe that any affordable housing that is demolished must be replaced with new affordable housing to mitigate the loss. With rents continuing to rise in Berkeley, replacing affordable housing that will be lost is important for any displaced tenants to be able to afford to remain in Berkeley. In addition, housing people close to where they work reduces the need to drive, which lessens traffic congestion and pollution and reduces our overall carbon footprint. Transportation accounts for a primary source of greenhouse gas emissions in Berkeley, according to the 2009 Berkeley Climate Action Plan report. When replacing housing stock is necessary, the inclusion of new affordable housing within Berkeley's borders helps further the City's Climate Action goals.

We believe that the revised language proposed in this ordinance will provide a much-needed clarification and help facilitate new transit-oriented development while mitigating the loss of affordable housing. Additionally, we suggest that the language in Section 23C.08.020.A.4 be further clarified to ensure that the affordable units required under the Demolition Ordinance to replace pre-1980 units that are demolished cannot count towards satisfying the Affordable Housing Mitigation Fee requirements or to qualify for a Density Bonus under state law. They must be provided in **addition** to any affordable units that would otherwise be provided by the developer to satisfy other requirements.

Thank you for your continued partnership in the local implementation of a Sustainable Communities Strategy, and your support for implementing the maximum affordable housing feasible to meet the pressing affordable housing needs of Berkeley – and all Bay Area residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Igor Tregub', written over a horizontal line.

Igor Tregub
Conservation Chair
Sierra Club Northern Alameda County Group