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**Northern Alameda County Group**

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

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October 30, 2013

Members of the Berkeley Planning Commission  
City of Berkeley

**Re: Key Elements of Demolition Ordinance Changes Supported by the Sierra Club**

Dear Chair Novosel and Members of the Berkeley Planning Commission:

You have before you tonight at least two versions of amendments to the Berkeley Demolition Ordinance (Zoning Amendments to BMC Chapter 23.08 – Demolition and Dwelling Unit Controls). While the number of proposed drafts has led to a great deal of confusion, we urge you to re-adopt ordinance language that uses the June 2013 draft as a model. Only this draft includes language that is supported the Sierra Club and the Berkeley Housing Advisory Commission. In addition, at your April 3, 2013 meeting, the Planning Commission already approved similar language.

The Sierra Club is on record supporting an ordinance with:

- **One-for-one replacement of rent controlled units with permanently affordable housing at the low-income level (50% Area Median Income) or below**
- **Strong eviction protections for existing tenants and full compliance with the Berkeley Relocation Ordinance if tenants are to be temporarily relocated through no fault of their own**
- **Robust energy efficiency measures in new multifamily housing (i.e. LEED, GreenPoint) to mitigate for the energy expenditure of demolition of existing buildings and new construction**

With rents continuing to rise in Berkeley, replacing rent controlled units with affordable housing and providing existing residents the first right of refusal to move into the new units would allow displaced tenants to remain in Berkeley. In addition, housing low-income tenants close to where they work reduces the need to drive, traffic congestion, pollution, and Berkeley's overall carbon footprint. Transportation accounts for a primary source of greenhouse gas emissions, according to the 2009 Berkeley Climate Action Plan report. When replacing housing stock is necessary, the inclusion of affordable housing within the new building furthers the City's Climate Action goals.

The Sierra Club has consistently supported infill housing development for tenants of a variety of income levels and family sizes along transit corridors. The problems this ordinance attempts to solve are different. Rather than allowing for new development in unutilized parcels along transit corridors, this ordinance applies to the redevelopment of existing housing in the entire city.

For this reason, the City of Berkeley should carefully consider the language of the proposed revisions to the Demolition Ordinance. The Sierra Club believes that including the aforementioned three key elements will achieve the right balance of competing policies.

Thank you for your continued support of the related goals of housing affordability and climate action. Please do not hesitate to contact us at 510-848-0800 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Igor Tregub", written in a cursive style.

Igor Tregub  
Conservation Chair  
Sierra Club Northern Alameda Group