

June 4, 2020

Hon. Anthony Portantino  
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 1299 (PORTANTINO) HOUSING DEVELOPMENT: INCENTIVES: REZONING OF IDLE  
RETAIL SITES-SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Portantino,

On behalf of the City of Thousand Oaks, I am pleased to support your SB 1299. This bill would create a pilot program in cooperation with the Department of Housing and Community Development. The program would provide grants to cities to work with builders to repurpose and rezone idle sites used for a big box retailer or a commercial shopping center for workforce housing. California is struggling with a housing shortage, especially workforce housing. Hardworking teachers, nurses, and police officers often struggle to find housing in the communities they serve.

SB 1299 would award cities a grant equal to the average amount of annual sales and use tax revenue generated by each idle site as an incentive for rezoning. This incentive would be applicable for seven years after submission of application for the pilot.

With the growth and ease of online shopping or e-commerce many commercial shopping centers are losing their popularity leading to a number of vacancies. Moreover, several department stores are announcing bankruptcies, abandoning expansive retail space. SB 1299 would require eligible idle sites to be vacant for at least twelve months to qualify. However, such spaces often remain abandoned for many years. SB 1299 would allow cities to rezone one or more of the idle sites for workforce housing "by right." Should the legislature appropriate the necessary funds for this pilot program, it would serve as another tool available for cities to support the development of workforce housing opportunities in their community.

For these reasons, we support your SB 1299.

Sincerely,



Al Adam  
Mayor

cc: Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin  
Senator Henry Stern  
David Mullinax- Regional Public Affairs Manager, [dmullinax@cacities.org](mailto:dmullinax@cacities.org)  
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