

PATTERSON AREA NEIGHBORHOODS ASSOCIATION
534 San Blas Place
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
www.contactpana@aol.com

November 11, 2003

Assemblymember Darrell Steinberg
State Capital, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Opposition to AB 1160 Second Units

Dear Assemblymember Steinberg:

The Patterson Area Neighborhoods Association, an organization comprised of several thousand residents on the south coast of Santa Barbara county, opposes AB 1160 as currently proposed. This position does not reflect a blanket animosity toward second units since we appreciate that they offer valuable opportunities to provide additional housing. We do believe, however, that it is premature to go forward with additional second unit legislation when the effects of AB 1866 have yet to be fully analyzed.

AB 1160 intends to reduce parking standards through prohibition of garages and allows other reductions in parking requirements which will adversely affect our neighborhoods. Now, without 2nd units, many of our neighborhoods are experiencing a shortage of parking because there are more vehicles per property than were originally planned for or can be accommodated on the property. Another problem with reduced parking standards is that in subdivisions with cul de sacs and their inherent parking deficits, lack of sufficient street parking is now a huge problem which will be exacerbated if this bill goes forward. Will we have to consider the "reservation" of the space in front of our property to ensure that we have a place to park our own vehicles? The proliferation of on-street parking is a growing blight of our neighborhoods.

Further, the portion of AB 1160 that directs jurisdictions to approve multi-family and single family residential use on any parcel zoned and developed for primary and secondary education is short-sighted. This bill will take away valuable open space used by students for a multitude of activities. Will playgrounds and athletic fields be used for housing? This provision will destroy the character of our neighborhood primary schools. As a parent of two primary school-aged children, I can think of nothing more that will diminish their positive experience of elementary school than taking away their open space where they play soccer and baseball in order to build houses. What if schools need room to expand? Do we build houses on school district property to find only that space has to be found elsewhere to build additional school facilities?

AB 1160 may be a well-intentioned effort to help address the State's need for more housing but it further diminishes communities' voices in local land use planning and ignores comprehensive and inclusive general plans. This zoning by state mandate will change decades-long planning for single family and multi-family residential neighborhoods. The bill's one-size-fits-all approach, which, for example, creates the

opportunity to construct a 2nd unit of up to 1200 sq ft., the equivalent of a 3-bedroom house, is simply not feasible in many of our neighborhoods already burdened with garage conversions and lack of on-street parking. One single family home neighborhood in our community already has 43% of its lots with rental units. To allow the production of additional rental units on these properties has huge quality of life impacts. We agree that neighborhoods can evolve to accommodate more people but this should not come at the expense of carefully crafted and considered community and neighborhood planning standards.

Our local jurisdictions are still attempting to interpret and implement the requirements of AB 1866. Therefore we believe it is prudent to delay moving forward with additional second unit legislation until an assessment of the impacts of AB 1866 is available. Also AB 1160 will impose more unfunded mandates, during a time of deep financial uncertainty, on local jurisdictions to again revise and update their 2nd unit ordinances. To require this at this time is premature. Lastly, it is also our belief that AB 1160's one-size-fits all legislation ignores many important local factors necessary to ensure vibrant and vital neighborhoods; instead, it will degrade community standards and ultimately erode quality of life for all residents.

Sincerely,

Tim Schmidt
President

Copy to: State Senator Tom McClintock
Assemblymember Hannah-Beth Jackson
2nd District Supervisor Susan Rose
3rd District Supervisor Gail Marshall
City of Goleta