



August 20, 2026

To: President pro Tempore Limón and California State Senators

Re: AB-956 Accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units. **OPPOSE**

Senators:

While we appreciate the amendment to allow local jurisdictions to not permit a junior accessory dwelling unit (JADU) with developments of two detached ADUs, Neighbors For A Better San Diego remains opposed to this bill because the Legislature is not understanding the upward pressure that this bill would put on the sale prices of small starter homes.

In order to offset the housing density land appreciation effect, the Legislature should add other constraints on ADU development, such as increasing the minimum setback to 5 feet (to match zone zero fire regulations) and eliminate the 800 square foot exception to the floor area ratio, which allows ADUs developments to bulge over their allowed floor area ratios.

AB-956 is not a homeowner bill. Homeowners already have the option of adding two accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to their properties plus a junior accessory dwelling unit, so the major impact of this bill would be to turn what was originally intended to be a way for homeowners to add housing for family members or extra income into a program targeted to developers.

The bill will especially change the market for smaller homes (e.g., 1,200 sf homes on 5,000 sf lots). Today these small homes are available as starter homes to first time homebuyers, but if AB-956 is adopted, these will become the primary target for developers, who can convert a garage or other space internal to the existing house and add two detached ADUs in the rear (four total rental units).

Therefore, AB-956 harms would-be homeowners in two ways:

- The price for starter homes would rise by tens of thousands of dollars or more because of the increased land value to developers.
- The inventory of starter homes would be permanently decreased as developers turn for-sale homes into apartment complexes.

California has seen robust ADU development across the state. Any further expansion of the program needs to have clear and thorough economic and social analyses, including the disparate negative impact of these programs on California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC) designated low opportunity communities, which violates California's commitment to affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH).

Finally, state laws are inconsistent. The side and rear setbacks for new detached ADUs are 4 feet, while the state has adopted a conflicting 5-foot setback requirement for Zone Zero (fire safety). Setbacks for ADUs and all other infill housing programs should be increased to 5 feet to match Zone Zero requirements, especially since fire hazard zones are likely to expand in coming years due to climate change.

Based on the above reasons, I urge you to oppose AB-956.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Geoffrey Hueter".

Geoffrey Hueter, Chair
Neighbors For A Better San Diego