



CITY OF LEMON GROVE

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Office of the City Manager

February 20, 2020

*Hand Delivered and Emailed to
Tessa.Lero@sandag.org*

San Diego Association of Governments
Board of Directors
c/o Tessa Lero
Clerk of the Board
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: City of Lemon Grove Comments on City of Imperial Beach Appeal of Draft Housing Unit Allocation for 2021-2029 Housing Cycle

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Board:

On January 6, 2020, in accordance with Government Code section 65584.05(c) SANDAG provided local governments with notice of all Draft Housing Allocation Appeals filed in the region by sending an email to the jurisdictions containing the notification and links to the appeals. Pursuant to that Section, local governments and SANDAG have 45-days – until February 20, 2020 – to comment on those appeals. The City of Lemon Grove ("City") submits these comments on the appeal letter of the City of Imperial Beach. The City supports the arguments of the City of Imperial Beach as outlined below.

The City supports the arguments that SANDAG has ignored municipal boundaries when allocating housing units, that SANDAG has not taken into account that the City lacks sufficient vacant land to accommodate the Draft Allocation and that SANDAG has used a flawed mechanism to distribute housing units based on transit stations within the boundaries of the City. Furthermore, the City agrees that SANDAG has not considered the commute patterns from south San Diego to the job centers in northern San Diego.

1. The Draft Allocation And The Methodology Upon Which It Is Based Does Not Adequately Consider The Statutory Factor That Requires Consideration Of The Opportunities And Constraints To Development Of Additional Housing.

Like Imperial Beach, the City of Lemon Grove lacks sufficient vacant land to accommodate the Draft Allocation. The City of Imperial Beach states in its appeal letter:



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"Based upon the 1,375 units allocated, Imperial Beach would need approximately 172 housing units constructed each year. This yearly allocation is not realistic based upon past units constructed and the fact that Imperial Beach is a "built out City" with primarily redevelopment occurring as "greenfield" development is effectively non-existent. For example, from 2013 through 2016, a total of only 59 units were constructed or approximately 15 per year. From 2017 to date, Imperial Beach has experienced the largest residential development projects in its history, including one project with approximately 167 units, resulting in 292 total units, or approximately 98 per year. Additionally, a funding mechanism to assist with the achievement of the housing allocation is needed as a way to incentivize housing development as the City currently does not have any financial incentives to offer. Furthermore, based upon development trends and economics, the ability to realize the allocated units appears unrealistic. Any allocation that is disproportional AND is not attainable, does not further the statutory requirements and is patently flawed."

The City of Lemon Grove has a similar situation in that between 2013 and 2018, the City produced an average of 72.8 units per year. Over an 8-year cycle this equates to 582 units, well short of the 1359 units allocated to the City. The City does not have sufficient vacant land to produce above moderate housing at low densities, which highlights the error in the Draft Allocation and unfairly sets up similarly situated Cities for failure.

2. SANDAG Has Not Taken Into Consideration The Vehicle Commute Patterns And The Lack Of Light Rail Service From Communities South Of I-8 To The Northern Job Centers And How This Will Effect The Vehicle Miles Traveled Or The Effect On GHG Emissions.

The City of Lemon Grove also supports the City of Imperial Beach's argument that since the major job centers in San Diego County are located north of I-8 and the major traffic congestion in the County is south of I-8, allocating "95% of all Major Transit Stop housing units...to 4 communities south of I-8, the vehicle miles traveled for residents south of I-8 will be disproportionately increased from those north of I-8, resulting in greater emissions and decreased air quality for economically disadvantaged communities." SANDAG has not taken into consideration the vehicle commute patterns and the lack of light rail service from communities south of I-8 to the northern job centers and how this will affect vehicle miles traveled. Lemon Grove is also located south of the I-8 and bears the brunt of this flawed methodology. As Imperial Beach points out, this outcome is the result of a failure to meet the statutory objective outlined in Government Code section 65584(d)(1).



3. The Draft Allocation Fails to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing.

Much like the City of Imperial Beach, the City of Lemon Grove is a proudly diverse City. The City of Lemon Grove fully supports and joins the City of Imperial Beach's argument in its appeal, in which it argues that the Draft Allocation and the methodology upon which it is based, did not adequately take into consideration Government Code section 65584(e), by which SANDAG is directed to:

"take meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, **replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns**, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws."

SANDAG has failed to meet this requirement by disproportionately and inequitably allocating housing units around transit stops that are located in cities south of the I-8 and by ignoring their diversity. Instead of taking actions that "replace segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns," SANDAG, by adoption of the methodology at issue, has further institutionalized the challenges that the State is expressly trying to remedy through fair housing.

In conclusion, the City of Lemon Grove agrees with the City of Imperial Beach that SANDAG has not taken into account the municipal boundaries of the City, the lack of vacant land in the City and the unique jurisdictional boundary issues associated with transit stations that serve multiple jurisdictions. SANDAG is not only failing to meet fair housing goals, but is further institutionalizing the problems that the State is seeking to combat. The City respectfully submits these comments on the appeal letter of the City of Imperial Beach.

Respectfully,

Lydia Romero
City Manager