



Apr 2, 2026

**City of Newport Beach
100 Civic Center Drive
Newport Beach, CA 92660**

Re: Proposed Housing Development Project at 1500 Quail Street

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Dear Newport Beach Planning Commission,

The California Housing Defense Fund (“CalHDF”) submits this letter to remind the City of its obligation to abide by all relevant state laws when evaluating the proposed 100-unit housing development project at 1500 Quail Street. These laws include the Housing Accountability Act (“HAA”) and AB 130.

The HAA provides the project legal protections. It requires approval of zoning and general plan compliant housing development projects unless findings can be made regarding specific, objective, written health and safety hazards. (Gov. Code, § 65589.5, subd. (j).) The HAA also bars cities from imposing conditions on the approval of such projects that would reduce the project’s density unless, again, such written findings are made. (*Ibid.*) As a development with at least two-thirds of its area devoted to residential uses, the project falls within the HAA’s ambit, and it complies with local zoning code and the City’s general plan. The HAA’s protections therefore apply, and the City may not reject the project except based on health and safety standards, as outlined above. Furthermore, if the City rejects the project or impairs its feasibility, it must conduct “a thorough analysis of the economic, social, and environmental effects of the action.” (*Id.* at subd. (b).)

Moreover, the City planned for 238 units of housing on the site (Housing Opportunity Site Map Identification No. 86) in its Housing Element. (See Table B-12.)

Additionally, the project is eligible for a statutory exemption from CEQA pursuant to AB 130 (Pub. Res. Code, § 21080.66. Caselaw from the California Court of Appeal affirms that local governments err, and may be sued, when they improperly refuse to grant a project a CEQA exemption or streamlined CEQA review to which it is entitled. (*Hilltop Group, Inc. v. County of San Diego* (2024) 99 Cal.App.5th 890, 911.)

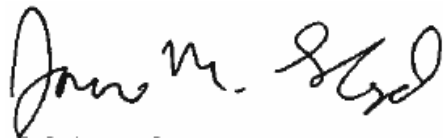
As you are well aware, California remains in the throes of a statewide crisis-level housing shortage. New housing such as this is a public benefit: it will increase the city's tax base; it will bring new customers to local businesses; and it will reduce displacement of existing residents by reducing competition for existing housing. It will also help cut down on transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions by providing housing in denser, more urban areas, as opposed to farther-flung regions in the state (and out of state). While no one project will solve the statewide housing crisis, the proposed development is a step in the right direction. CalHDF urges the City to approve it, consistent with its obligations under state law.

CalHDF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation whose mission includes advocating for increased access to housing for Californians at all income levels, including low-income households. You may learn more about CalHDF at www.calhdf.org.

Sincerely,



Dylan Casey
CalHDF Executive Director



James M. Lloyd
CalHDF Director of Planning and Investigations