

August 25, 2016

The Honorable Kansen Chu
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 3048
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Opposition to Assembly Bill 718 (Chu) – Local Government Authority. Sleeping in Vehicles

Dear Assemblymember Chu:

On behalf of the Downtown Long Beach Associates (DLBA), the 1,500 businesses and 4,000 commercial and residential property owners of the two Business Improvement District (BIDs) it represents, I write in opposition to Assembly Bill 718 (Chu). As representatives of the Downtown Long Beach community, the DLBA is sensitive to the challenges that homeless individuals face, and has made significant progress in collaboration with the City of Long Beach and our community partners to help transition individuals experiencing homelessness into permanent housing. AB 718 threatens to undo this progress.

We encourage lawmakers to enact measures that provide funding to develop critically needed affordable housing and for mental health and other resources that can truly help those living on the streets and in vehicles. However, we do not believe removing local regulatory authority, as AB 718 would do, is an appropriate solution. AB 718 would preempt local authority, including as we understand it BID agents to regulate and enforce laws governing the use of public and private space. Vehicle use and control issues should be addressed at the local level.

The issues raised by AB 718 are less about parking but more about the use of vehicles for human habitation, including sleeping and “resting.” Neither city parking locations whether on public or private property, nor automobiles were intended or designed for residential occupancy. This year, the Legislature responded to California’s homelessness crisis by passing the “No Place Like Home” proposal that will provide \$2 billion for housing with supportive services. This is a very positive step and more is needed. Sen. Jim Beall (D-San Jose) is advocating for \$3 billion affordable housing bond for the 2018 ballot that is still pending approval during the final days of the Legislative Session. These are the types of efforts that will help make progress addressing this problem.

AB 718, however, takes policy making in the wrong direction. It is not appropriate or prudent for the Legislature to remove local government authority to protect the public health, safety and welfare of their residents from issues that arise when people live in cars and trucks parked on public and private property. These issues cannot responsibly be ignored.

What is needed most to combat homelessness is adequate funding to address the crisis of dwindling supply and availability of affordable housing and emergency shelters. We encourage legislators to support additional funding for affordable housing and homeless solutions. However, cannot support legislative action that removes local government authority and reverses progress made in the fight for affordable permanent housing.

For these reasons, we must oppose AB 718.

Sincerely,



Kraig Kojian
President & CEO

cc: The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell, Assemblymember, 70th Assembly District
The Honorable Robert Garcia, Mayor, City of Long Beach
Long Beach City Council
Downtown Long Beach Associates, Board of Directors
Diana Tang, Manager of Government Affairs, City of Long Beach
California Downtown Association