



# The League of Women Voters of Oakland

The League of Women Voters - the place where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement

July 10, 2007

To: Members of the City Of Oakland Inclusionary Housing Blue Ribbon Commission

From: League Of Women of Women Voters of Oakland

The League of Women Voters of Oakland commends the members of the Blue Ribbon Commission for your long hours, hard work and careful consideration of many issues.

The League supports policies and programs which improve the variety of housing opportunities in each neighborhood. To further this goal, we urge that the "No Net Loss" provision of the Condo Conversion policy be retained.

We believe that the discussion of this policy needs to include a fuller discussion of the consequences of any potential change. Early in these meetings the question was raised about whether or not you wanted to change the ratio of rental to owned housing in Oakland. There has not yet been a discussion of this topic, and therefore no answer to this question.

The City of Oakland has a large population of renters. Where are the current renters going to go when their apartments are converted to condominiums? Some may be able to buy their apartments, but many will not be able to do so. We need to meet the housing requirements of all of Oakland's residents – not just those who can be homeowners. Further, some people who are able to buy a home choose to rent; we need to respect that choice also.

When we say "No Net Loss", remember that there is already a fairly large loop hole in the current ordinance, in that it applies only to buildings that have 5 or more units, so in 2006, we lost almost 400 rental units in buildings of 4 or fewer units to condo conversions – with no replacement rental units.

You have data on where conversions have occurred recently. We think it important that you carefully review what is happening now before recommending policy changes which will affect the supply of rental housing in Oakland in the future.

Finally, we hope that you will consider adding a provision to the current condo conversion ordinance requiring that all buildings being converted be brought up to current building code – with no exceptions for small buildings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helen Hutchison'.

Helen Hutchison, President

cc: Hon. Ron Dellums  
Oakland City Councilmembers  
*East Bay Express*  
*Montclarion*

*Oakland Tribune*  
*Oakland Post*  
*Oakland Globe*  
East Bay Housing Organizations

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