



April 11, 2022

The Honorable Cristina Garcia  
California State Assembly  
California State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1778 State Transportation Funding: freeway widening: poverty and pollution – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Garcia:

On behalf of the Council of Infill Builders, a statewide organization of real estate professionals committed to improving the quality of California's downtown, transit-oriented communities, I write to support AB 1778. The bill would require the Department of Transportation to consult the California Healthy Places Index (HPI) prior to the start of freeway widening projects to determine whether the project area meets objective criteria on health and equity prior to obtaining funding, permits and personnel support.

Freeway widening in California has too often harmed the lowest-income communities, which are typically located in areas with significant air pollution, including levels of particulate matter that are 10 times higher than the state average. In addition, freeway widening and expansion projects require the acquisition of real property, which has historically displaced low-income residents and disrupted jobs and small businesses. Furthermore, freeway widening increases vehicle trips, traffic and pollution, decreasing opportunity for equitable and healthy infill development.

AB 1778 will remedy these injustices and negative outcomes by requiring the state's department of transportation to consult the California Healthy Index to identify the HPI score for the freeway project area prior to beginning a project. Projects covered include freeway widening or extensions, interchange expansion projects that increase traffic to or from existing or future industrial or warehouse facilities, and those that increase displacement of residents and businesses, either temporarily or permanently. If the identified HPI score falls within the zero to 50th percentile, the legislature would deny the department use of funds, permits and personnel time.

The Council of Infill Builders supports this overdue legislative approach and thanks you for your work on this critical infill, equity and public health issue.

Sincerely,

Mott Smith  
Council of Infill Builders