

Ma'Ayn Johnson

From: Maggie Aguilar
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 4:13 PM
To: Ma'Ayn Johnson; Peter Waggonner
Cc: Duran, Ruben; [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Comment for SCAG Regional Council meeting, January 7, 2021

FYI

From: Henry Fung [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 4:09 PM
To: ePublic Comment Group <ePublicComment@scag.ca.gov>
Subject: Comment for SCAG Regional Council meeting, January 7, 2021

(This is a revision to a comment sent to the Executive/Administrative Committee, done so to be in the record for Regional Council.)

Dear honorable members of the SCAG Regional Council:

Recently it seems that several cities are requesting that SCAG schedule a closed session for possible litigation on the state regarding the Regional Housing Needs Determination. While I have no opinion on whether a closed session be scheduled. as a taxpayer and resident of the SCAG region, I strongly oppose litigation.

SCAG has received many plaudits for its planning and programming activities. The RHNA methodology was praised by the State Department of Housing and Community Development. The Go Human campaign, slow streets programs, and driver education have resulted in safer streets for walkers, bicyclists, and other non-automobile users. SCAG also acts as a forum for encouraging business investment through the sustainable communities program and the annual economic summit. Spending money on litigation necessarily means that some of these programs could be eliminated.

What these cities wish to do is to drain the SCAG budget, and possibly the budgets of many of its members, on litigation that is not likely to be successful. The President's RHNA litigation study group has already studied the issue and chosen not to move forward. This decision should be respected. Hopefully they will share why they chose to make this decision in closed session.

With COVID-19 affecting city and county budgets extensively through revenue losses and added costs, any litigation by cities will necessarily result in city general fund programs being cut. The loss of police officers, firefighters, library employees, parks workers, and the possible elimination of many programs essential in supporting families during the pandemic could be cut all because cities don't want to plan for housing. Many cities have already gone to the voters to raise their sales taxes to fund these services. The voters did not expect for the money to be spent on lawyers.

Some of the Orange County cities that want litigation may feel that they can afford to sue the State. If so, they should fund the litigation themselves and not have it drain the SCAG budget. The SCAG cities that do not want to participate should not be required to pay for these expenses, or for the State's expenses should they lose.

Also, an adversarial position could result in more legislation passed at the State level that could make litigation moot. I support the SCAG President and executive leadership to continue to dialogue productively with the State, the Governor's Administration, and our legislators, and not go in the direction of fruitless litigation that could direct money away from both COVID-19 relief and the necessary steps to plan beyond COVID-19, and into the pockets of lawyers.

Sincerely,
Henry Fung
Covina, CA