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**From:** Buff Whitman-Bradley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 29, 2021 12:49 PM  
**To:** Regional Housing Need Allocation  
**Subject:** regarding RINA appeals in Marin and Sonoma counties

\*External Email\*

Dear ABAG:

I know many, many people have sent you letters opposing the appeals filed by communities in Marin and Sonoma counties. You have all the information and the arguments in front of you. I join those urging you to reject those appeals. I am a resident of Fairfax, in Marin County, and I cannot understand how so many local jurisdictions have been so successful for so long in keeping affordable housing out of their towns. It is shameful and now we have a chance to right that wrong. Please deny the appeals.

Sincerely,

Arthur Whitman-Bradley  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Debra [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 29, 2021 7:59 AM  
**To:** Regional Housing Need Allocation  
**Subject:** Housing

**\*External Email\***

**RE: Comment on RHNA allocation appeals filed by the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you concerning the RHNA allocation appeals that have been filed from jurisdictions in Marin and Sonoma counties: the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma.

**As an over 25 year resident of San Rafael, I continue to see our community as vocal supporters for diversity and equity. However, the actions taken by our communities in Marin and Sonoma counties need to support the advocacy that is preached.**

Many of the jurisdictions listed above have increased tenant protections and housing affordability for the people who live and work in the jurisdiction – such as through recent ordinances, including just cause for eviction protections for renters, Covid-19 related eviction moratoriums, and source of income protections for people with rental subsidies. These are all positive actions.

However, I am concerned that the appeal of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) allocations sends a negative signal by promoting exclusion and reinforcing the segregation of low- income, disabled, and BIPOC communities.

I understand that the Executive Board of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) adopted the RHNA equity adjustment to ensure that all jurisdictions exhibiting above-average levels of racial and economic exclusion take on their fair share of low- and very-low-income RHNA units.

I support the equity adjustment because previous RHNAs have failed to allocate enough affordable housing to white, affluent jurisdictions that have a history of opposing affordable housing development in the Bay Area. The new RHNA methodology, which includes the equity adjustment, provides a meaningful opportunity for these cities and counties to address the inequitable allocations of the recent past. Keeping the adjusted allocations will allow jurisdictions to meet state legal requirements to affirmatively further fair housing in their communities.

The equity adjustment is critical to address racial segregation in the Bay Area, including in Marin and Sonoma counties. Since the Fair Housing Act of 1968 barred exclusion on the basis of race, wealthier and largely white municipalities throughout California, including in these two counties, passed exclusionary land use and zoning regulations such as large-lot zoning, prohibitions on multi-family housing, parking requirements, and more to limit the development of affordable housing and exclude low-income people of color.

Today, exclusionary zoning and community opposition in neighborhoods with well-funded schools and public amenities are major barriers to developing affordable housing. It's because of this that Marin and Sonoma counties are dramatically more segregated today than four decades ago. We need the RHNA allocations to address the impacts of our historical inequitable land use policies.

I understand the concerns expressed about fire safety, drought, and lack of developable land. However, these concerns need not exclude the need for equity and inclusion.

When we exclude affordable homes, communities who need that affordability, particularly people of color and those with disabilities who work in the community, are forced to live elsewhere, far from their work or in overcrowded homes. Many lower-income communities of color are now facing displacement yet again as suburban expenses quickly outstrip their incomes. The equity adjustment helps increase affordability, ensuring that everyone can live in neighborhoods of their choice based on individual and family needs rather than based on historic patterns of segregation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the disparities and inequities in our region, exposing a housing system that is failing low-income people and BIPOC communities. We must all work together to ensure everyone has a choice to stay and thrive in their communities or move closer to their jobs and other needs.

I urge you to require that these jurisdictions meet their assigned regional housing needs, expand opportunities in high-resource communities, particularly for Latinx community members, and deny their appeals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Debra Taube



# Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California

1314 Lincoln Ave., Ste. A, San Rafael, CA 94901 ▼ (415) 457-5025 ▼ TDD: (800) 735-2922  
[www.fairhousingnorcal.org](http://www.fairhousingnorcal.org) ▼ [fhanc@fairhousingnorcal.org](mailto:fhanc@fairhousingnorcal.org)

August 30, 2021

Associated Bay Area Governments  
[RHNA@bayareametro.gov](mailto:RHNA@bayareametro.gov)

**RE: Comment on RHNA allocation appeals filed by the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma**

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of staff and board of Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California (FHANC), I am writing to you concerning the RHNA allocation appeals that have been filed from jurisdictions in Marin and Sonoma counties: the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma. FHANC is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting equal housing opportunity in Marin, Sonoma, and Solano Counties through community education, housing counseling, particularly related to housing discrimination, and advocacy related to affirmatively furthering fair housing.

We urge you to deny the appeals.

Many of the jurisdictions listed above have increased tenant protections and housing affordability for the people who live and work in the jurisdiction – as evidenced by recent ordinances, including just cause for eviction protections for renters, Covid-19 related eviction moratoriums, and source of income protections for people with rental subsidies.

**However, we are concerned that the appeal of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) allocations sends an opposite signal from a message of inclusivity and prosperity for all.**

As we know, the Executive Board of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) adopted the RHNA equity adjustment to ensure that all jurisdictions exhibiting above-average levels of racial and economic exclusion take on their fair share of low- and very-low-income RHNA units.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The equity adjustment uses a composite score that identifies jurisdictions exhibiting racial and economic exclusion based on the jurisdiction's divergence index score and the percent of the jurisdiction's households above 120% of Area Median Income (AMI). The divergence index score calculates how different a jurisdiction's racial demographics are from the region's demographics. (The Othering and Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley has identified the divergence index as the best measure of segregation in the region.) The equity adjustment ensures that all of the jurisdictions identified using this composite score receive an allocation of very low- and low-income units that is at least proportional to its share of the region's total households in 2020. This means that to have a proportional allocation, a city with 2% of existing households would also get 2% of the allocation of very low- and low-income RHNA units. In the seven jurisdictions in Marin, Napa, and

*A local non-profit helping communities eliminate housing discrimination*

TDD: CALIFORNIA RELAY SERVICE FOR THE HEARING OR SPEECH IMPAIRED: (800) 735-2922  
SE HABLA ESPAÑOL - NẾU CẦN GIÚP ĐỖ BẰNG TIẾNG VIỆT NAM XIN LIÊN LẠC SỐ: (415) 847-2747

When high-resource jurisdictions, such as those in Marin County, improve housing opportunities for low-income individuals, who are disproportionately people of color and people with disabilities, the jurisdiction will move closer to being an inclusive and equitable place where all residents have access to a safe and affordable home and equal access to economic opportunity.

FHANC supports the equity adjustment because previous RHNA have failed to allocate enough affordable housing to white, affluent jurisdictions that have a history of opposing affordable housing development in the Bay Area.<sup>2</sup> A 2017 study by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at UC Berkeley found that ABAG was not allocating a fair share of low-income housing to jurisdictions with higher percentages of White residents in prior RHNA cycles.<sup>3</sup>

The new RHNA methodology, which includes the equity adjustment, provides a meaningful opportunity for these cities and counties to address the inequitable allocations of the recent past. Adhering to the adjusted allocations will allow the jurisdictions to meet state legal requirements to affirmatively further fair housing in their communities.

Affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions to overcome patterns of segregation and fostering inclusive communities, free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity.<sup>4</sup> The equity adjustment helps meet the duty to affirmatively further fair housing by increasing affordability and thereby inclusivity in our community such that everyone can live in neighborhoods of their choice based on individual and family needs rather than based on patterns of segregation.

The equity adjustment is critical to address racial segregation in the Bay Area, including Marin and Sonoma counties. Since the Fair Housing Act of 1968 barred exclusion on the basis of race, wealthier predominantly white municipalities throughout California, including the jurisdictions in these two counties, passed exclusionary land use and zoning regulations such as large-lot zoning, prohibitions on multi-family housing, parking requirements, and more to limit the development of affordable housing and exclude low-income people of color.<sup>5</sup>

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Sonoma subject to the equity adjustment, a total of 940 lower-income units are needed to achieve proportionality. ABAG Executive Director, “Draft RHNA Methodology and Final Subregional Shares” (Association of Bay Area Governments, January 21, 2021), 36, 19 [https://abag.ca.gov/sites/default/files/draft\\_rhna\\_allocation\\_presentation\\_to\\_exec\\_bd\\_jan\\_21.pdf](https://abag.ca.gov/sites/default/files/draft_rhna_allocation_presentation_to_exec_bd_jan_21.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> For background on the most racially segregated cities in the Bay Area measured by “inter-municipal” segregation, see Stephen Menendian, Arthur Gales, and Samir Gambhir, “The Most Segregated (and Integrated) Cities in the SF Bay Area,” (Othering & Belonging Institute, November 18, 2020), <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/most-segregated-and-integrated-cities-sf-bay-area>.

<sup>3</sup> Local governments with higher percentages of white residents were allocated lower numbers of lower income housing during the 3rd and 5th RHNA cycles, which span the years 1999-2006 and 2014-2023. Heather Bromfield and Eli Moore, “Unfair Shares: Racial Disparities and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Process in the Bay Area,” Research Brief (Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, August 2017), 6, [https://belonging.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/haasinstitute\\_unfairshares\\_rhnabayarea\\_publish.pdf](https://belonging.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/haasinstitute_unfairshares_rhnabayarea_publish.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> See Gov. Code, § 8899.50, subd. (a)(1).

<sup>5</sup> Ameer Chew and Chione Lucina Muñoz Flegal, Facing History, Uprooting Inequality: A Path to Housing Justice in California (PolicyLink, 2020), 47, [https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/pl\\_report\\_calif-housing\\_101420a.pdf](https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/pl_report_calif-housing_101420a.pdf).



Today, exclusionary zoning and community opposition in neighborhoods with well-funded schools and public amenities are significant barriers to affordable housing development.<sup>6</sup> As a result, Marin and Sonoma counties are dramatically more segregated today than it was in 1980.<sup>7</sup> A regional approach is necessary to address the impacts of this history of inequitable land use policy.

FHANC recognizes the jurisdictions' concerns such as fire safety and lack of developable land; however, if we do not step up on building more affordable housing, these counties cannot be successful in becoming more diverse.

When jurisdictions exclude affordable homes, communities who need that affordability, particularly people of color and those with disabilities who work in the community, are forced to live elsewhere, far from their work or in an overcrowded home. Many lower-income communities of color have already had to do that in the Bay Area, but they are now facing displacement again as the suburban cost-of-living skyrockets much faster than their incomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the disparities and inequities in our region, exposing a housing system that is failing low-income people and BIPOC communities and requiring us to reimagine our housing system as we build toward a just recovery. We must all work together to ensure everyone has a choice to stay and thrive in their communities or move closer to their jobs and other needs.

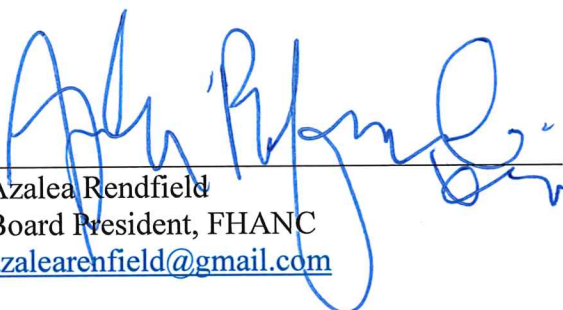
We urge you to require that these jurisdictions meet their assigned regional housing needs and expand opportunities in high-resource communities, particularly for Latinx community members,<sup>8</sup> and deny their appeals. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Caroline Peattie*

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Caroline Peattie  
Executive Director, FHANC  
[peattie@fairhousingnorcal.org](mailto:peattie@fairhousingnorcal.org)



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Azalea Rendfield  
Board President, FHANC  
[azalearenfield@gmail.com](mailto:azalearenfield@gmail.com)

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<sup>6</sup> Chew et al., Facing History, Uprooting Inequality: A Path to Housing Justice in California, 47.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Menendian and Samir Gambhir, "Racial Segregation in the San Francisco Bay Area, Part 3: Measuring Segregation," (Othering & Belonging Institute, May 28, 2019), <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/racial-segregation-san-francisco-bay-area-part-3>. <sup>8</sup> See Gov. Code, § 65587(b). <sup>9</sup> Between 2000 and 2015, Sonoma County's low-income Latinx population more than doubled and Marin's nearly doubled. Rising Housing Costs and Re-Segregation in the San Francisco Bay Area (UC Berkeley's Urban Displacement Project and the California Housing Partnership, February 2019), 8, [https://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/bay\\_area\\_re-segregation\\_rising\\_housing\\_costs\\_report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/bay_area_re-segregation_rising_housing_costs_report_2019.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Between 2000 and 2015, Sonoma County's low-income Latinx population more than doubled and Marin's nearly doubled. Rising Housing Costs and Re-Segregation in the San Francisco Bay Area (UC Berkeley's Urban Displacement Project and the California Housing Partnership, February 2019), 8, <https://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/>

August 30, 2021

Associated Bay Area Governments  
RHNA@bayareametro.gov

**RE: Comment on RHNA allocation appeals filed by the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you concerning the RHNA allocation appeals that have been filed from jurisdictions in Marin and Sonoma counties: the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma.

**I urge you to deny the appeals. We retired to Sausalito and now Mill Valley 5 years ago from New York City where we lived for many years in highly integrated buildings. Priced from \$3 million purchase to \$3,000/mo. – subsidy rent, each floor of each building had residents from a wide economic and racial background. Marinites claim progressiveness but it only shows up in voting and attitudes pertaining to areas outside their own communities.**

Just cause for eviction protections for renters, Covid-19 related eviction moratoriums, and source of income protections for people with rental subsidies are all positive actions, however, the appeal of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) allocations promotes exclusion and reinforcing the segregation of low-income, disabled, and BIPOC communities.

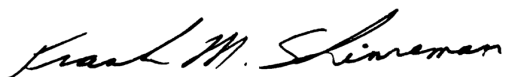
Previous RHNAs have failed to allocate enough affordable housing to white, affluent jurisdictions that have a history of opposing affordable housing development in the Bay Area. The new RHNA methodology, which includes the equity adjustment, provides a meaningful opportunity for these cities and counties to address the inequitable allocations of the recent past. Keeping the adjusted allocations will allow jurisdictions to meet state legal requirements to affirmatively further fair housing in their communities.

It is time for Marin to get used to living in neighborhoods that contain people from a wide variety of income, education, religion and racial backgrounds. Such communities are more safe, vibrant and productive and do not reduce property values.

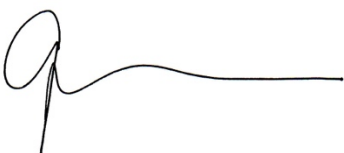
I urge you to require that these jurisdictions meet their assigned regional housing needs, expand opportunities in high-resource communities, particularly for Latinx community members, and deny their appeals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Frank Shinneman & Cindy Knoebel



Fred Allebach  
Member Sonoma Valley Housing Group  
8/1/21

### **Public comment on Sonoma County's RHNA appeal**

Hello,  
My comment will be simple. Deny the appeal. Sonoma County's initial allocation *was already reduced* by @1000.

Sonoma County needs all the housing it can get; the more housing, the higher percentage of lower AMI units will need to be accounted for. It would be fine if you shifted some of the full allocation to county cities, for example the City of Sonoma could take 750 instead of 137; this again would call for more desperately needed lower AMI units.

The City of Sonoma held a \$35,000 Housing Our Community series in 2019 where 50 well-informed community members called for 750 new units in the next 10 years, half deed-restricted. There is public will for more housing, and more deed-restricted lower income housing. This is bottom-up "local control."

Somebody has to be the adult in the room and force segregated, wealthy, North Bay locales to integrate and have some pressure to produce housing to meet real needs. Enough of the "rural character" and "small town character" arguments; a real jobs-to-housing ratio needs to be met. In Sonoma city, there are seven low wage jobs for every lower-AMI housing unit. White property owners don't have the right to a segregated stasis.

Sonoma County and the North Bay should not be allowed to externalize their housing inequity issues. True sustainability calls for municipalities to cover their own working class community members. The only path for that is to have everyone housed where they work; with new AFFH and Housing Sites Inventory laws, RHNA can be one policy tool to force housing equity onto local land use policy.

Sonoma County unincorporated USAs are fine for new housing. One reason? City NIMBYs are so strong that nothing ever gets done. UGBs and NIMBYs have put a Green Checkmate on North Bay housing. A high Sonoma County unincorporated RHNA allocation may pragmatically be the best solution for more units.

Deny the Sonoma County appeals. Shift as much to county cities as you like. Whatever you do, keep the allocation at the same number and make the municipalities here deal with it.

best regards,  
Fred Allebach  
Sonoma



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**From:** Hollie Smith <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 1, 2021 11:36:25 AM  
**To:** MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>  
**Subject:** New housing and water allocation

**\*External Email\***

I read that Sonoma County is appealing meeting its new housing construction goals, and is hoping for a reduction in new units due to concern for the local water crisis, among other issues. Not only should you grant this request, but you should seek to place a moratorium on all new housing in the Sonoma area. Ranchers sell off cattle and other livestock, farmers let fields go fallow, homeowners wells go dry; and we are on water restrictions, what part of this crisis do you not understand? Are you insane? I have not heard of one new plan to add additional water resources to the Sonoma area. If we have more years of drought, we have no back up plan. Please be sane; no point in adding units if there is no water line to hook them up to .

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**From:** Jim Hayes [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Friday, August 6, 2021 10:38:58 AM

**To:** district4@sonoma-county.org <district4@sonoma-county.org> <district4@sonoma-county.org>; MTC-ABAG Info <info@bayareametro.gov>; Susan Gorin <susan.gorin@sonoma-county.org>; district5@sonoma-county.org <district5@sonoma-county.org> <district5@sonoma-county.org>; David Rabbitt <david.rabbitt@sonoma-county.org>; district3 <district3@sonoma-county.org>

**Subject:** Sonoma county and Windsor reduction request

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**\*External Email\***

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Hi Info at ABAG,

Please forward this to Mr. Jesse Arreguin in his role as president of ABAG.

In my local paper, I read with dismay that my county government (Sonoma) and the city of Windsor have applied for a reduction in target for home building. I was also unhappy to read that they plan to put most new building in only 2 cities- Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa. I live in Rohnert Park and I am happy we are building apartment housing, affordable housing etc. But I believe every city in the state should have to do this. We need more housing for workers everywhere.

“Rabbitt and other local officials say the increases are at odds with a countywide effort to focus growth in denser cities such as Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park. They argue those areas already are zoned for more affordable multifamily homes and large apartment buildings.” (Press Democrat July 30<sup>th</sup>).

<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/sonoma-county-windsor-appeal-state-mandated-targets-for-future-housing/>

Jim Hayes



August 28, 2021

Associated Bay Area Governments  
RHNA@bayareametro.gov

RE: Comment on RHNA allocation appeals filed by the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you concerning the RHNA allocation appeals that have been filed from jurisdictions in Marin and Sonoma counties: the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma.

I urge you to deny the appeals. As a 40 year resident of Fairfax and San Anselmo, I continue to see our community as vocal supporters for diversity and equity. However, the actions taken by our communities in Marin and Sonoma counties need to support the advocacy that is preached.

Many of the jurisdictions listed above have increased tenant protections and housing affordability for the people who live and work in the jurisdiction – such as through recent ordinances, including just cause for eviction protections for renters, Covid-19 related eviction moratoriums, and source of income protections for people with rental subsidies. These are all positive actions.

However, I am concerned that the appeal of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) allocations sends a negative signal by promoting exclusion and reinforcing the segregation of low- income, disabled, and BIPOC communities.

I understand that the Executive Board of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) adopted the RHNA equity adjustment to ensure that all jurisdictions exhibiting above-average levels of racial and economic exclusion take on their fair share of low- and very-low-income RHNA units.

I support the equity adjustment because previous RHNAs have failed to allocate enough affordable housing to white, affluent jurisdictions that have a history of opposing affordable housing development in the Bay Area. The new RHNA methodology, which includes the equity adjustment, provides a meaningful opportunity for these cities and counties to address the inequitable allocations of the recent past. Keeping the adjusted allocations will allow jurisdictions to meet state legal requirements to affirmatively further fair housing in their communities.

The equity adjustment is critical to address racial segregation in the Bay Area, including in Marin and Sonoma counties. Since the Fair Housing Act of 1968 barred exclusion on the basis of

race, wealthier and largely white municipalities throughout California, including in these two counties, passed exclusionary land use and zoning regulations such as large-lot zoning, prohibitions on multi-family housing, parking requirements, and more to limit the development of affordable housing and exclude low-income people of color.

Today, exclusionary zoning and community opposition in neighborhoods with well-funded schools and public amenities are major barriers to developing affordable housing. It's because of this that Marin and Sonoma counties are dramatically more segregated today than four decades ago. We need the RHNA allocations to address the impacts of our historical inequitable land use policies.

I understand the concerns expressed about fire safety, drought, and lack of developable land. The actual appeal made by the Town of Fairfax, for example, focuses on these three items. However, Fairfax's appeal does not make any argument against the need for inclusion, equity or diversity within our community, which is the basis of the equity adjustment.

When we exclude affordable homes, communities who need that affordability, particularly people of color and those with disabilities who work in the community, are forced to live elsewhere, far from their work or in overcrowded homes. Many lower-income communities of color are now facing displacement yet again as suburban expenses quickly outstrip their incomes. The equity adjustment helps increase affordability, ensuring that everyone can live in neighborhoods of their choice based on individual and family needs rather than based on historic patterns of segregation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the disparities and inequities in our region, exposing a housing system that is failing low-income people and BIPOC communities. We must all work together to ensure everyone has a choice to stay and thrive in their communities or move closer to their jobs and other needs.

I urge you to require that these jurisdictions meet their assigned regional housing needs, expand opportunities in high-resource communities, particularly for Latinx community members, and deny their appeals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Mennucci

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 29, 2021 1:25 PM  
**To:** Regional Housing Need Allocation  
**Subject:** Comment on RHNA allocation appeals

**\*External Email\***

Associated Bay Area Governments

To Whom It May Concern,

I have lived in Marin County for 50 years and have never been happy with the lack of diversity in our County.

I am writing now concerning the RHNA allocation appeals that have been filed from jurisdictions in Marin and Sonoma counties: the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma.

I hope to hear that you deny the appeals. I support the equity adjustment because previous RHNAs have failed to allocate enough affordable housing to white, affluent jurisdictions that have a history of opposing affordable housing development in the Bay Area.

Sincerely

Marilyn Price  
[REDACTED]



# SONOMA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

111 SANTA ROSA AVENUE, SUITE 240, SANTA ROSA, CA 95404

(707) 565-2577

www.sonomalafco.org

August 30, 2021

The Administrative Committee  
Association of Bay Area Governments  
375 Beale St. Ste. 800  
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Sonoma LAFCO's Comment on the Regional Housing Needs Appeal from the County of Sonoma County

Dear President and ABAG Administrative Committee:

The Sonoma Local Agency Commission (Sonoma LAFCO) would like to thank the Association of Bay Area Governments for the opportunity to comment on the Regional Housing Needs Appeal from the County of Sonoma.

## State Law

California State Law, beginning with Section 56000, gives the authority for the establishment and/or change in the jurisdictional boundaries of cities and special districts to the LAFCOs statewide. Also known as the Cortese Knox Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (CKH), Section 56001, titled Legislative Findings and Declarations, states in part (*emphasis added*).

“The Legislature finds and declares that it is the policy of the state to encourage orderly growth and development which are essential to the social, fiscal, and economic well-being of the state. The Legislature recognizes that the logical formation and determination of local agency boundaries is an important factor in promoting orderly development and in balancing that development with sometimes competing state interests of discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open-space and prime agricultural lands, and efficiently extending government services. The Legislature also recognizes that providing housing for persons and families of all incomes is an important factor in promoting orderly development. Therefore, the Legislature further finds and declares that this policy should be effected by the logical formation and modification of the boundaries of local agencies, *with a preference granted to accommodating additional growth within, or through the expansion of, the boundaries of those local agencies which can best accommodate and provide necessary governmental services and housing for persons and families of all incomes in the most efficient manner feasible.*”

Sonoma LAFCO holds that in most instances, the local agencies that can best accommodate and provide these necessary governmental services are the cities. We therefore strongly encourage new development requiring public services, such as

## SONOMA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

domestic water and sanitary sewer, to occur within the boundary of the agency providing those services. In instances where territory to be developed is eligible for annexation, we require that it be annexed to the agency prior to the extension of public services.

In the event that annexation is not possible, the Commission may consider the extension of public services outside of the agency's boundary following Section 56133 which states in part (*emphasis added*):

(a) A city or district may provide new or extended services by contract or agreement outside its jurisdictional boundary *only if it first requests and receives written approval from the commission.*

(b) The commission may authorize a city or district to provide new or extended services outside its jurisdictional boundary but within its sphere of influence in anticipation of a later change of organization.

(c) The commission may authorize a city or district to provide new or extended services outside its jurisdictional boundary and outside its sphere of influence to respond to an *existing or impending threat to the health or safety of the public or the residents of the affected territory...*

### Sonoma LAFCO Policy

In 2008, Sonoma LAFCO adopted policy that states the Commission, or by direction, the Executive Officer, will consider authorization of the extension of public services to existing development outside of a city's boundary but within its sphere of influence when those services are required to respond to an existing or impending threat to the public health or safety of the residents of the affected territory.

The Commission will not consider authorization of the extension of public services for new development outside of a city's boundary but within a city's sphere of influence, unless the new development is for a 100 percent affordable project as defined in Section 50079.5 of the Health and Safety code, the proposed new development is consistent with the City and County General Plans, and annexation to the city is not feasible at the time of application.

The Commission may, under certain circumstances, find exemptions to its policy.

### Comments on Appeal

Sonoma LAFCO concurs with the County's statement that changes to district and city boundaries that would be needed to support the extension of public services into unincorporated areas are, as put forth in state law, under LAFCO's authority, not the County's.

## **SONOMA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**

Sonoma LAFCO agrees that the allocation of 3,881 housing units to the County will direct growth into rural areas outside all of the cities' voter-approved Urban Growth Boundaries, the County's Urban Service Area Boundaries and into voter-approved Community Separators. We commend and support the efforts of the cities and County, through their respective general plans, to focus growth within urban areas to increase the efficiency in the provision of public services, to prevent urban sprawl and to preserve the agricultural resources and open space areas unique to our county.

In 2017, Sonoma County lost over 5,600 structures to wildfires, many of which were located in the unincorporated areas. The County has suffered wildfires in three out the four years following 2017 resulting in the additional loss of structures and property. We are concerned that in light of the continuing threat of wildland fires combined with the extreme shortage of available water resources due to the severe drought, promoting urban level development in the unincorporated areas, particularly those located in wildland urban interface areas, may increase the potential loss of homes, businesses and lives.

Sonoma LAFCO supports the County of Sonoma's request to reduce its allocation of 3,881 units to 1,910 units.

Sincerely,

Mark Bramfitt  
Executive Officer

CC: Pam Stafford, Commission Chair

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**From:** Stephen Bingham [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 29, 2021 3:04 PM  
**To:** Regional Housing Need Allocation  
**Subject:** RHNA allocation appeals filed by the Marin County and various cities in the County

**\*External Email\***

August 30, 2021

Executive Board  
Associated Bay Area Governments  
RHNA@bayareametro.gov

**RE: Comment on RHNA allocation appeals filed by the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma**

Dear Members of the ABAG Executive Board:

I am writing to you concerning the RHNA allocation appeals that have been filed from jurisdictions in Marin and Sonoma counties: the cities of Belvedere, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Sausalito, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and Windsor, and the counties of Marin and Sonoma.

**I urge you to deny the appeals. I live in San Rafael and have fought for years for more affordable housing in San Rafael and Marin County. While San Rafael and Novato have taken some positive steps in the right direction, the County and the cities filing the current RHNA appeals have approved virtually no affordable housing in the over 25 years my wife and I have lived in Marin. This has resulted in a huge lack of diversity of populations in the County and horrific traffic during commute hours because those who work in Marin can't afford to live here. [**

Many of the jurisdictions listed above have increased tenant protections and housing affordability for the people who live and work in the jurisdiction – such as through recent ordinances, including just cause for eviction protections for renters, Covid-19 related eviction moratoriums, and source of income protections for people with rental subsidies. These are all positive actions.

However, I am concerned that the appeal of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) allocations sends a negative signal by promoting exclusion and reinforcing the segregation of low- income, disabled, and BIPOC communities.

I understand that the Executive Board of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) adopted the RHNA equity adjustment to ensure that all jurisdictions exhibiting above-average levels of racial and economic exclusion take on their fair share of low- and very-low-income RHNA units.

I support the equity adjustment because previous RHNA's have failed to allocate enough affordable housing to white, affluent jurisdictions that have a history of opposing affordable housing development in the Bay Area. The new RHNA methodology, which includes the equity adjustment, provides a meaningful opportunity for these cities and counties to address the inequitable allocations of the recent past. Keeping the adjusted allocations will allow jurisdictions to meet state legal requirements to affirmatively further fair housing in their communities.

The equity adjustment is critical to address racial segregation in the Bay Area, including in Marin and Sonoma counties. Since the Fair Housing Act of 1968 barred exclusion on the basis of race, wealthier and largely white municipalities throughout California, including in these two counties, passed exclusionary land use and zoning regulations such as large-lot zoning, prohibitions on multi-family housing, parking requirements, and more to limit the development of affordable housing and exclude low-income people of color.

Today, exclusionary zoning and community opposition in neighborhoods with well-funded schools and public amenities are major barriers to developing affordable housing. It's because of this that Marin and Sonoma counties are dramatically more segregated today than four decades ago. We need the RHNA allocations to address the impacts of our historical inequitable land use policies.

I understand the concerns expressed about fire safety, drought, and lack of developable land. However, the appeals don't argue against the need for inclusion, equity or diversity within our community, which is the basis of the equity adjustment.

When we exclude affordable homes, communities who need that affordability, particularly people of color and those with disabilities who work in the community, are forced to live elsewhere, far from their work or in overcrowded homes. Many lower-income communities of color are now facing displacement yet again as suburban expenses quickly outstrip their incomes. The equity adjustment helps increase affordability, ensuring that everyone can live in neighborhoods of their choice based on individual and family needs rather than based on historic patterns of segregation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the disparities and inequities in our region, exposing a housing system that is failing low-income people and BIPOC communities. We must all work together to ensure everyone has a choice to stay and thrive in their communities or move closer to their jobs and other needs.

I urge you to require that these jurisdictions meet their assigned regional housing needs, expand opportunities in high-resource communities, particularly for Latinx community members, and deny their appeals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Stephen Bingham*

Stephen Bingham  
