**[INSERT LETTERHEAD]**

June 26, 2024

The Honorable Nancy Skinner

Chair, Senate Housing Committee

1021 O Street, Suite 8630

Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh

Vice Chair, Senate Housing Committee

1021 O Street, Suite 7220

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SUPPORT AB 2910 (Santiago) – State Housing Law: City of Los Angeles: Conversion of Commercial Buildings**

Dear Chair Skinner and Vice Chair Ochoa Bogh:

On behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION], I am writing to **SUPPORT AB 2910 (Santiago)**, which enables the City of Los Angeles to adopt alternative building regulations to facilitate the conversion of commercial buildings to residential units.

[PERSONALIZE THE LETTER HERE; INCLUDE YOUR ORGANIZATION’S CONNECTION TO ADAPTIVE REUSE/HOUSING ISSUES]

The COVID-19 pandemic spurred a significant shift in the way people work, reducing the amount of time spent working in offices and increasing the amount of work done on hybrid or remote schedules. Property values of office buildings have declined in parallel with diminished demand for office space, which has significant implications for tax revenues that cities, counties and the state depend on to fund critical public services. Adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial properties has the potential to breathe new life into downtowns across California reversing declining tax revenues while addressing the state’s housing crisis and furthering our ambitious sustainability goals, among other important public objectives.

A UC Berkeley Terner Center for Housing Innovation report from November 2021, "Adaptive Reuse Challenges and Opportunities in California," recommends that local jurisdictions adopt ordinances that clarify building code requirements for these projects, and notes that "the state could support more adaptive reuse projects by providing technical guidance or training in inspections, as well as by making revisions to the California Existing Building Code and/or to the California Residential Code."

In a 2024 issue brief “Building and Fire Code Updates to Support Adaptive Reuse,” the Central City Association of Los Angeles (CCA) highlights that “California Health and Safety Code Section 17958.11 was enacted in 1979 to allow local jurisdictions to establish alternative standards for conversion projects that would not be allowed otherwise in a traditional change of use project. However, this law narrowly applies to joint living and work quarters…” CCA recommends that "In order to provide a foundation for alternative standards for conversions of offices to new uses, including housing and hotels, both the California Health and Safety Code and the LA City Building Code must be updated to provide expanded flexibility for a broad range of adaptive reuse projects.”

AB 2910 enables the City of Los Angeles to adopt alternative building regulations to facilitate the conversion of commercial buildings to residential uses. Before the City may adopt alternative building regulations, the City must submit their proposed regulations to the California Building Standards Commission, which may offer technical assistance or request revisions to the proposed regulations, within a specified timeframe, in order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

This bill would give Los Angeles the flexibility and nuance needed to amend their local building codes to better enable conversion projects, while ensuring the State of California has the appropriate level of oversight in the process.

For the reasons stated above, [YOUR ORGANIZATION] is pleased to **SUPPORT AB 2910 (Santiago)**.

Sincerely,

NAME

POSITION

CC: Honorable Senators and Consultants, Senate Housing Committee