

Submitter: D Torres
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1095

Chair & Committee Members,

I STRONGLY OPPOSE SB 1095.

This proposed measure is a misguided and overreaching approach that punishes homeowners, discourages investment, and sets a troubling precedent for property rights.

At its core, this bill undermines a basic principle of ownership: the right to decide how and when to use one's private property. People purchase homes for a variety of reasons—retirement, seasonal use, inheritance, long-term investment—and many of these legitimate situations could fall within the scope of this fee. Penalizing someone for not occupying their own legally owned property is an overstep of local government authority.

This measure won't just impact wealthy investors or corporations—it could harm everyday individuals who own second homes, care for properties on behalf of elderly relatives, or leave homes temporarily vacant due to personal hardship, travel, or extended illness. A blanket policy that doesn't account for these scenarios risks punishing people unfairly.

Real estate investment plays a critical role in neighborhood stability, economic growth, and housing development. The threat of a vacancy fee may discourage new investment, particularly in areas already struggling to attract property development. This could ironically reduce housing stock over time, not expand it.

Determining when a home is “vacant” can be subjective and prone to error or abuse. Does occasional occupancy count? What about part-time residents or those who rent seasonally? These gray areas open the door to bureaucratic overreach, inconsistent enforcement, and legal disputes—creating more problems than the policy intends to solve.

If the goal is to increase housing availability, let's pursue proactive, collaborative solutions: incentivize renovation of neglected properties, streamline permitting for accessory dwelling units, and support first-time homebuyers. Punitive measures like vacancy taxes are blunt instruments that fail to address root causes.

This legislation represents a short-sighted and inequitable approach to a complex

issue. I urge you to protect the rights of homeowners and avoid burdensome new regulations by voting NO on this proposal.