

Regional Housing

From: Henry Fung <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, June 19, 2019 10:25 PM
To: Regional Housing
Subject: RHNA comments for July meeting

Dear Ms. Johnson,

I have the following comments and would like to enter the recent Los Angeles Times article on the RHNA process and the decision made by the Regional Council into the record. <https://www.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-ca-housing-southern-california-rejects-state-20190618-story.html>

There will be complaints from the elected officials on the RHNA subcommittee that they were portrayed unfairly in the Times article. Due to space constraints and the need to hold the interest of the reader, a technical overview of the RHNA process was not included in the article. Nevertheless, the bottom line of the story holds, and although I am concerned about the statements by the voting Los Angeles County member regarding "Skid Row housing", the comments made at the June RHNA subcommittee meeting by the same person to sue the State Department of Housing and Community Development are more alarming.

As a taxpayer and interested community member, but not a professional planner, I am listening and learning about the RHNA process and staying engaged with my elected officials from the County of Los Angeles and my city on my opinions about the process, and am trying to understand all perspectives, even those which I don't agree with. We live in a democracy and the RHNA laws were passed by our elected officials in Sacramento and signed by a duly elected Governor. Although I disagree with staff's interpretation of the RHNA statute in the instance of calculating allocation to address overcrowding and existing need, they are outlining their rationale and, I believe, attempting to act in good faith to meet the requests HCD provided in their informal consultations. (At this stage, since SCAG's Regional Council has made their submission, I will direct any comments about the recommendation itself to HCD directly.)

A move to take legal action would be seen by many to be like those school districts which resisted integration, or sued to preserve outdated voting systems. It will be a stain on our collective history. I strongly urge the RHNA subcommittee to avoid legal action, and work with HCD to respond to the statutes as written. The time to convince lawmakers to change the law is over and we must follow the will of our State leaders, who have the challenge of address our housing crisis, and increasingly our climate crisis.

With respect to the public comment at the RHNA subcommittee, there is increasing public and municipal awareness of the process, especially for the critical areas of the RHNA methodology and distribution between income categories and social equity adjustment; as well as the subregional distribution (should delegation be chosen) and RHNA appeals. Limiting the meeting duration to two hours will not permit for robust public comment or discussion amongst the RHNA subcommittee members. This time must be lengthened.

For the RHNA methodology public hearings, how are they planned to be conducted? Will decision makers hear the voices of the municipalities and residents who are affected, or will they just speak to a hearing officer and stenographer? As I have noted in past correspondence, I certainly support the use of videoconferencing technology to enable comment at remote sites, however one hearing must be held in Los Angeles and it must be held after 6 pm on a weeknight so working people, not commenting for their day jobs, can attend. As many RHNA subcommittee members as possible should attend to hear our perspectives.

I will reserve my comments on the RHNA methodology once the draft version is finalized, but do agree with staff's proposal for a 150% social equity adjustment for projected housing need. Educational quality, access to parks, etc. should be considered to move that adjustment number, and staff should assist those who want to include this adjustment in RHNA of the appropriate metrics that might be used to measure these items. I agree with Chair Peggy Huang that measures like test scores or percentage of Title I students may not be appropriate.

Thank you for considering my comments and to the staff and elected officials who are engaging in this process.

Sincerely,
Henry Fung