February 14, 2022

The Honorable Alex Lee

Member of the California State Assembly

California State Capitol

Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Support for AB 2053 (Lee): Social Housing Act**

Dear Assemblymember Lee:

[Name of organization] is writing in strong support of AB 2053, which would introduce social housing to California. Inspired by successful models in Europe and Asia, this bill will create self-sustaining housing that will be permanently affordable to working Californians of all income levels. AB 2053 will significantly address our housing crisis by developing homes for the social benefit of all Californians, rather than for the profit of a few.

Since the Great Recession, global investors have poured billions into luxury housing in California. Many of those units sit vacant. Meanwhile, the cost of housing on the private market has skyrocketed. In 2020, a worker had to earn an hourly wage of $36.96 to afford an average 2-bedroom apartment. As a result, 41.6% of California households cannot afford their housing and pay over 30% of their household income. Many more are homeless; in fact, 27% of people experiencing homelessness in the entire United States live in California. Estimates show that in many Californian cities, the number of vacant homes exceeds the number of homeless residents.

Housing is a fundamental right. As the United Nations stated in a 2017 report, “Rather than treating housing as a commodity valued primarily as an asset for the accumulation of wealth [governments must] reclaim housing as a social good, and thus ensure the human right to a place to live in security and dignity.”

AB 2053 would define social housing as democratically owned and community-controlled housing that is universally available to working families of all incomes, permanently affordable, and forever off the speculative market. It would also help California achieve its housing goals by developing social housing units, including new construction and taking existing units off the private market.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]