



CITY OF LAGUNA NIGUEL

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CITY COUNCIL

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Council Member Stephanie Oddo
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July 3, 2025

The Honorable Lori Wilson
Chair, Assembly Committee on Transportation
1020 N Street, Suite 112
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: SB 445 (Wiener) Transportation Projects: Permitting.
Notice of OPPOSITION (As amended 6/30/2025)

Dear Chair Wilson,

The City of Laguna Niguel **opposes SB 445 (Wiener)**, which seeks to create a new state permitting scheme for local projects that ultimately introduces sweeping and problematic changes that would significantly impair local government's ability to manage public infrastructure, ensure worker and public safety, and coordinate fairly across all critical infrastructure sectors.

SB 445 proposes to drastically alter existing approval and coordination processes by imposing highly prescriptive and impractical timeframes that do not reflect the complexity of infrastructure coordination, environmental review, and public engagement necessary for responsible project delivery. Failure to meet notification and review deadlines results in automatic default decisions, potentially ignoring broader infrastructure impacts or unresolved technical issues. The process removes discretion from local agencies, handing decision-making power to the project proponent and California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) via an unknown arbitrator (whose decision is immune against any appeals process), regardless of local objections or infrastructure risks. This shift effectively sidelines cities in the planning and delivery of infrastructure projects within their own jurisdictions. The result is a near-total erosion of local control over assets we are obligated to maintain and steward on behalf of our communities.

Most concerning, the bill appears to grant project proponents — public or private — total authority to move forward with projects that could significantly alter or relocate critical infrastructure such as water, wastewater, and power systems, within the public right of way, without meaningful consultation or resolution with the affected city. This undermines essential protections for worker safety, service continuity, and environmental integrity.

While we appreciate the desire to expedite certain infrastructure projects, we cannot support legislation that sacrifices thoughtful planning, public safety, and equitable infrastructure prioritization in the name of speed. SB 445, in its current form, is unworkable and sets a dangerous precedent for undermining local authority and infrastructure integrity.

We urge you to make **SB 445 a two-year bill** and work with local governments to craft solutions that balance the need for sustainable transportation improvements with the complex realities of infrastructure coordination and community impact.

For these reasons, the City of Laguna Niguel must oppose SB 445 (Wiener). Should you have any questions about our position, please contact Kevin O'Connor, Assistant to the City Manager, at koconnor@cityoflagunaniguel.org.

Sincerely,



Ray Gennawey
Mayor

Cc: Assembly Committee on Transportation
Senator Wiener, 11th District
Laguna Niguel City Council