



March 20, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
The City of Berkeley, California

I am writing in strong support of the “Referral to Initiate a Public Process and Zoning Concepts for 2023 - 2031 Housing Element Update” item authored by Vice Mayor Droste, Mayor Arreguin, Councilmember Kesarwani and Councilmember Taplin on your 3/25 Council Agenda.

I am a professor of energy at UC Berkeley, director of the Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory, former Science Envoy for the United States Department of State, and a Coordinating Lead Author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I am also a principal of the *EcoBlock* 100% clean energy block-scale project for lower-income East Bay residents (<https://ecoblock.berkeley.edu>).

Since Council has already committed in theory to undoing exclusionary zoning, now is the time to *act* on addressing this problem by beginning a public process to reform zoning regulations. At a time of national discourse about race and equity, this is an opportunity to address inequities in Berkeley’s own zoning code. Local zoning reform can have the biggest impact on addressing issues that are important to our community such as homelessness, affordable housing, climate change, and traffic. This is an opportunity for Berkeley to be among the first group of cities to adopt zoning that can simultaneously address historical inequities and skyrocketing housing costs.

Given the state-mandated requirement for Berkeley to zone for 8,934 new homes, this referral outlines a community driven process to re-evaluate zoning throughout the City, emphasizing density in our main commercial corridors and permitting missing middle housing in our neighborhoods. Affordability, public safety, social and racial justice, design guidelines, and tenant and displacement protections are critical to any zoning changes, and they are specifically prioritized in this referral.

I have previously authored academic research<sup>1</sup> and public comment, including this recent *New York Times* piece<sup>2</sup> arguing for the social and racial justice, climate justice, and planning and municipal benefits of *accessible*, infill housing that is priced and controlled to spur in-fill, diverse neighborhoods.

I urge you to support this referral as a critical first step in addressing Berkeley’s housing needs with a comprehensive citywide strategy.

Sincerely,

Daniel Kammen  
Professor and Chair, Energy and Resources Group  
University of California, Berkeley  
Former Science Envoy, US State Department

<sup>1</sup> Christopher M. Jones, Stephen M. Wheeler, and **Daniel M Kammen** (2018) “Carbon Footprint Planning: Quantifying Local and State Mitigation Opportunities for 700 California Cities”, *Urban Planning*, **3 (2)**, 35 - 51. DOI:10.17645/up.v3i2.1218

<sup>2</sup> Scott Wiener & **Daniel M Kammen** (2019), “Why housing policy is climate policy,” *The New York Times*, March 25, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/25/opinion/california-home-prices-climate.html>