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Comment Received From: Claire Ann Warshaw
Submitted On: 2/26/2020
Docket Number: 19-ERDD-01

2020_02_26 19-ERDD-01_CEC Draft Solicitation Re-imagining Mix-Use Affordable Housing

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

RE: 19-ERDD-01 Re-Imagining Affordable Mixed-Use Housing Draft Solicitation

California Energy Commission Staff:

Please, if possible, judge submitted new mixed-used, affordable housing projects for noise and light pollution, plus excessive dirty electricity and/or electromagnetic fields.

Noise Problem Example: I live in a densely packed townhouse complex, which fronts an active 2-lane street, in Sacramento County. This provides ample vehicle noise depending on time of day. There is a 69 kV to 12 kV distribution substation across the street which operates air conditioning during the summer, providing white noise. In addition, since each townhouse is independently owned, and has backyard property, we each have our own heating and air conditioning systems. Originally, in 1984, these HVAC units were all electric heat pumps. Some owners have converted to gas due to cost and efficiency, according to one owner. (Climate change and global warming issues were not discussed when the owner told me that, although he advocated for cool roofs.) Each building has three townhouse units. I share a party wall with one neighbor; some townhouses have two party walls. Because of the tightness of this design, our HVAC units are close to our fences and in some cases, close to not only our own bedroom walls/windows, but also our neighbors.

All seemed well with this design, until owners started leaving their HVAC units on at night. This may be due to new SMART thermostats. I am not sure. This also may be due to new generations believing that constant air filtration is necessary. Whatever the case, my complex has white noise at night which sounds (to me) similar to an airport. One next door neighbor installed a larger looking, variable speed HVAC unit before he sold his townhouse. This larger HVAC is close to my master bedroom window. Now, with the new neighbor, this HVAC unit is going on commonly for long time spans in the night. It wakes me sometimes and annoys me often. Learning that new noise, I usually, not always, turn my heat pump (old style thermostat) off at night. At my age, I sweat at night frequently, with just a blanket on. I did not use to sweat much, so I understand younger neighbors may have different body climates. But even when I was younger, I was happier to have a blanket and quiet at night. I do not understand adjusting to white noise, as some seem to have done. Hearing the nearby loud HVAC unit, I imagine all the fancy new blankets that neighbor could have already gained, instead of paying more for energy bills, instead of creating more white noise and sinking more, likely dirtier, energy generation. The numbers would probably amaze all of us.

It seems multi-unit complexes, for more temperate zones of California, could be designed with attention to eliminating white noise and perhaps purposely, to use less night energy demand.

Thanks for your time and consideration of these parameters.

Sincerely,

Claire Warshaw
P. O. Box 277612, Sacramento, California 95827

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

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