



805.967.2500 | SBSCChamber.com  
Mailing Address: 5662 Calle Real #204, Goleta, CA 93117  
Visitor Center: 120 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

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August 7, 2025  
The Honorable Aisha Wahab  
Chair, Senate Housing Committee  
1021 O Street, Room 3330  
Sacramento, CA 95814

***RE: AB 736 (Wicks), as amended on April 10, 2025 (Position: Support if Amended)***

Dear Chair Wahab:

On behalf of the Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce, representing businesses across southern Santa Barbara County, I am writing to express our appreciation for the author's leadership in confronting California's housing crisis. We recognize AB 736, the Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2026, as a vital step forward. However, we respectfully urge that this measure be amended to include public higher education institutions, particularly the University of California and California State University systems, as eligible recipients of bond funding for housing.

Students across the UC system, our future workforce, face an affordability crisis. California's economic future is dependent on the ability for UC and CSU to drive economic mobility, and that means students must have affordable housing options.

Lack of affordable workforce housing is the number one challenge faced by businesses in our community, due to the significant impact it has on our local workforce. This challenge is caused by the notable challenges developers face related to cost and timelines associated with local processes, leading to a severe housing supply shortage in our region. However, our local university, UC Santa Barbara has proven to be effective at providing affordable workforce housing in our community.

Excluding higher education from the housing bond framework would be a missed opportunity at a time when California cannot afford to overlook all housing solutions. University campuses are adept at quickly building affordable housing for students, which can relieve strain on residents and communities.

If amended to include dedicated funding for student housing at public colleges and universities, it would send a clear message that California values its students as part of the solution to the housing crisis and our shared economic prosperity.

We welcome the opportunity to work with you to ensure California's housing solutions include its students.

Sincerely,

Kristen Miller  
President & CEO  
Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce