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April 16, 2025

The Honorable Sasha Renée Pérez  
Senator, California State Senate  
1021 O St., Suite 6720  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 634 (Pérez) Homelessness: civil and criminal penalties**  
**Notice of OPPOSITION** (As Amended 03/26/25)

Dear Senator Pérez,

The City of Manhattan Beach respectfully **opposes SB 634 (Pérez)**, which would prohibit local jurisdictions from adopting or enforcing ordinances to address homelessness. While we recognize the bill's intent, SB 634 would severely limit cities' ability to respond to the growing homelessness crisis in communities across California.

Cities are implementing balanced approaches that protect both the rights of individuals experiencing homelessness and the broader community's needs for clean, safe, and accessible public spaces. SB 634 hinders this progress by prohibiting local governments from adopting any regulation, policy, or guidance that imposes civil or criminal penalties on a person experiencing homelessness. By eliminating all enforcement mechanisms, SB 634 gives people the right to stand, sit, lay, sleep, or put up a tent in any public place.

The City of Manhattan Beach supports legislation and efforts that ensure public safety. However, as written, SB 634 would limit local control and the ability of cities to enforce ordinances that protect the public's welfare. It is foreseeable that having no enforcement mechanism for keeping sidewalks and alleys clear would disproportionately impact older, smaller seaside communities like Manhattan Beach and could increase the likelihood of dangerous vehicle and pedestrian encounters, as well as make it difficult to provide for the ongoing cleanup, maintenance, and sanitation of our beaches and parks. Additionally, unsheltered individuals could be disincentivized to accept housing or other supportive services if they are able to sleep in public places.

Cities have been sued by business owners for allowing encampments to block access to businesses and by disability rights advocates over encampments that have obstructed sidewalks and public spaces. Without the ability to use civil or criminal enforcement remedies, cities would face increased legal liability and more importantly, have no meaningful way to respond to urgent health and safety concerns. The City of Manhattan Beach recognizes that we must remain focused on

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connecting unhoused residents to housing and services, but cities also need basic tools to meet their legal obligations and protect public spaces.

SB 634 also directly contradicts cities' efforts to address encampments in response to the Governor's November 2024 [executive order](#). The order directed State departments and agencies to adopt policies to address homeless encampments on State properties and encouraged local governments to adopt similar policies or risk losing access to state homelessness funding. Cities want to help the state to realize our shared vision of reducing homelessness and supporting our most vulnerable residents. However, SB 634 leaves cities without any enforcement tools, hindering cities' ability to carry out the Governor's directive and jeopardizing State funding cities receive to address homelessness.

Local jurisdictions are already working within a complex and evolving legal landscape, including recent federal court decisions like *Johnson v. Grants Pass*, which clarified constitutional limits on how cities can address homelessness through enforcement actions. In response to the Grants Pass ruling, the Governor stated:

*Today's ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court provides State and local officials the **definitive authority** to implement and **enforce** policies to clear unsafe encampments from our streets. This decision removes the **legal ambiguities** that have **tied the hands** of local officials for years and **limited their ability** to deliver on common-sense measures to protect the safety and well-being of our communities.*

SB 634 directly undermines this decision by stripping local governments of the authority to tailor enforcement strategies to their unique circumstances. It also disregards the years of legal effort cities have invested to gain the clarity now provided by the Court.

The City of Manhattan Beach urges the Legislature to support policies that empower local governments to act with compassion and urgency — not tie their hands behind their backs. SB 634 does not reflect the nuanced, community-led solutions that are showing promise across the State. For these reasons, the City of Manhattan Beach must **oppose SB 634 (Pérez)**.

Sincerely,



Amy Thomas Howorth  
Mayor  
City of Manhattan Beach

Cc: City of Manhattan Beach City Council  
The Honorable State Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi  
The Honorable State Senator Ben Allen  
South Bay Cities Council of Governments  
Jeff Kiernan, League of California Cities Public Affairs Manager  
League of California Cities, [cityletters@calcities.org](mailto:cityletters@calcities.org)  
California Contract Cities Association