October 23, 2018

The Honorable Herb Wesson,
200 North Spring Street, Room 430
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Section 8/Housing Choice Vouchers, File:18-0462 (OPPOSE)

Dear Council President Wesson:

On behalf of BizFed, a grassroots alliance of more than 170 business organizations representing over 390,000 employers with nearly 4 million employees in LA County, we are writing to oppose the Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher ordinance.

We are commemorating our tenth anniversary with an initiative to lift one million people out of poverty in the next decade. According to business leaders, housing production and housing affordability are opportunities to prevent and lift people out of poverty in LA County.

BizFed believes that Los Angeles County is already a difficult and expensive place to live and work. In our most recent BizFed Pulse Poll, nearly two-thirds of business leaders said that government regulation and compliance are one of the top reasons why businesses are leaving the area.

The currently drafted ordinance is vague and leaves too much wiggle room for the city to make a voluntary Federal program mandatory for property owners which goes against property rights for property owners most of whom already keep rents low without subsidies and without cumbersome paperwork.

This ordinance will exacerbate the housing crisis. It will reduce the amount of workforce housing on the market. It does nothing to help families who are working hard to lift themselves out of poverty becase it would make housing more expensive. Nor will this ordinance increase the production of the very housing we need to build in the city. This will be another attempt to address our housing crisis without building new housing.

This policy will impact tenants and property owners negatively as the program as currently administrated is riddled in delays of payments, multiple inspections, delays for re-inspections, voluminous regulations and requirements, as well as the forced use of the Public Housing Authority’s leases rather than those used by owners.

The recently increased Linkage Fees, Quimby Fees, implementation of JJJ and possible increase in the Street Damage Restoration Fee will all increase the cost of building housing, which hurts small business and working families.
We need to work together on the many challenges facing Los Angeles. Housing production, homelessness and the modernization of our infrastructure for the 2028 Olympics are just a few of those challenges. BizFed wants to partner with you to comprehensively solve our housing crisis.

BizFed will continue to work with smart leaders like yourself to create the necessary avenues to fund and incentivize housing supply. We must curb CEQA lawsuit abuse, support high-density transit-oriented zoning, and reduce the impacts of taxes and fees to increase housing supply.

If you have any questions, please contact Jerard Wright, our policy manager on this issue, at jerard.wright@bizfed.org.

Sincerely,

Hilary Norton
BizFed Chair
Fixing Angelenos Stuck in Traffic (FAST)

David Fleming
BizFed Founding Chair

Tracy Hernandez
BizFed Founding CEO

IMPOWER, Inc.

CC: Los Angeles Councilmember Gil Cedillo
Los Angeles Councilmember Paul Krekorian
Los Angeles Councilmember Bob Blumenfield
Los Angeles Councilmember David Ryu
Los Angeles Councilmember Paul Koretz
Los Angeles Councilmember Nury Martinez
Los Angeles Councilmember Monica Rodriguez
Los Angeles Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Los Angeles Councilmember Curren Price
Los Angeles Councilmember Mike Bonin
Los Angeles Councilmember Mitch Englander
Los Angeles Councilmember Mitch O’Farrell
Los Angeles Councilmember Jose Huizar
Los Angeles Councilmember Joe Buscaino