

Housing fee didn't kill SF economy

'In response' letter to the editor to opinion piece on SD's linkage fee

5:01 p.m. Nov. 8, 2013

I am both amazed and amused that the U-T has bought the argument that the increase in the linkage fee (“workforce housing offset”) is an “assault” on the local economy (“Assault on local economy cannot stand,” Editorial, Nov. 6). What is there about San Diego’s economy that makes it so shaky it cannot withstand this meager development fee?

Since the two most expensive housing markets in the nation are San Francisco and San Diego, it seems logical to me to look to the north to measure the effect those dreaded fees have had there.

When the Affordable Housing Coalition first worked in 2003 to have the fee raised here, San Francisco had an impact fee on hotel construction of \$11.92 per square foot compared to 64 cents in San Diego. Retail construction in San Francisco paid a fee of \$13.95 per square foot, while retail development in San Diego paid 64 cents. Business interests made the same sorry argument then that the U-T made in its Nov. 6 editorial. So I have been watching for 10 years for news of the fall of San Francisco’s economy where they pay up to 22 times in impact fees compared to what we pay here.

Did I miss the story on the crumbling of San Francisco’s economy? Or am I hearing those same voices that cried that a 2 percent increase in TOT for affordable housing and public safety would kill tourism — those same voices that then imposed that 2 percent increase to promote tourism to boost the industry? How can you buy their claim?

It is way past time for the U-T and the business community to stop crying wolf and step forward and help build the broad coalition needed to address San Diego’s housing state of emergency — the most serious real threat to the stability of our city.

Richard Lawrence

Co-chair, Affordable

Housing Coalition

San Diego

© Copyright 2013 The San Diego Union-Tribune, LLC. An MLIM LLC Company. All rights reserved.