



AB 357: Student & Faculty Housing Success Act

Summary:

AB 357 proposes to exempt specific student, faculty, and staff housing developments in the Coastal Zone from the review process mandated by the Coastal Commission.

This change aims to enhance the efficiency and affordability of housing development for public colleges and qualified nonprofits.

Background:

California's Coastal Zone is a vital ecological and recreational area, extending from the coastline to roughly five miles inland.

Established by the 1976 Coastal Act, the Coastal Commission was created to oversee and regulate developments in this area to protect the coastal environment. By issuing coastal development permits and certifying Local Coastal Plans, the commission ensures that the unique needs of California's coast are met while balancing development interests.

Problem:

Since the establishment of these regulations, the Coastal Commission has imposed significant restrictions on development, contributing to a critical housing shortage along California's coast. Research from the Turner Center indicates that from 1980 to 2010, housing units in typical U.S. metropolitan areas grew by 54%, while California's Coastal Metros saw only a 32% increase despite rising population numbers. This gap has resulted in skyrocketing housing costs, making coastal living unaffordable for many Californians.

For institutions within the Coastal Zone, such as the University of California, California State University, and community colleges, the requirement for Coastal Commission approval adds lengthy review processes, increasing development costs and timelines. This

situation is particularly challenging given that a significant portion of California students faces housing insecurity. Reducing barriers to student housing development is essential to addressing these needs.

Solution:

AB 357 seeks to mitigate these challenges by exempting student housing projects initiated by public institutions of higher education or qualified nonprofits from Coastal Commission review. This legislative change would primarily impact various campuses located in the Coastal Zone, including Cuesta College, Santa Barbara City College, Pepperdine University, Point Loma Nazarene, UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego, and parts of UC Irvine and UC Santa Cruz.

By eliminating redundant environmental review processes, AB 357 aims to streamline the development of new student housing units, providing a necessary and timely response to the ongoing housing crisis facing students in California. This bill represents a step towards increasing the availability of affordable housing for those pursuing their education along the coast.

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