



AB 1449 (Alvarez) CEQA Exemption for Affordable Housing

Bill Summary

This bill will facilitate the development of affordable housing by exempting from CEQA certain 100% affordable housing projects throughout California.

Problem

Despite the well-established need, affordable and supportive housing projects face vocal opposition across the state, making these projects more difficult to site, more time-consuming to approve, and more costly to build. Current law provides numerous protections for proposed affordable and supportive housing developments seeking local approval, including many by right approvals or CEQA exemptions for certain affordable housing projects.

Unfortunately, the existing tools have many limitations and prevent access to CEQA streamlining for many 100% affordable housing developments. Examples include:

- Unit caps
- Building size caps
- Population density requirements
- Site limitations
- Subjective standards
- Broad discretion to the lead agency to not grant the exemption

100% affordable housing developments are critical to helping the state reach its climate goals and to affirmatively further fair housing. By its nature and as a result of state and local funding priorities, affordable housing is higher density and built on location efficient sites close to services and amenities its residents need. The funding programs

also prioritize housing in high resource areas, which have been shown by research to support positive economic, educational, and health outcomes to low-income families, particularly for families with children.

Solution

This bill would exempt from CEQA 100% affordable housing projects that meet location prerequisites, rigorous labor standards, and comply with specified environmental requirements. This bill balances the need of California's two most pressing issues in housing and homelessness with the environmental and labor concerns to ensure more affordable homes are built quickly for those most in need. Projects would still be required to receive local approvals.

Support

- California Housing Consortium (sponsor)
- California Housing Partnership (sponsor)
- Housing California (sponsor)

For More Information

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