



AB 989 – HOUSING ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY

This bill ensures that local governments do not actively defy or circumvent state law and improperly or unlawfully prevent the development of badly needed affordable housing.

BACKGROUND

California is experiencing a housing supply crisis, with housing demand far outstripping supply. California recently ranked 49th out of the 50 states in housing units per capita. Studies have shown that the housing crisis is driving high costs of living and further threatening sustainable economic growth in the state.

Research has also shown that cost burdened households have had to cut back on critical basic needs like food, and can be forced to take on additional debt in order to afford rent. Extremely low-income households in California have to pay at least half of their income toward housing, putting them at risk of housing instability and homelessness.

State law requires local governments to exercise their zoning power so as to meet the housing needs of residents at all income group levels and to remove arbitrary constraints that prevent the development of sufficient affordable housing.

Even when proposed housing projects conform to local zoning requirements, local officials may improperly deny projects or subject them to unreasonable conditions that make them financially infeasible.

It is often prohibitively expensive, time-consuming, and impractical to bring litigation challenging improper and unlawful decisions preventing the construction of affordable housing. For this reason, State Legislatures in Statutes in Illinois, Massachusetts, and Oregon have created alternative

means to challenge efforts to prevent the construction of affordable housing.

THIS BILL

AB 989 creates a state Housing Accountability Committee to adjudicate any violations of state housing law. This provides a quicker, less expensive, less confrontational, and more consistent alternative to administering state laws in court.

The Housing Accountability Commission would be comprised of five members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, including the Directors of Housing and Community Development and Office of Planning and Research, one member of a city council or board of supervisors, and one other member with extensive experience in the development of affordable housing.

To be eligible for an appeal to the Committee, a development must include 10% of units affordable to extremely low-income families, 20% of units affordable to low-income families, or 100% of units affordable to moderate-income families.

SUPPORT

California Apartment Association (co-sponsor)
California Housing Partnership (co-sponsor)
Abundant Housing LA
BRIDGE Housing
California Association of Realtors
California Building Industry Association
California Coalition for Rural Housing
California Housing Consortium
Housing California
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Merritt Community Capital Corporation
Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California
Sacramento Housing Alliance
Sacramento Mayor Steinberg
San Diego Housing Federation

Southern California Rental Housing Association
SV@Home Action Fund

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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