

Sample Support Letter – AB 989 (Gabriel)

Increase Affordable Housing Production Through Faster, Cheaper, And More Effective
Enforcement of the Housing Accountability Act

Please submit a support letter on letterhead here: <https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/>

Send Copy to: mstivers@chpc.net

Date

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
State Capitol, Room 4117
Sacramento, CA. 95814

RE: AB 989 - Support

Dear Assemblyman Gabriel:

[Name of Your Organization] is proud to support AB 989, your bill to increase affordable housing production through faster, cheaper, and more effective enforcement of the Housing Accountability Act (HAA).

The HAA prohibits a city or county from disapproving an affordable housing development, or imposing conditions that render it financially infeasible, unless the city or county can make one of five objective findings. While the Act creates a strong legal foundation for accountability in local land use decisions, most affordable housing developers are reluctant to go to court to challenge a city or county that violates the law due to the time, expense, and uncertainty given judges' lack of familiarity with the law. As a result of this lack of enforcement, the law is less effective than it should be.

AB 989 creates a state Housing Accountability Committee to adjudicate violations of the HAA and gives it the authority to overturn denials or conditions of approval that are not consistent with the Act. This provides a quicker, less expensive, less confrontational, and more consistent alternative to enforcing state housing laws in court. Massachusetts has a similar appeals committee authorized by Chapter 40B, which has been successful in balancing the need for affordable housing with legitimate local concerns and, ultimately, increasing the development of affordable homes. In Massachusetts, the mere existence of the appeal option has resulted in localities being more willing to work with developers to find a path forward lest the city or county lose local control.

The Legislature is rightly focused on accountability and enforcement of existing laws. AB 989 is an effective approach to apply these principles in the realm of affordable housing. Thank you for your authorship of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Your name and title