



March 14, 2023

The Honorable Assemblymember David Alvarez
California State Assembly
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Support – [AB 1287](#) – Density Bonus Law: additional density bonus and incentives or concessions: California Coastal Act of 1976.

Dear Assemblymember Alvarez,

We write on behalf of Abundant Housing LA in support of Assembly Bill 1287, which would strengthen state density bonus law by allowing additional bonus density and zoning concessions for projects that incorporate certain percentages of homes affordable to moderate income households and would ensure that density bonus law will apply in the Coastal Zone.

Abundant Housing LA is a pro-housing, nonprofit advocacy organization working to help solve Southern California's housing crisis. We support reforms to legalize more homes, make homes easier to build, increase funding for affordable housing, and protect tenants, which are all needed to make housing more affordable, improve access to jobs and transit, promote greater environmental sustainability, and advance racial and economic equity. As a community organization, in order to maintain our independence, we do not accept financial support from housing developers or their consultants.

California's [Statewide Housing Plan](#) states that about 421,000 new homes affordable to moderate income households will be needed between 2021 and 2029. Yet only about 109,000 such homes were permitted in the last eight year cycle, per the state's [General Plan Annual Progress Report Dashboard](#). Combined with the effects of California's overall housing shortage, this has led to escalating housing costs that are [pushing](#) middle-income households out of the state. State density bonus law has been limited in its ability to address this problem in part because it is trumped by the Coastal Act, which makes it harder to build mixed-income and 100% affordable developments in the Coastal Zone, which is where some of the state's most expensive neighborhoods are located, and where housing is most needed from a housing affordability perspective.

AB 1287 would help by creating a supplemental density bonus for projects that include homes affordable to moderate income households. A project must first qualify for a base density bonus, for example by making at least 24% of its homes affordable to lower-income households. Then, if the project also makes at least 5% of its homes as affordable to moderate income households, it would be entitled to an additional density bonus of 20 to 50% on top of the base density bonus

that it is already entitled to under existing law. The project would also be entitled to additional zoning concessions, which are an existing mechanism in density bonus law to ensure that local development standards aren't used to block the project or make it more expensive to build in an unreasonable way. Finally, density bonus law would be made fully applicable in the Coastal Zone.

These changes would produce several benefits. Firstly, the supplemental density bonus would create more housing opportunities for moderate income households and other households at a variety of income levels, since projects would often qualify based on including homes at deeper affordability levels and because the projects would often include market rate homes that help absorb housing demand without pushing up the price of existing housing. Secondly, exclusive coastal areas would be required to do more to open up housing opportunities to people at a variety of income levels. This is a critical component of affirmatively furthering fair housing. Californians should not be denied access to high-opportunity coastal neighborhoods because of their socioeconomic status. In a state where Black, Indigenous and other people of color disproportionately experience adverse housing outcomes, opening up coastal neighborhoods to new housing is also a racial justice issue and a means to combat de facto segregation.

For these reasons, we are proud to support AB 1287, and we offer our thanks to you for bringing this important bill forward.

Sincerely,

Leonora Camner

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