



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

March 21, 2019

Assembly Member Buffy Wicks
Room 5160
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

SUBJECT: **AB 725 (Wicks) – Notice of Opposition**
Prohibits more than 20% above moderate-income housing zoning to
be single family
In Assembly Housing Committee – Wednesday, March 27th

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

The American Planning Association, California Chapter must respectfully oppose your AB 725, which as introduced would prohibit more than 20% of a jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need for above moderate-income housing from being allocated to sites with zoning restricted to single-family development. APA appreciates meeting with your staff on this issue and understand that the bill may be amended to allow a total of 30% total of all sites to be zoned single family in suburban and metropolitan areas of the state. But this arbitrary overlay on existing local zoning that already meets the requirements of the housing element is still overly restrictive.

The major concerns are below:

1. It is not clear what this legislation is trying to address. Is it to reduce single family housing, reduce single-family only housing, or increase multifamily? APA supports encouraging a wide variety of housing types and density, but it is a struggle to find a clear cause and effect here that requires this sort of action.
2. Currently, jurisdictions already allow ADUs in single-family zones. In addition, about 40% of the sites in the jurisdiction must be zoned higher density multi-family to be affordable to lower-income housing projects. Also, the new RHNA allocations are expected to be much higher in the next few years for every city and county, which will require increased density to reach those numbers. If more high density/multifamily zoned sites are the goal, the many bills signed into law in the last few years are already steering cities and counties to higher density sites to meet those new requirements. But, this bill would require complicated overlay zones or rezonings to adopt a compliant housing element under this scheme, and completing the next cycle of elements over the coming two years will be tough enough as it is.

3. The 30% limit is arbitrary and not reflective of the variety of real estate markets in the state. In some communities, single family housing is in extremely high demand, and in others can be almost exclusively multifamily. This proposal will have completely different impacts depending on the jurisdiction and assumes that developers will limit their single-family projects. There are many cities and counties in the state that do a good job of providing low income housing – would they be exempted from this blanket mandate? What about cities and counties that have an abundance of low-income housing like the Central Valley that are drastically underserved by high-end housing and need to encourage it?

A better approach would be to require communities to analyze the demand profile for above moderate housing or identify more options for infill development, but even that deflects attention from more pressing housing issues. Instead, the state should target RHNA allocations to encourage increased housing near high quality transit and job centers and providing incentives (including more per capita subventions) for communities with housing to mitigate the real impacts of servicing residential development. Instead, this one-size-fits-all approach appears to be arbitrarily determined without research to identify how communities throughout California will be affected by this change.

If you have any questions, please contact our lobbyist, Sande George, with Stefan/George Associates, sgeorge@stefangeorge.com, 916-443-5301.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Phillips
Vice President, Policy and Legislation - APA California

cc: Governor's Office
Assembly Housing Committee
OPR
Republican Caucus