



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

May 7, 2020

Assembly Member Laura Friedman
State Capitol, Room 2137
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Member David Chiu
State Capitol, Room 4112
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: **Support for AB 2323 (Friedman/Chiu) - Streamlining of Existing CEQA Exemptions**

Dear Assembly Member Friedman and Chiu:

The American Planning Association, California Chapter (APA California) is pleased to support your bill, AB 2323. AB 2323 will make a number of updates to existing California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining provisions for housing projects in order to make the various exemptions more consistent and workable.

As California continues to face an unprecedented housing crisis, compounded by the recent and ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, APA California supports efforts to streamline and encourage housing development, and target CEQA exemptions for housing development, which can be part of the array of tools needed to help boost housing production. Over the years, a number of statutory exemptions have been enacted for projects that meet specific criteria. Existing law includes at least 10 distinct exemptions from CEQA for housing projects, however, because these exemptions typically have a range of specific requirements that must first be met to qualify for streamlining benefits, it can be hard to identify projects that qualify. Moreover, many exemptions incorporate subjective standards or use terms that conflict with each other, further causing confusion about their applicability. Accordingly, these exemptions often go underutilized.

Given challenges and inconsistencies with the various existing streamlining options, APA California appreciates your interest in making these exemptions more consistent and workable to encourage types of developments that are supportive of California's environmental policies. We appreciate the time your staff has spent to work with stakeholders, including APA California, and look forward to continuing that process as the bill moves. We understand further amendments are forthcoming and are supportive of the direction the bill is moving in. If you have any questions, please contact Lauren De Valencia, Stefan/George Associates, APA California's lobbyist, at 443-5301, lauren@stefangeorge.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Eric Phillips'.

Eric Phillips
Vice President Policy and Legislation
APA California

cc: Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Assembly Republican Caucus
The Governor
The Office of Planning and Research