



American Planning Association  
**California Chapter**

*Creating Great Communities*

May 5, 2021

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel  
Assembly Member, California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 4117  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SUBJECT: Neutral as Amended for AB 989 (Gabriel) New Housing Development Appeals Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Gabriel:

The American Planning Association, California Chapter (APA California) is pleased to remove opposition to your bill, AB 989, which would create a new Housing Accountability Committee (HAC) within the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), comprised now of eight members appointed by the Governor, to receive appeals from applicants when a local government denies multifamily housing projects of ten units or more, emergency shelters, or approves the development subject to conditions that the applicant's judgment render the project economically infeasible.

APA California appreciates the time your office took to discuss our concerns, which have been addressed with the recent amendments in print on May 3. Our concerns centered around the procedural process outlined in the bill. And while we appreciate the view that it is unlikely cities and counties that follow state housing laws would not find themselves before such Committee, we want to ensure that there are balanced interests and a fair process for all parties involved, should such a situation arise. While it isn't entirely clear how frequently the new Committee would be utilized and how successful this approach may be in California, we believe the amendments made to the bill will provide for a more workable path forward. While we do not have a position on the establishment of a new appeals process, planners understand the importance of approving housing that is consistent with applicable development standards. That is why our organization continues to support a number of important housing related bills related to zoning reform, streamlining and funding to encourage a variety of tools to tackle this challenging crisis.

With the amendments made to the bill, we are pleased to move to a neutral position and would like to again thank you for your consideration of APA California's concerns. If you have any questions, please contact Lauren De Valencia, [lauren@stefangeorge.com](mailto:lauren@stefangeorge.com), APA California's lobbyist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Eric Phillips' with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric Phillips  
Vice President Policy and Legislation  
APA California

cc: The Governor  
The Office of Planning and Research  
The Department of Housing and Community Development