



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

March 7, 2024

Senate President Pro Tempore Mike McGuire
1021 O Street, Ste. 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Budget Chair Jesse Gabriel
1021 O Street, Ste. 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas
1021 O Street, Ste. 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senate Budget Chair Scott Wiener
1021 O Street, Ste. 8620
Sacramento, CA 95818

Re: 2024-25 Budget Proposal on Regional Early Action (REAP) Grants Recission

Dear Senate President Pro Tempore McGuire, Assembly Speaker Rivas, Assembly Budget Chair Gabriel, and Senate Budget Chair Wiener:

The American Planning Association, California Chapter urge the Legislature to protect the Regional Early Action Planning Grants of 2021 (REAP 2.0) and other housing programs funded through the budget that are assisting local governments in critical work to address California's affordable housing crisis. As budget hearings and negotiations continue, we urge you to reject proposed cuts and delays to several important housing related programs, including the \$300 million reversion of the REAP 2.0 grants included in Governor Newsom's 2024-2025 January Budget proposal.

APA California is a non-profit organization made up of practicing planners, citizens and public officials committed to advancing the practice of local, regional, and statewide planning throughout urban, suburban, and rural California. As adopted in APA California's Legislative Platform, *Plan California*, our organization is supportive of efforts that provide local resources to plan for and fund affordable housing and infrastructure in communities throughout the state.

While we understand the immense challenges the Legislature faces given the current budget deficit, now more than ever we need to invest in the critical work communities are undertaking across the state to accelerate housing production while reducing vehicle miles traveled. While the Legislature continues to prioritize policy changes to provide climate smart housing opportunities, jurisdictions cannot successfully plan without resources to do so. Planners are working hard to update housing elements and related zoning ordinances, in addition to trying to keep pace with the level and scale of new planning-related laws that are passed year over year. Many jurisdictions simply lack resources, both in terms of funding and capacity, to implement new programs and plans as mandated by the state. Proposed REAP 2.0 cuts will only further exacerbate this challenge.

Addressing the housing crisis and preparing for more resilient communities is a shared goal and something that planners are working hard to do. But they need tools and resources to help the Legislature achieve the outcomes that everyone desires. Communities are depending on this critical funding and APA California members have shared numerous examples of planning efforts that would be left unfunded if the REAP 2.0 grants were to be cut as proposed. These types of efforts would produce the results the state needs and the Legislature wants to see, yet they hang in the balance as potential cuts loom. Additionally, proposed cuts to the Multifamily Housing Program, the Infill Infrastructure Grants Program, CalHome and other important affordable housing programs will only create more challenges in addressing our housing crisis. These programs, in addition to prioritizing an affordable housing bond (AB 1657, Wicks) for the November 2024 ballot, are all pieces of the puzzle that are necessary to match the scale of the crisis California continues to face.

We look forward to working with you on this issue and if you have any questions, please contact our lobbyist, Lauren De Valencia, with Stefan/George Associates at lauren@stefangeorge.com.

Sincerely,

Erik de Kok, AICP
Vice President Policy and Legislation
APA California

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