



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

May 2, 2025

The Honorable Diane Papan
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Room 4220
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 650 (Papan) Housing Element: Regional Housing Needs Allocation – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Papan:

The American Planning Association, California Chapter (APA California) is pleased to support your AB 650, which would allow local governments to begin the housing element update process earlier, provide greater certainty and generally reduce ambiguity in the housing element review process.

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 minimize constraints to housing production, including state constraints.

The housing element is an important part of how local governments plan for housing in their community. However, updating the housing element has grown to be incredibly complex, particularly after changes were made to the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation and other new laws that impacted the 6th cycle update. Many planners have identified challenges that can inform legislative changes to make the 7th cycle, which is quickly approaching, more efficient. Some of the challenges include truncated timelines, responding to HCD's feedback, a lack of clarity regarding what is expected from local governments when reviewing additional housing element drafts, and the introduction of new requirements late in the housing element review process due to new legislative mandates.

AB 650 would address these issues by allowing local governments to begin updating the housing element earlier in the process and would require HCD to provide specificity on what must be included to remedy any deficiencies, ensuring that local governments are not penalized when HCD identifies additional deficiencies not previously included in prior review letters. Overall, the bill would provide greater clarity and certainty to planners as they embark on the next housing element update to ensure that jurisdictions are able to adopt a certified housing element on time.

For all the reasons listed above, we are pleased to support AB 650 and we appreciate your efforts on this important issue. If you have any questions, please contact our lobbyist, Lauren De Valencia, with Stefan/George Associates at lauren@stefangeorge.com.

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cc: The Governor's Office
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