



Senator Scott Wiener, 11th Senate District

Senate Bill 10 – Local Control for Increased Housing Density

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 10 allows local governments a streamlined path to zone infill neighborhoods for light touch, missing middle density — up to ten units per parcel — if they choose.

PROBLEM

California has descended into a suffocating housing crisis that has only been worsened by COVID-19 and its economic impacts. The state's lack of affordable housing has contributed to mass migration out of the state, skyrocketing eviction rates, record levels of chronic homelessness, and a growing class of lower-income supercommuters unable to afford or access housing within several hours of their jobs.

In addition to these crises, many California neighborhoods remain racially segregated, as the density that cities plan for is often concentrated in low-income communities of color, especially those with poor air quality. This leads to deep health and educational inequities, as well as an extreme gap in access to resources, and increased displacement pressures in these vulnerable areas.

Many local governments in California are motivated independently to increase density in neighborhoods, and others are required by state law to do this as part of their Housing Element. These actions will have the effect of integrating communities across racial and socioeconomic lines, alleviating pressure on our housing supply, and creating dignified and abundant housing opportunities for young families, multigenerational households, and seniors who wish to age in place.

However, various state and local laws make it extremely difficult to do these common-sense rezonings quickly – even very mild efforts are often mired in expensive, decades-long legal appeals and litigation.

SOLUTION

SB 10 is a simple bill that authorizes local governments to rezone neighborhoods for increased

housing density, up to ten homes per parcel, if they choose to. This authorization will require that a legislative body pass a resolution to adopt the plan, and exempts that zoning action from being considered a project under the California Environmental Quality Act. To be eligible for this local action, an area must be urban infill, consistent with the definition used in Senate Bill 35 (2017), or be near high quality public transportation or a job-rich area. When the local government passes this resolution, it can choose whether the individual projects will be ministerial/by right or subject to discretionary approval.

SB 10 is a powerful tool for local governments to create a path to adding modest density to address California's housing shortage, preserves significant local control for local jurisdictions, and makes it faster, less expensive, and less risky for a city to undertake a community process to increase density in our neighborhoods.

SUPPORT

- California YIMBY (Sponsor)
- Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)
- Los Angeles Business Council
- Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA)
- Silicon Valley Leadership Group
- YIMBY Action

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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