

February 24, 2021

The Honorable Scott Wiener
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Support – SB 477 – Housing Data Collection.

Dear Senator Scott Wiener,

I write on behalf of California YIMBY to sponsor and support SB 477, which will require the state's Department of Housing and Community Development to collect information from local governments about when state housing programs are used to support housing.

California YIMBY is a statewide organization of 80,000 neighbors who welcome more neighbors. We believe that an equitable California begins with abundant, secure, affordable housing. We focus on housing and land use policy at the state and local level to ensure grassroots organizers and city leaders have the tools they need to accelerate home building, fight displacement, and fight for a California for everyone.

California has adopted several laws to help the state resolve its historic 3.5-million-home shortage, including Accessory Dwelling Unit law, Density Bonus Law, and laws to streamline the process for getting housing approved. These laws are important, but advocates, researchers, and legislators struggle to quantify exactly how effective they are.

For example, a report from the Controller of LA found a very small amount of housing was built under the density bonus law, and that the program "has not lived up to its potential".¹ To improve Density Bonus Law and build more affordable housing, it is important to understand whether this is the case in other cities.

By passing SB 477, the Legislature will be able to tell when and where these laws are helpful. Knowing where these laws are building housing is important to understanding if these laws are advancing or reversing racial segregation in California; an important co-benefit of eliminating our housing shortage can and should be eliminating our legacy of racial segregation. But currently, we lack statewide data on if these laws are doing that.

SB 477 will resolve this data gap by requiring more information on California's existing Annual Progress Report, which local governments send to the state every April 1st to demonstrate their progress towards meeting their Regional Housing Needs Assessments. SB 477 helps advance our progress towards ending the housing crisis by measuring the efficacy of state laws, allowing the Legislature to make informed decisions about the future of those laws, such as how to improve them. For this reason, California YIMBY is pleased to offer our support to SB 477. We urge your colleagues to support this important measure.

Best wishes,



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¹ https://lacontroller.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/R17_10_DensityBonus.pdf