



Fact Sheet: AB 68

The Housing and Climate Solutions Act

PROPOSED BILL

Assembly Bill (AB) 68 seeks to address California's climate and ongoing housing crises by making it easier to build multifamily housing in key locations, while preserving environmentally sensitive areas that are crucial to fighting climate change.

Specifically, AB 68 would:

- Require ministerial approval of infill multifamily units in walkable, transit-accessible, and low-vehicle miles traveled (VMT) neighborhoods that are close to services and under specified conditions.
- Preserve natural and working landscapes outside of existing communities that are critical for climate resilience, storing carbon, and keeping people out of harm's way.

BACKGROUND

California has failed to build enough housing in existing communities near jobs, transit, and schools. Instead, regions have favored development of remote locations, forcing Californians into long commutes to find housing they can afford. This increases vehicle miles traveled and carbon emissions, permanently damages nature and the habitats, and puts more families in areas that are increasingly in the path of catastrophic wildfires, flooding, and other climate-related disasters.

The state can no longer ignore that land use reforms are needed to tackle both climate and housing shortcomings, or more people will suffer the consequences.

Climate change has the most significant effect on communities of color. According to the Legislative Analyst's Office in a 2022 report, low income households and communities of color are expected to bear a disproportionate burden of these climate impacts, including a 50% greater risk to the long-term destructive effects of wildfire.

To meet the challenges that climate change poses, our state must increase our focus on where and how new housing is built. Using density effectively can lead to more efficient development, protect nature, and mitigate the future consequences of climate change. In 2021, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report stating one of the most effective ways to cut carbon emissions of cities was to stop the expansion of urban sprawl by promoting infill housing, which reduces car dependence, is more energy and water efficient, and keeps habitats and ecosystems intact to clean air and water, protect wildlife, and store carbon. Housing production and climate change are intrinsically linked, and our policies must change to reflect this relationship.

SOLUTION

AB 68 ensures development occurs in a fair and environmentally responsible manner and maximizes buildable land by ensuring local governments build housing in the areas they have already prioritized in their Sustainable Communities Strategies plans and by fast-tracking approval of more naturally affordable multi-family housing in high opportunity neighborhoods located in Climate Smart Parcels.

Climate Smart Parcels are areas that meet the following standards:

- Located in the highest, high, and moderate resource area under Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) opportunity maps.
- Located within one-half mile from transit; is located in a very low vehicle travel area; or
- Within a mile walking distance of resources such as parks, grocery stores, and small businesses.

AB 68 seeks to improve residential infill development by requiring ministerial approvals and directing more affordable housing near amenities and services that sustain rich, vibrant, communities. Local governments can develop parcels outside of existing communities when they can demonstrate that there is no other way of meeting their housing goals, or subject parcels have existing rights for development.

Rethinking how we build communities is only one part of the process; it is also essential that we protect natural and working lands that are critical to climate resilience, and human health as they have been increasingly deteriorating or disappearing. Concentrating growth in already developed areas before we expand further into natural and working lands is how our state will improve air and water quality, public health and safety, and other benefits — all of which are essential to ensure Californians' well-being.

Coordinated action is needed to ensure the state tackles both climate change challenges and its housing crisis. It is time to empower the plans local governments have completed under Senate Bill 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008), and focus housing growth in environmentally smart locations. Local governments can then direct their increased housing away from lands most critical for climate resilience and towards areas that

provide shorter commutes; more equal access to jobs, schools, parks and other resources; less risk of fire or flooding; and healthier lifestyles.

SUPPORT

California YIMBY (Co-Sponsor)
The Nature Conservancy (Co-Sponsor)
Endangered Habitats League
New Way Homes
LISC San Diego

OPPOSITION

None at this time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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