PLEASE ADD YOUR LOGO

DATE, 2023

The Honorable Buffy Wicks

California State Assembly

1021 O Street, Suite 4240

Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 68 (Ward) - Housing and Climate Solutions Act - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Wicks,

On behalf of [Organization Name], we write in support of AB 68, which will help alleviate California’s housing crisis and reduce climate change risk by streamlining approvals and increasing the number of homes near jobs, schools, parks, transit, and other resources, while reducing sprawl into natural and working lands.

[Optional: A few sentences about your organization and why you specifically support AB 68]

California needs to build at least 2.5 million new housing units by 2030 to meet our needs–a target impossible to achieve at our current rate of around 100,000 new units per year. The shortage of available housing has caused rental prices to skyrocket throughout the state, put homeownership out of reach for the majority of Californians, and contributed to rising homelessness. [More than half](https://www.ocregister.com/2022/11/28/qa-the-few-state-lawmakers-who-are-renters-form-new-caucus-to-advocate-for-tenants/) of California renters are rent-burdened, meaning they spend at least 30% of their income on rent.

Our housing shortage is fueled by local policies that stop smaller, more naturally affordable homes from being built in many communities near jobs, schools, parks, transit, and other critical resources. This disproportionately impacts communities of color and lower-income Californians who are increasingly forced into long commutes to find housing they can afford.

As a result of policies that push new housing growth into remote areas, we have [increasingly](https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-05-16/california-properties-at-risk-of-wildfire-expected-to-grow) put people in the path of catastrophic [wildfires](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/09/09/climate/growing-wildfire-risk-homes.html), [flooding](https://www.ppic.org/publication/floods-in-california/), and other climate-related disasters. Now, more than a quarter of Californians live in areas at [high risk of wildfire](https://www.next10.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Next10-Rebuilding-Resilient-Final.pdf?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20210910&utm_term=5748061&utm_campaign=money&utm_id=4558538&orgid=554&utm_att1=money). These housing bans also lead to more pollution from cars, since residents must drive further from their homes to get to work, go to the grocery store, or take their children to school.

The Housing and Climate Solutions Act (AB 68) will make it faster and easier to build more homes near jobs, schools, transit, and other resources, addressing the housing shortage and bringing down costs while helping to keep Californians out of areas at high risk of fires and floods.

AB 68 will put more homes and more people in the areas they want to live. The bill builds on the planning local governments have already done to identify priority locations for new infill housing through their Sustainable Communities Strategies. It also provides streamlined, fast-tracked approval for multi-family housing – which is often more affordable and accessible for lower- and middle-income Californians and communities of color – in walkable neighborhoods. Critical tenant protections are included to ensure that new development does not remove low-income or rent-controlled housing.

AB 68 ensures that local governments plan more sustainably by focusing development in climate-safe existing communities and away from areas more susceptible to wildfires, floods, and other climate-driven disasters. Legalizing more homes in climate-safe areas will not only keep more Californians out of harm's way, it will reduce climate pollution from long car commutes, protect valuable natural and working lands, and create more equitable, sustainable, and affordable housing for everyone.

It is for these reasons that [organization name] is proud to support AB 68 (Ward).

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Insert Your Full Name]

[Insert Your Title]

[Insert Your Organization’s Name]