

# Assembly Bill 1206 – Pre-Approved Housing Plans

## Assemblymember John Harabedian

### Bill Summary

AB 1206 streamlines the approval process for single-family and multifamily housing by requiring local agencies to establish pre-approved housing plan programs. This legislation is a transformative measure for Californians facing an ongoing housing crisis and for those working to rebuild in the aftermath of disasters like the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires.

### Background

California's housing crisis remains one of the state's most pressing challenges, compounded by increasing natural disasters. The Eaton and Palisades Fires of 2025 destroyed over 16,240 structures, leaving thousands of families displaced. The economic toll was devastating, with total property damage and economic losses estimated between \$250 billion and \$275 billion (CalMatters). These fires further exacerbated the state's long-standing housing shortage, where only 15% of households can afford the median-priced single-family home (CalMatters).

Even before the recent disasters, California struggled with a severe housing deficit, with an estimated shortfall of 2.5 million homes. Bureaucratic barriers, lengthy approval timelines, and inconsistent permitting processes across jurisdictions have hindered the development of new housing. As wildfires and other natural disasters continue to displace thousands of residents each year, the need for a faster, more efficient housing approval process has never been more urgent. The state's recovery efforts depend on a system that allows for rapid rebuilding without unnecessary delays, ensuring affected communities can regain stability.

Under current law, cities and counties regulate land use through zoning ordinances and general plans, overseeing the approval process for new developments. However, these regulatory frameworks often contribute to excessive permitting delays, preventing communities from rebuilding efficiently.

### Problem

The current approval processes for new developments are often slow, bureaucratic, and inconsistent across jurisdictions, creating significant barriers to both rebuilding efforts and new construction. Homeowners and developers navigating these complex regulations face unpredictable timelines, with some projects stalled for months or even years due to local permitting bottlenecks.

Recognizing the need for greater efficiency, the state has already mandated that local agencies establish pre-approved accessory dwelling unit (ADU) programs by January 1, 2025. These programs allow specific ADU designs to receive pre-approval, expediting the permitting process and reducing administrative delays. While this approach has successfully improved housing production at a small scale, it does not go far enough to address the state's broader housing crisis or support disaster recovery.

### Solution

AB 1206 builds on this proven strategy by expanding pre-approved housing plans beyond ADUs to include single-family and multifamily housing. By requiring local agencies to adopt these programs by January 1, 2026, the bill ensures faster, standardized approvals, enabling communities to rebuild efficiently and increasing the overall housing supply.

Additionally, the bill will:

- Require agencies to post pre-approved plans and applicant contact information online.
- Require fast-tracked approval (within 30 days) for housing applications using a pre-approved plan.
- Ensure the process is non-discretionary, eliminating subjective review.
- Apply statewide to create uniformity across jurisdictions.

AB 1206 will reduce permitting delays, standardize approvals, and support California's long-term

housing needs while providing immediate relief to communities recovering from disaster.

### **For More Information**

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