



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

2000 MAIN STREET, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA 92648-2702

GRACEY VAN DER MARK MAYOR

July 3, 2024

Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7620
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2597 (Ward) Planning and zoning: revision of housing element: regional housing need allocation appeals: Southern California Association of Governments

Dear Senator Caballero,

The City of Huntington Beach respectfully opposes AB 2597.

AB 2597 will erode the ability for jurisdictions to exercise local control while bolstering HCD's flawed regional housing determination.

This bill purports that Department of Housing and Community Development can implement a regional housing needs assessment process with enhanced unsupported discretionary, arbitrary, and gratuitous allocations of housing units at the cost of existing neighborhoods, open spaces, and the business community. Moreover, this bill strips these jurisdictions of their ability to appeal flawed housing allocations.

For these reasons the City of Huntington Beach opposes AB 2597.

Sincerely,

Gracey Van Der Mark
Mayor

Cc: Assembly Member Christopher Ward
Senator Janet Nguyen
Assembly Member Diane Dixon

Date of Hearing: May 8, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2597 (Ward) – As Amended April 1, 2024

Policy Committee:	Housing and Community Development	Vote:	9 - 0
	Local Government		9 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill revises the housing element statutory adoption deadlines, for the seventh and subsequent housing element cycles, for local governments within the regional jurisdiction of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), except for the County of Los Angeles and all local governments within the County of Los Angeles.

Specifically, this bill:

Provides that each local government within the regional jurisdiction of SCAG and that has a compliant housing element as of the adoption of the second regional transportation plan (RTP) update, as specified, excluding the County of Los Angeles and all local governments within the County of Los Angeles, must adopt a housing element 30 months after the adoption of every second RTP update for the seventh revision and subsequent revisions of the housing element, or as otherwise provided in law.

FISCAL EFFECT:

The Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) indicates this bill has no fiscal impact to the department.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

[This bill] is a good government measure intended to help local governments, interested stakeholders, and HCD have more capacity and time to produce, edit, and review the close to 200 housing elements that are simultaneously due on each housing element cycle for jurisdictions within the Southern California Association of Governments. The bill does this by creating two ‘phases’ of housing element due dates for SCAG – so that the workload spike is much more manageable for all parties and good quality housing elements can be drafted, reviewed by HCD, and adopted with less strain in the future.

2) **Background.** Existing law requires each city and county’s legislative body to adopt a general plan for land use within its jurisdiction. Each general plan must include a housing element detailing existing housing conditions within the jurisdiction, the need for new housing and the strategy the jurisdiction will use to address that need. Local governments must adopt a

new housing element every eight years, although some rural jurisdictions must do so every five years.

Among other things, the housing element must demonstrate how the community plans to accommodate its share of its region's housing needs allocation (RHNA), a figure determined by HCD through a demographic analysis of housing needs and population projections. HCD establishes each council of government's (COG's) regional housing targets across the state for the next five- or eight-year planning cycle. Each COG then sub-allocates the RHNA to each local government within the COG's jurisdiction, and in turn each jurisdiction uses its housing element to show how it will accommodate that number of new housing units.

Housing element adoption dates are staggered across the state depending on certain timelines for each COG. SCAG is by far the largest COG in the state, encompassing six counties – Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura – and 191 cities in an area covering more than 38,000 square miles.

According to the author, when 197 jurisdictions simultaneously submit a draft housing element roughly 90 days prior to the same due date, HCD faces a tremendous workload “spike” to timely review and deliver written feedback by its own 90-day deadlines.

This bill smooths this workload spike by creating two housing element adoption due dates for SCAG jurisdictions in future cycles: Los Angeles County and jurisdictions within Los Angeles County remain on the current 18-month adoption period (effectively one year after RHNA suballocations are assigned), while all other jurisdictions in SCAG have 30 months after the second RTP (effectively two years after RHNA suballocations are assigned) to adopt a compliant housing element. A jurisdiction outside of Los Angeles County that does not have a compliant housing element as of the adoption of the second RTP instead remains on the 18-month cycle.

Analysis Prepared by: Jennifer Swenson / APPR. / (916) 319-2081