

April 4, 2023

The Honorable David Alvarez
California State Assembly
1021 N Street, Suite 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1449 (Alvarez) Affordable Housing CEQA Exemption – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Alvarez,

On behalf of MidPen Housing Corporation, we write in support of Assembly Bill 1449, your bill to facilitate the development of affordable housing by exempting from CEQA certain 100% affordable housing projects throughout California.

MidPen Housing is one of the nation’s leading nonprofit developers, owners, and managers of high-quality, affordable housing and onsite resident services. Since MidPen was founded in 1970, we have developed over 125 communities and 8,500 homes for low-income families, seniors and those with supportive housing needs throughout Northern California.

The pandemic has shown us all the essential role affordable housing plays in every California community — providing shelter, support, and community to some of the state’s most vulnerable populations, from seniors and veterans to teachers, firefighters, and many other hard-working families. California currently has a gap of 1.2 million homes affordable to lower-income households and on any given night, roughly 160,000 people in California experience homelessness. While the state has taken significant steps in recent years to address the housing and homelessness crises, there is much more to be done to make housing more accessible and affordable to lower-income Californians in every community.

Despite the well-established need, affordable and supportive housing projects face vocal opposition across the state, making these projects more difficult to site, more time-consuming to approve, and more costly to build. Current law provides numerous protections for proposed affordable and supportive housing developments seeking local approval, including many by right approvals or CEQA exemptions for certain affordable housing projects.

Unfortunately, the existing tools have many limitations and prevent access to CEQA streamlining for many 100% affordable housing developments. These developments are critical to helping the state reach its climate goals and to affirmatively further fair housing. By its nature and as a result of state and local funding priorities, affordable housing is higher density and built on location efficient sites close to services and amenities its residents need. The funding programs also prioritize housing in high resource areas, which have been shown by research to support positive economic, educational, and health outcomes to low-income families, particularly for families with children.



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HOUSING

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AB 1449 would exempt from CEQA 100% affordable housing projects that meet rigorous labor standards and comply with specified environmental requirements. This bill balances the need of California's two most pressing issues in housing and homelessness with the environmental and labor concerns to ensure more affordable homes are built quickly for those most in need.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Matthew O. Franklin
President and CEO
MidPen Housing Corporation

cc:

Nevada V. Merriman, Director of Policy, MidPen Housing
Senator Mike McGuire
Senator Bill Dodd
Senator Susan Eggman
Senator Steve Glazer
Senator Nancy Skinner
Senator Aisha Wahab
Senator Josh Becker
Senator Dave Cortese
Senator John Laird
Senator Alex Padilla
Senator Diane Feinstein
Assemblymember Jim Wood
Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
Assemblymember Lori Wilson
Assemblymember Damon Connolly
Assemblymember Phil Ting
Assemblymember Matt Haney
Assemblymember Mia Bonta
Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Assemblymember Liz Ortega
Assemblymember Diane Papan
Assemblymember Marc Berman
Assemblymember Alex Lee



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Assemblymember Evan Low
Assemblymember Ash Kalra
Assemblymember Gail Pellerin
Assemblymember Robert Rivas
Assemblymember Dawn Addis