



April 12, 2017

The Honorable Evan Low
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 4126
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT AB 1397 (Low)

Dear Assemblyman Low:

The California Housing Consortium (CHC) is pleased to support AB 1397, which would strengthen state Housing Element Law by ensuring that the inventories of land provided by local governments is actually suitable for residential development.

CHC is a non-partisan advocate for the production and preservation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income Californians. We represent the development, building, financial, and public sectors united in their goal that every Californian has a safe, affordable place to call home.

California families are facing a harder time finding a place to live than at any point in our history. California's broken and backward housing policies have contributed to the worsening crisis:

- A decade of disinvestment has starved local communities of the seed dollars they need to bring affordable homes to struggling neighborhoods. A new report from the state's own Department of Housing and Community Development finds "unstable funding for affordable-home development is impeding our ability to meet California's housing needs, particularly for lower-income households."
- California spends \$300 million in tax dollars every year to subsidize purchases of second homes for some Californians when millions more struggle to have a roof over their head at all.
- Existing laws that require local governments to plan to accommodate jobs and growth haven't resulted in the promised affordable development.

AB 1397 ensures that vacant sites included in a local government's Housing Element have a realistic and demonstrated potential for redevelopment in order to be counted toward accommodating a portion of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. In addition, parcels included in the inventory must have sufficient

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water, sewer and dry utilities sufficient to support housing development or be included in a program to secure such services, and such services must be available within three years if the site is counted as part of the accommodation for low- and very low-income units. More strict methodologies are also included for sites that may be available for housing, but not specifically zoned for housing.

AB 1397 comes at a crucial time for California, when state housing investment has plummeted by 69% in the last decade, worsening the unprecedented housing affordability crisis in our state. Today, more than 1.7 million Californians are paying more than half their income in rent – leaving too few dollars for nutrition, medicine, transportation, and other fundamentals.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue and your ongoing commitment to ensuring the availability of housing affordable to all Californians. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact our Policy Director, Marina Wiant, at (916) 272-2325 or mwiant@calhsng.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Pearl". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "P".

Ray Pearl
Executive Director

CC: Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development