

April 24, 2025

The Honorable Diane Papan
Member, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 4220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 650 (Papan) Planning and Zoning: Housing Element: Regional Housing Needs Allocation.

Notice of SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Papan,

The City of Hawthorne is pleased to support your measure AB 650, which will allow local governments to begin the housing element update process six months early, provide greater certainty and reduce ambiguity in the housing element review process, and ensure that local governments have adequate time to respond to the California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) review letters.

Since 1969, California's local governments have planned and selected sites for housing at all income levels through the housing element portion of a local government's general plan. Every eight years, local governments are required to adopt a blueprint outlining where developers can or cannot build residential developments within their respective communities and obtain certification from HCD. Local governments plan for their fair share of housing development as determined through the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process. As part of this complex process, local governments submit in their housing elements a variety of essential data, actions, and programs to promote fair, equitable, and affordable housing in their community.

During the 6th RHNA cycle, local governments experienced various challenges in obtaining certification from HCD. Some of the challenges include a short timeline for completing these complex documents and responding to HCD's feedback, a lack of clarity regarding what the state expects from local governments when reviewing additional housing element drafts, and the introduction of new requirements late in the housing element review process.

AB 650 would address these issues by allowing local governments to begin updating their housing element six months early. The bill also requires HCD to provide specific text and analysis that must be included in the housing element to remedy deficiencies,

ensuring that local governments are not penalized when HCD identifies additional deficiencies not previously identified in prior reviews.

Additionally, a longer and more certain review process for housing elements will allow cities like Hawthorne greater opportunity to explore options that are aligned with state housing objectives but also reflect this community's values, build on local knowledge that HCD often lacks, and restores a certain degree of local control. For these reasons, the City of Hawthorne is pleased to support your measure AB 650.

Sincerely,

Alex Vargas
Mayor

Alex Monteiro
Mayor Pro Tem

Faye Johnson
Councilmember

Katrina Manning
Councilmember

Angie Reyes English
Councilmember

cc. The Honorable Laura Richardson, Senator
The Honorable Tina McKinnor
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