
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2296
Author: Papan (D)
Amended: 6/29/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE HOUSING COMMITTEE: 10-0, 6/24/26

AYES: Arreguín, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0, 5/27/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Planning and zoning: housing element: regional housing needs allocation

SOURCE: League of California Cities

DIGEST: This bill extends a number of timelines in the process of regional housing needs determination (RHND), regional housing needs allocation (RHNA), and housing element revision.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Provides that each community's fair share of housing be determined through the RHND and the subsequent RHNA plan for the region. Establishes the RHND/RHNA process as follows:
 - a) Department of Finance (DOF) and the department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) develop regional housing needs estimates;
 - b) Councils of Government (COGs) allocate housing within each region based on these determinations, and where a COG does not exist, HCD conducts the allocations; and

- c) cities and counties incorporate these allocations into their housing elements.
- 2) Requires HCD, in consultation with each COG, to determine the RHND for each region using population projections produced by DOF and regional population forecasts used in preparing Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) updates, in consultation with each COG.
 - 3) Requires HCD, at least 26 months prior to the housing element adoption deadline for the region and prior to developing the existing and projected housing need for a region, to meet and consult with the COG regarding the assumptions and methodology to be used by HCD to develop the RHND. Requires the COG to provide data assumptions from their projections, as specified.
 - 4) Requires HCD, after consultation with the COG, to make a determination of the region's existing and projected housing need based upon the assumptions and methodology determined in 3). Requires the RHND to reflect the achievement of a feasible balance between jobs and housing within the region using the regional employment projections in the applicable regional transportation plan.
 - 5) Requires each COG or delegate subregion, at least two years before a scheduled revision of the housing element, to develop, in consultation with HCD, a proposed methodology for distributing the RHNA to cities, counties, and cities and counties within the region or subregion.
 - 6) Requires each COG or delegate subregion, at least one and one-half years before a scheduled revision of the housing element, to distribute a draft RHNA allocation plan to each local government in the region or subregion, and HCD, based on the methodology in 5) above, and publish the draft allocation on its website.

This bill:

- 1) Revises the time by which two or more cities and a county, or counties, may form a subregional entity for the purpose of allocating the subregion's RHNA among its members, from 28 months prior to the scheduled housing element update to 34 months prior.
- 2) Revises the time by which a COG must determine the share of RHNA assigned to each delegate subregion in 2) above from 25 months prior to the scheduled revision to 31 months prior.

- 3) Revises the time by which each COG or delegate subregion shall develop, in consultation with the HCD, a proposed methodology for distributing the RHNA to local governments within the region or subregion, from at least two years prior to the scheduled housing element revision to at least two and one-half years prior.
- 4) Revises the time by which each COG and delegate subregion shall distribute a draft RHNA to each local government in the region or subregion and to HCD based on the methodology described in 4) above and to publish the draft RHNA on its website, from at least one and one-half years before the scheduled housing element revision to at least two years prior.
- 5) Provides that the changes made by this bill do not apply to councils of governments with a housing element revision due in 2027 or 2028.

Background

Housing elements. Every city and county in California is required to develop a general plan that outlines the community's vision of future development through a series of policy statements and goals. A community's general plan lays the foundation for all future land use decisions, as these decisions must be consistent with the plan. General plans are comprised of several elements that address various land use topics: land use, circulation (*e.g.*, traffic), housing, conservation, open-space, noise, and safety.

Each community's general plan must include a housing element, which outlines a long-term plan for meeting the community's existing and projected housing needs. The housing element demonstrates how the community plans to accommodate its "fair share" of its region's housing needs. In general, a housing element must identify and analyze existing and project housing needs, identify adequate sites with appropriate zoning to meet its share of the RHNA, and ensure that regulatory systems provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development.

Comments

Author's Statement. "AB 2296 will improve the housing element review process by addressing the delays and challenges local governments face in dealing with HCD. This bill makes two key improvements: first, it starts the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process six months earlier, giving municipalities more time to work on their housing elements and allowing them to engage with HCD sooner. Additionally, the bill will stagger housing element deadlines within

Councils of Government to ease the workload on HCD staff, freeing up their time for one-on-one, tailored feedback to municipalities. These changes will help local governments develop compliant housing elements on time, supporting the production of much-needed housing and ensuring clarity in the process”

California’s Housing Future 2040. HCD recently published *California’s Housing Future 2040: The Next Regional Housing Needs Allocation* pursuant to a statutory directive to develop recommendations to improve the RHNA process and methodology that promotes and streamlines housing development and substantially addresses California’s housing shortage following a stakeholder engagement process. One of the recommendations HCD adopted in the report recommends moving up the RHND consultation process by one year. Specifically, HCD includes a recommendation in the report that recommends, “Moving up the date by which the RHND must be provided by one year.” HCD additionally noted in its report that requiring the consultation to take place three years prior to the housing element due date will foster better alignment between the housing element cycle and RTP and Sustainable Community Strategy planning cycles.

Timelines. In addition to extending the timeframe for the formation of subregional entities, this bill extends a number of timelines in the RHND/RHNA and housing element process by six months. Specifically, this bill extends the following timelines as follows:

- a) Each COG must develop its proposed RHNA methodology at least 2.5 years prior to the scheduled housing element revision, rather than two years under existing law.
- b) Each COG must distribute its draft RHNA allocation plan at least two years prior to the scheduled housing element revision, rather than 1.5 years under existing law.
- c) These changes do not apply for the seventh housing element cycle to COGs with a housing element revision due date during the 2027 or 2028 calendar year.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/3/26)

League of California Cities (source)
Chino Hills; City of

City of Carpinteria
 City of Corona
 City of El Cerrito
 City of Emeryville
 City of Foster City
 City of Goleta
 City of Lafayette
 City of Lakewood CA
 City of Merced
 City of Milpitas
 City of Moorpark
 City of Palm Desert
 City of Rancho Cucamonga
 City of Redwood City
 City of Torrance
 City/county Association of Governments of San Mateo County
 Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers
 San Diego Association of Governments
 Sonoma County Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/3/26)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: Supporters argue that AB 2296 will help local governments begin updating their housing elements six months early, so the have adequate time to collaborate with HCD and receive technical assistance as needed to ensure they adopt a certified housing element on time.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0, 5/27/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gallagher, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Bonta, Gabriel, Garcia, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Hank Brady / HOUSING / (916) 651-4124
8/5/26 15:04:37

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