

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

CSA1 Bill Id:AB 893 Author:(Fong)

As Amended Ver:August 25, 2025

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Expands the Affordable Housing and High Road Jobs Act of 2022, established by AB 2011 (Wicks) of 2022, to apply to campus development zones, as defined.

Senate Amendments

Amendments taken in the Senate:

- 1) Provide that easements for public right-of-way, public or private utilities, or other public improvements in, under, or over the property shall not make the property ineligible to receive streamlined, ministerial review for either affordable or mixed-income housing developments under AB 2011.
- 2) Clarify that a local agency's review of whether a development project meets specified streamlining criteria under AB 2011 is limited to a review of the area of the site that would be physically disturbed by the construction.

COMMENTS

Student Housing Need: California's housing crisis is a half-century in the making. After decades of underproduction, supply is far behind need, and housing and rental costs are soaring. As a result, millions of Californians must make hard decisions about paying for housing at the expense of food, health care, child care, and transportation, directly impacting the quality of life in the state. One in three households in the state doesn't earn enough money to meet their basic needs. In 2024, over 187,000 Californians experienced homelessness on a given night.

To meet this housing need, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) determined that California must plan for more than 2.5 million new homes, and no less than one million of those homes must be affordable to lower-income households, in the 6th Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). By contrast, housing production in the past decade has been under 100,000 units per year – including less than 10,000 units of affordable housing per year.

A recent report from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) shows that students spend more on housing than tuition while attending public university. While public colleges have made significant efforts to house students on campus in recent years, the vast majority of California's college students still rely on a limited number of increasingly unaffordable and inaccessible off-campus housing units available through the private market. Public universities are not required to obtain approval to build student housing on their own land, so long as they have a master plan in place. Furthermore, student housing need is not accounted for in the RHNA process by HCD, so Californians attending university may be underserved by our current production pipeline.

According to a 2023 survey from the California Student Aid Commission, a majority of California college students experience rent burdens and housing insecurity due to high housing costs. Nearly 24% of CCC, 11% of CSU, and 8% of UC students are unable to keep up with the high cost of housing and are forced into homelessness in a given year. The largest representative

study of homelessness since the 1990s found that the most common reason for leaseholders leaving their last housing was economic.

This bill seeks to expand housing options for college students through the private market. Acknowledging that there is not enough dorm space to meet student housing needs, this bill provides a streamlined and ministerial approval process for developments within a campus development zone, as defined. This bill builds on the already established framework of AB 2011, as described below.

AB 2011 and Campus Development Zones: In response to the housing affordability crisis, the Legislature passed AB 2011 (Wicks), Chapter 647, Statutes of 2022, also known as the Affordable Housing and High Road Jobs Act of 2022. AB 2011 streamlines the approval process for certain housing developments along commercial corridors and in commercial zones, while ensuring labor standards for construction workers and facilitating the development of affordable housing units. The law allows for by-right approval of mixed-income and 100% affordable housing projects on sites currently zoned for office, retail, or parking uses, provided they meet specific affordability, labor, and environmental criteria. This means qualifying projects can bypass certain discretionary local approvals, such as conditional use permits, making it easier and faster to build housing.

This bill seeks to expand both market-rate and affordable housing options near colleges across the state by building upon the framework established by AB 2011. It would do so by establishing "campus development zones," defined as areas within a ½ mile radius of a UC, CSU, or CCC, and applying the same framework of AB 2011 to those zones, with some exceptions. As is the case with AB 2011, this bill would not allow for development on residential parcels, it would be limited to commercially-zoned parcels. Specifically, this bill would amend AB 2011 as follows:

- 1) Allowing lower-income students and faculty to qualify for affordable units in the campus development zone;
- 2) Establishing a 65' height limit for developments in the campus development zone; and
- 3) Establishing a density limit ranging from 52.5 – 80 dwelling units per acre within the campus development zone.

According to the Author

"California continues to be plagued by its housing crisis, short millions of the units needed to reduce the burden of housing costs. This has contributed to homelessness, eroded our quality of life, and stifled our economy. Recent changes in housing law have shown some results but we have yet to turn the tide on housing affordability. Student housing insecurity and student homelessness in particular affects millions of students in our city colleges, CSUs, and UCs. Additionally, students are excluded from many affordable housing units due to policies that don't reflect current conditions and current student demographics. AB 893 addresses these pressing issues by expanding the streamlined, ministerial review process created by AB 2011 to commercially zoned parcels that are within a one-half mile of universities' main campuses. It expands and streamlines eligibility for affordable units to students who would be able to demonstrate need via their financial aid awards. AB 893 builds on existing momentum and sets the groundwork for California to move the needle on the housing costs that are disproportionately affecting students, and it does this while increasing the vitality of the campus communities we know and love."

Arguments in Support

The Student HOMES Coalition, the bill sponsor, writes in support: "The shortage of student housing has led to skyrocketing rental prices, forcing many students to decide between financial stress, lengthy commutes, or substandard living conditions. At UCs, for example, the average cost of living off-campus increased by 54% between 2014 and 2022. Thousands of students are unable to keep up with the rising rents, and thus UCLA reports that 20% of California community college students, 11% of CSU students, and 4% of UC students experience homelessness in a given academic year. Restrictive zoning laws and lengthy permitting processes exacerbate the crisis and contribute to student homelessness, making it difficult to build the high-density housing necessary to accommodate growing student populations. By streamlining the approval process and allowing for higher-density development within campus development zones, AB 893 will remove unnecessary barriers to housing construction and ensure students have access to safe, affordable housing."

Arguments in Opposition

The South Bay Council of Governments writes in opposition: "Unfortunately, AB 893 would disregard the state-mandated planning processing and instead force cities to ministerially approve housing on nearly all parcels within a half-mile of a university campus without any regard to the existing zoning or local conditions.

By-right and one-size-fits-all approaches will not solve the housing crisis. The state should work with, and provide funding to, cities and counties to prevent and reduce homelessness and spur affordable housing development in a way that makes sense for their individual communities, which would also address the needs of students, faculty, and staff at these important educational institutions."

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations:

- 1) HCD anticipates negligible costs.
- 2) This bill imposes new costs on affected local agencies to revise planning requirements for developments in a campus development zone. These costs are not state-reimbursable because local agencies have general authority to charge and adjust planning and permitting fees to offset increased costs associated with the provisions of this bill.

VOTES:

ASM HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: 10-1-1

YES: Haney, Patterson, Ávila Fariás, Caloza, Garcia, Kalra, Lee, Quirk-Silva, Wicks, Wilson

NO: Gallagher

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ta

ASM LOCAL GOVERNMENT: 9-0-1

YES: Carrillo, Hoover, Pacheco, Ramos, Ransom, Blanca Rubio, Stefani, Ward, Wilson

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ta

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 10-0-5

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez, Dixon, Hart, Ta, Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 65-5-9

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Davies, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hoover, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO: DeMaio, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Irwin

ABS, ABST OR NV: Castillo, Chen, Flora, Hart, Lackey, Sanchez, Schiavo, Ta, Tangipa

SENATE FLOOR: 31-9-0

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NO: Alvarado-Gil, Choi, Dahle, Grove, Jones, Niello, Seyarto, Strickland, Valladares

UPDATED

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