

Date of Hearing: August 20, 2025

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 484 (Laird) – As Amended June 25, 2025

Policy Committee:	Natural Resources	Vote:	14 - 0
	Housing and Community Development		12 - 0

Urgency: No                      State Mandated Local Program: No                      Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the California Coastal Commission (CCC) to identify infill areas within at least three local jurisdictions that do not have a certified local coastal program (LCP) for a categorical exclusion from the coastal development permit (CDP) requirement for deed-restricted affordable housing developments.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the CCC – by July 1, 2027, pursuant to specified requirements, and in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) – to identify infill areas within three local jurisdictions that do not have a certified LCP, wherein development of a residential housing project comprised entirely of units that are deed-restricted for very low-, low-, or moderate-income persons shall be categorically excluded from the requirement to obtain a CDP.
- 2) Sunsets the categorical exclusion on June 30, 2037, and provides that the exclusion shall be of no further force or effect within an identified jurisdiction if the certification of the applicable LCP occurs on or before June 30, 2037.
- 3) Requires each of the areas identified by the CCC for the provisions of this bill to be effective upon a two-thirds vote of the CCC, as specified.
- 4) Requires the CCC, in consultation with HCD, to do all of the following when identifying categorical exclusion areas: (a) select jurisdictions located in various regions of the coast; (b) select jurisdictions that vary in population size from one another; (c) identify the largest feasible categorical exclusion areas; (d) ensure the areas affirmatively further fair housing, as specified; (e) consider each selected jurisdiction’s inventory of sites in its housing element, as specified; and (f) avoid sites projected to be impacted by sea level rise and associated coastal hazards.
- 5) Provides that nothing in this bill exempts a qualifying residential housing project proposed in a categorical exclusion area from obtaining a land use entitlement approval otherwise required by the local jurisdiction, as specified.
- 6) Requires a development proponent, prior to beginning construction of a proposed residential housing project subject to the categorical exclusion, described above, to request from the CCC a notice of exclusion, and requires the CCC to provide that notice, as specified.

- 7) Requires the CCC to post clearly defined maps of the categorical exclusion areas established pursuant to this bill on its website by August 1, 2027.
- 8) Requires the CCC, by January 1, 2035, to submit a report to the Legislature identifying the number of projects constructed or currently under construction that received the categorical exclusion described above.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) The CCC estimates General Fund costs of approximately \$220,000 annually for two years for one position to perform the required spatial analysis and coordinate with HCD to delineate the required categorical exclusion areas, prepare the necessary staff reports and maps for the CCC to approve the categorical exclusions, and oversee initial implementation.
- 2) Costs of an unknown, but likely minor, amount for HCD to consult with the CCC.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Senate Bill 484 harmonizes the urgent need for affordable housing with the principles established by voters when they created the Coastal Commission. By leveraging the Commission's existing authority to establish categorical exemptions for certain types of development, SB 484 requires the Coastal Commission to streamline 100% affordable housing development within infill areas in limited parts of our coast, ensuring that both affordable housing and environmental protections are prioritized.

- 2) **Background.** The CCC administers the Coastal Act and regulates proposed development along the coast and in nearby areas in the coastal zone. The Coastal Act requires local governments to develop LCPs consistent with policies of the Coastal Act. LCPs are land use planning documents that lay out a framework for development and coastal resource protection within a city or county's coastal zone area. Generally, any development activity in the coastal zone requires a CDP from the CCC or local government with a certified LCP. In a jurisdiction with a certified LCP, the local government issues the CDP with detailed planning and design standards. However, even when the local government grants a permit, CDP decisions are appealable to the CCC if the development falls within certain defined zones. For a jurisdiction without an LCP, also known as an "uncertified" jurisdiction, the CCC is the permitting authority for CDPs.

Under current law, the CCC may establish categorical exclusions from CDP requirements for specific classes of development that the CCC determines, following a public hearing and a two-thirds vote of its appointed members, will not have a significant adverse effect on coastal resources or public coastal access. This bill establishes a pilot program designed to streamline the approval of affordable housing in certain areas of the coastal zone by leveraging the CCC's existing authority to issue categorical exclusions from CDP requirements.

The California Housing Partnership contends that developing affordable housing in the coastal zone is especially challenging and, “while the Coastal Act does a good job of protecting access to and the beauty of the coast, it often adds time and creates significant uncertainty for affordable housing developers who cannot afford to take on such risks.”

The CCC is in support of this bill. In its letter, the CCC notes that of the 76 local governments located in the coastal zone, there are 12 cities that remain uncertified – all of which came up short on one or more of their state targets for new affordable housing in the last housing element cycle. Given that these cities do not have LCPs, the CCC is in charge of coastal permitting in these portions of the coastal zone. By establishing categorical exclusions in these areas, the CCC writes that it would simply be excluding affordable housing projects from its own jurisdiction, and the “[categorical exclusions] required by the bill would not affect the relevant local government’s land use authority or any other permits that a local government issues for affordable housing projects.” The CCC contends that “these parts of the coastal zone provide an opportunity for the Commission to take direct action to facilitate the construction of new affordable housing in appropriate areas.”

**Analysis Prepared by:** Nikita Koraddi / APPR. / (916) 319-2081