



April 12, 2021

Re: ACA 1, Voter Threshold for Affordable Housing and Infrastructure

Dear Assemblymembers Aguiar-Curry, Gonzalez, and Chiu:

We represent a diverse group of stakeholders working together to address California's housing supply and affordability crisis and write to express our strong support for ACA 1 to amend the state Constitution to allow local general obligation bonds or sales taxes to finance, among other things, affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, and infrastructure improvements to be approved by a 55% majority vote.

California continues to confront a significant shortage of housing, in general, and affordable housing, in particular. While we need more than 400,000 units built each year to try to reduce this serious shortage, only slightly more than 100,000 units were permitted last year. Moreover, only about 25,000 units of affordable housing were permitted. In our state, where a disturbing percentage of our residents now pay half or more of their income for housing costs, the lack of housing which is affordable only exacerbates a deepening crisis.

As you know, the state Constitution currently requires that local general obligation bonds and sales taxes for designated purposes must be approved by two-thirds of the voters. This supermajority threshold frequently prevents communities which would like to invest in important local public improvements from doing so, even in cases where a clear majority of the voters would like to do so. The undemocratic constraints on local voters to pass measures to generate resources to support affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, and infrastructure projects have served as a roadblock to allowing communities to meet the needs of local residents.

We recognize that the legislature and governor have worked to adopt a number of policy and fiscal measures in the last several years to stimulate greater production of housing, particularly affordable housing, and we applaud those steps. Many local communities would like to do their fair share to build more affordable housing but lack funding. ACA 1 will give Californians at the local level a fair opportunity to address the acute deficits in public infrastructure and affordable housing in their own communities.

Thank you for authoring this important bill. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Roger Dickinson at (916) 599-2456 or rdickinson@lgc.org.

Sincerely,

Meea Kang, Director
Council of Infill Builders

Ray Pearl, Executive Director
California Housing Consortium

Sande George, Legislative Advocate
APA California

Denny Zane, Executive Director
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Luke Villalobos, Legislative Advocate
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Cynthia Castillo, Policy Advocate
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Victoria Rome, Director of California Government
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Howard Penn, Executive Director
Planning and Conservation League