



BERKELEY CITY COUNCILMEMBER
TERRY TAPLIN
DISTRICT 2

CONSENT CALENDAR
February 28, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Taplin
Subject: Support for AB-309: Social Housing.

RECOMMENDATION

Send a letter in support of Assembly Bill [3092053](#) to the state legislature.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

BACKGROUND

Assembly Bill 309 is an updated version of Assembly Bill 2053 (2022) by Assemblymember Alex Lee (D-San Jose): “The Zenovich-Moscone-Chacon Housing and Home Finance Act establishes the Department of Housing and Community Development and the California Housing Finance Agency and sets forth various programs administered by those entities intended to, among other things, provide a comprehensive and balanced approach to the solution of housing problems of the people of this state.” This includes publicly-owned mixed income housing developments with just cause protections and direct involvement in management by residents.

Because social housing is internally cross-subsidized by higher income households (including rents at market rate), it would avoid the problems of concentrated poverty, disinvestment, and lack of operating subsidies that has afflicted public housing throughout the United States in the past. This model is already working successfully elsewhere in the United States, including Montgomery County, Maryland under the supervision of the Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC)¹, and Sacramento’s CADA agency.² The Berkeley City Council previously voted to send a letter of support for AB-2053 in 2022.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Taplin Council District 2 510-981-7120

¹ <https://www.hocmc.org/news-archive/775-hoc-breaks-ground-at-900-thayer-in-silver-spring.html>

² <https://www.cadanet.org/resources-agendas/fast-facts>

AB-309

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Attachments:

1: Letter

2: Assembly Bill 309 (January 2023 draft)

The Honorable Alex Lee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 94249

Dear Assembly member Lee:

The City Council of the City of Berkeley is proud to support Assembly Bill 309: Social Housing. We believe that a state housing agency developing publicly-owned, mixed-income housing with a skilled and trained workforce and maintained by diverse communities of residents offers a promising path toward housing abundance and economic justice. We were proud to support your previous bill, AB-2053, The Social Housing Act of 2022.

On November 9, 2021, the Berkeley City Council unanimously passed a resolution recognizing housing as a human right, as well as committing to a study of social housing models in Berkeley. The City Council has recognized that housing security and fair housing opportunity is a core mandate of the public sector, and that it can learn from other countries with successful public sector housing development models, such as Vienna and Singapore. By establishing a statewide Housing Authority to produce and preserve social housing, your bill could have transformative impacts with regards to expanding housing opportunity and providing sustainable community autonomy for Berkeley residents and residents-to-be.

California currently ranks 49th out of all 50 states in new homes built per capita, and roughly one-fifth of the population bears an extraordinary rent burden, paying over half of their income in rent. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, over 800,000 households in the state would have stayed above the poverty line in 2019 if housing costs had remained constant at 2013 levels. While progress is incremental, even minor improvements represent real material gains for our most vulnerable residents. Berkeley and other cities are making substantive efforts to increase housing supply, but we are well aware that neither the private market nor publicly subsidies alone can build us out of a housing shortage that was decades in the making. It will take every available strategy on the table, and the City of Berkeley is heartened by your bold and innovative proposal.

With gratitude,

The Berkeley City Council
2180 Milvia St
Berkeley, CA 94704