

## The Voice of Affordable Housing

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January 24, 2018

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski California State Senate State Capitol, Room 4085 Sacramento, CA 95814

## Re: SB 831 (Wieckowski): Land Use: Accessory Dwelling Units - Support

Dear Senator Wieckowski,

On behalf of our 750 plus members, the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH) is writing to offer our support of SB 831(Wieckowski), which removes many barriers to accessory dwelling unit development and will make these needed units even easier to build. We also believe S will be made even stronger if it is amended to disallow owner occupancy requirements from accessory dwelling unit ordinances.

Founded in 1979, NPH is the collective voice of those who support, build and finance affordable housing. We are 750 affordable housing developers, advocates, community leaders and businesses, working to secure resources, promote good policy, educate the public, and support affordable homes as the foundation for thriving individuals, families and neighborhoods.

As you know, California families are facing a harder time finding a place to live than at any point in our history. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, six of the Bay Area's nine counties place among the top ten most expensive in the nation. According to the latest rental data from Zillow (dated December 2017) the median asking rent in Alameda County is \$3,075. Working families, many of whom are employed in Alameda County's service industries simply cannot afford such rents forcing them to commute increasingly longer distances shutting them out of the Bay Area while worsening traffic congestion and further degrading our environment.

SB 831 provides a proactive means to address the Bay Area's housing crisis by removing barriers to the construction of accessory dwelling units which, through their smaller footprint and lower construction costs, can be rented at below market rates while also building homeowner equity. According to UC Berkeley's Terner Center for Housing Innovation, in 2012 the average ADU in the East Bay had an asking rent that was affordable to a family earning 62 percent of Area Median Income (in 2017 dollars the ADU would be affordable to a family of four earning \$60,388). Given that the majority of housing in California is single-family homes, this legislation could allow for a significant expansion of this more affordable housing type.



SB 831 will create more housing opportunities in California by removing many barriers faced by homeowners who wish to build ADUs including:

- Eliminating all local agency, school district, special district, and water corporation fees for an ADU.
- Creating an amnesty program for existing unwarranted ADUs to allow them to come into compliance
- Allowing for the creation of an ADU on any lot that has an existing or proposed home.
- Eliminating setback requirements for any accessory structure converted to an ADU.
- Deeming an ADU permit application automatically approved if a local agency has not acted upon the application within 120 days.

NPH also proposes the addition of an amendment to disallow owner occupancy requirements for ADUs as occupancy requirements have been used in the past to make it more difficult for owners to potentially rent these spaces and thereby expand the housing stock.

NPH is proud to support SB 831 (Wieckowski) and we believe that this modest change will make an already strong bill stronger.

We appreciate you and your leadership on this issue,

Sincerely,

Amie Fishman Executive Director Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH)