

Action #14.3 Lower Voter Approval Threshold for Affordable Housing Measures to 55%

1.1	Key Element of CASA Compact	#14 Affordable Housing production funding
1.2	Brief Description <i>1-3 sentence summary of action or policy</i>	<p>Proposition 13 requires any special taxes, i.e., taxes dedicated for a specific purpose, to receive at least 2/3rds approval when placed on the ballot by a legislative body and then the same level of approval by voters. Such a high bar means that it is exceedingly difficult and expensive to raise essential resources for affordable housing development. While Bay Area voters have been able to overcome such hurdles in three counties (SF, Alameda, Santa Clara) and several cities (Emeryville, Oakland) it has taken a veritable humanitarian shelter crisis to generate sufficient political support to be able to issue general obligation bonds for affordable housing.</p> <p>We propose asking voters to amend the California Constitution in 2020 to lower the voter approval threshold to 55% for any special tax related to funding the construction, rehabilitation or replacement of public or affordable housing and affordable housing-related infrastructure (ad valorem tax on real property, transactions or sales taxes on the sale of real property, issuance of general obligation bonds). California voters have already approved a similar measure (Prop. 39 in 2000) to lower the voter approval threshold to 55% for general obligation bonds issued for the construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition of land for school facilities. This constitutional amendment would only need to be approved by a majority of California voters to take effect (Prop. 39 was approved by a simple majority of 53.4%). Prop. 39 also had important accountability measures to ensure the funding was used for specified purposes, which this measure would also have in place.</p> <p>Lowering the voter threshold to 55% for approving special taxes related to affordable housing would have the effect of creating predictable and ongoing funding streams for affordable housing development and would greatly increase the viability of game-changing affordable housing funding measures.</p>
1.3	Supports these CASA goals: <i>(check all that apply)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Protection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation <input type="checkbox"/> Production
1.4	Desired Effect <i>What problem would this solve? Who would benefit? If applicable, identify any specific populations who will especially benefit.</i>	CASA's support for such a measure could reinvigorate legislative efforts (i.e. ACA 4) to place such an amendment on the ballot, which given the severity of our state's housing crisis, could be approved in 2020. The resultant campaign would also require endorsements and financial support from member organizations.
1.5	Key Questions and Points of Concern <i>What key questions or issues need to be resolved? What are the major sticking points and areas of negotiation?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of political support (endorsements, lobbying, financial resources) are CASA's member organizations willing to lend to such a measure?

1.6	Resources Needed <i>What costs will be incurred and by whom? Note any funding sources that are readily available, if known.</i>	Legislative lobbying, then endorsements and financial support for ensuing campaign
1.7	Scale of Impact <i>(as measured by Plan Bay Area goal alignment)</i>	Produce: Thousands of new affordable units on an annual basis
1.8	Potential Vehicles for Implementation <i>Check all that apply</i>	✓ Legislation We would first need legislation in 2019 to place this measure on the 2020 ballot
1.9	Time Frame <i>Time needed for action to be approved and implemented.</i>	✓ Short-Term (0-2 years) Legislation in 2019, ballot measure in 2020
1.10	Feasibility <i>Select one and describe your rationale for why this level of feasibility is anticipated.</i>	✓ Medium: This constitutional amendment requires a 2/3rds vote of the State Legislature to place it on the ballot and then a simple majority of voters statewide to be approved.