



City of Santa Barbara

Office of the Mayor

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June 26, 2025

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The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8120
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7560
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Opposition to AB 130 (Budget Trailer Bill – Housing)

Dear Governor Newsom, Senator Wiener, and Assembly Member Gabriel:

On behalf of the City of Santa Barbara, I respectfully submit this letter in strong opposition to AB 130, the 2025 housing budget trailer bill. While we support the shared goal of increasing housing production in a way that addresses California's affordability crisis, AB 130 represents a deeply flawed approach—both in substance and process.

AB 130 circumvents the legislative process by advancing sweeping policy changes through the expedited budget trailer bill mechanism, thereby avoiding meaningful public review and full vetting in second-house policy committees. This denies local governments, environmental stewards, housing experts, and community stakeholders the opportunity to analyze, testify, and improve these bills through the normal deliberative process. Major statutory overhauls with long-term implications—such as the removal of CEQA requirements, wage restructuring, and restrictions on local building standards—deserve thoughtful analysis, not last-minute inclusion in a fiscal bill negotiated behind closed doors.

Our concerns are fundamentally about community stewardship—the ability of local governments to guide growth in ways that reflect the unique environmental, cultural, and historical context of our cities. AB 130 overrides that responsibility by mandating state-level one-size-fits-all policies that undermine our ability to balance development with climate adaptation, infrastructure capacity, and historic preservation.

The bill's CEQA exemptions for urban infill housing projects—particularly those allowing ministerial approval without environmental review—could expose sensitive coastal and historic communities like Santa Barbara to unintended harms. The streamlined project approvals envisioned in AB 130 reduce or eliminate public input, weaken environmental safeguards, and curtail our ability to mitigate impacts to traffic, water supply, air quality, and wildfire evacuation planning. These are not hypothetical risks—they are real concerns in a coastal city bounded by the wildland fire urban interface and already vulnerable to natural disasters.



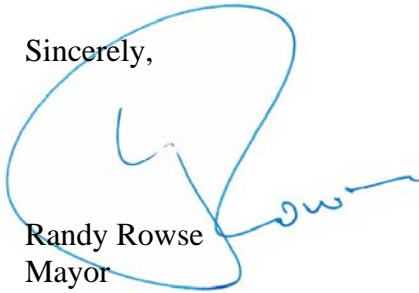
Please consider the environment before printing this letter.

AB 130 imposes a moratorium on new local amendments to the California Building Standards Code for residential construction, even when such amendments are aimed at achieving climate and energy goals. This prohibition threatens the progress cities like Santa Barbara have made toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions through green building standards, electrification measures, and resilience-focused upgrades. At a time when the state should be empowering communities to meet or exceed its climate commitments, AB 130 instead imposes a regressive barrier. Our City was engaged on policy bill AB 306 throughout its progress through the first house, and sought to continue conversations in the second house. Gutting AB 306 and pushing it through the expedited budget process has eliminated the opportunity to continue our engagement at the policy level.

Housing policy should be debated openly, crafted responsibly, and implemented in ways that recognize both our climate future and our community fabric. We believe the stakes are too high—and the flaws too significant—for this bill to proceed under the veil of budget negotiations.

For these reasons, the City of Santa Barbara opposes AB 130, urges you to reject it, and encourages the Legislature to revisit these issues through regular, transparent policy processes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randy Rowse", is written over the word "Sincerely,". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the top and a horizontal stroke at the end.

Randy Rowse
Mayor
City of Santa Barbara

cc: Senator Monique Limon
Assembly Member Gregg Hart
Santa Barbara City Council