



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON

May 27, 2025

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8140
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for AB 609 (Wicks)—California Environmental Quality Act: Exemption: Housing Development Projects

Dear Assemblymember Wicks,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach (City), the City is in support of AB 609, which exempts qualifying multi-family housing projects in existing urban areas from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Long Beach is a designated pro-housing City and a leader in California in the production of market-rate and affordable housing. Despite careful planning, community conversations and collaborations, individual projects in Long Beach are often delayed by additional CEQA work and challenges that are not always based on substantive environmental concerns. AB 609 will solve this problem and allow Long Beach to continue to do its important work of facilitating housing construction and to do it faster and better.

California's housing shortage is exacerbated by CEQA's burdensome review process. While regional plans, housing elements, and local zoning laws must comply with CEQA, most individual housing projects, even those fully aligned with local zoning and objective standards, must still undergo additional CEQA review. While CEQA effectively prevents negative environmental impacts, it was not designed to facilitate projects that are inherently beneficial to the environment, such as urban infill housing. Developing urban infill housing near jobs, schools, and other amenities is a proven strategy to reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions, one of the goals outlined in CEQA.

Under AB 609, qualifying projects must meet certain density requirements, be located on a site that has been previously developed for urban use, and be surrounded predominately by other residential or commercial development. Projects on environmentally sensitive or hazardous sites would not be eligible, and all projects must still comply with local general plans, zoning ordinances, and objective standards. AB 609 will help produce additional housing in urban areas, like Long Beach, with careful consideration of the environment and existing land use. For these reasons, the City supports AB 609.

Sincerely,

Rex Richardson
Long Beach Mayor

562.570.6801 — mayor@longbeach.gov — [@longbeachmayor](https://www.instagram.com/longbeachmayor)
411 W. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, California 90802