



SPUR



March 12, 2021

The Honorable Senator Scott Wiener
Senate Housing Committee
State Capitol, Room 2209
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 290 (Skinner): Density Bonus Law - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Wiener,

The undersigned coalition, the California Home Building Alliance (HBA), includes trade associations representing small and large businesses, for-profit and not-for-profit home builders, realtors, developers, employers, affordable housing infill builders, and non-profit research, education and advocacy organizations focused on increasing the supply of new housing and improving the quality and affordability of housing in California. This coalition is committed to supporting legislation that will rapidly and predictably increase housing production in our state, and we strongly support SB 290, which would improve and clarify the density bonus statute to expand its use in California and increase affordable housing production. The Home Building Alliance is made up of prominent organizations all throughout the state that are committed to advocating for policy changes that will increase housing supply, and we believe this bill is an important tool to help address California's increasing need for additional housing units.

California is facing a massive shortage of housing at every level – from affordable to market rate. One tool the state has to increase the production of affordable homes is the density bonus law. It currently allows affordable and senior housing developers to increase a project's density by up to 35%, depending on the amount of affordable housing being built. However, density bonus law is underutilized due to significant barriers, making its application infeasible. According to UC Berkeley's Turner Center for Housing Innovation, less than half of California cities and counties have had a development project that used the density bonus, and most jurisdictions have had only one or two projects.

SB 290 seeks to address four barriers that limit density bonus applicability. SB 290 would make the following improvements and clarifications to the state's density bonus law: first, the bill allows low-income student housing projects to receive up to one incentive. Second, SB 290 aligns the density bonus approval requirements with those in the Housing Accountability Act. Third, it expands the definition of for-sale projects beyond common interest developments, including units that can be sold to low-income families. And lastly, SB 290 adds a parking waiver for housing developments within one-half mile of transit that include 40% moderate-income, for-sale units.

It is for these reasons that the undersigned organizations below, urge your support on SB 290.



Michael Gunning, California Building Industry Association



Michael Lane, San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Research Association (SPUR)



Meca Kang, Council of Infill Builders



Louis Mirante, California YIMBY



Debbie Arakel, Habitat for Humanity California



Denise Pinkston, Casita Coalition and TMG Partners

