

- 5) Requires a local jurisdiction to give public notice of a hearing whenever a person applies for a zoning variance, special use permit, conditional use permit, zoning ordinance amendment, or general or specific plan amendment.
- 6) Requires the board of zoning adjustment or zoning administrator to hear and decide applications for conditional uses or other permits and establishes criteria for determining those matters, and applications for variances from the terms of the zoning ordinance.
- 7) Establishes the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which generally requires state and local government agencies to inform decision makers and the public about the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects, and to reduce those impacts to the extent feasible. CEQA applies when a development project requires discretionary approval from a local government.
- 8) Exempts interim motel conversion projects from CEQA, until January 1, 2025, provided the project does not result in an expansion of more than 10% of the floor area of any individual living unit in the structure or does not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. “Interim motel housing project” is defined as conversion of a motel, hotel, residential hotel, or hostel into supportive or transitional housing.

This bill:

- 1) Eliminates the requirement that applicants for state housing and homeless programs comply with housing first policies to receive state funding.
- 2) Removes the sunset for a CEQA exemption for specified interim motel conversion projects.

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Author’s Statement.* “California is currently undergoing a worst-in-the-nation homelessness crisis. Although the Legislature has spent more than \$17 billion since 2018 on homelessness programs, over 160,000 Californians sleep rough every night. While the state’s focus on Housing First is well-intentioned, restricting participation in state programs and funding has exacerbated backlogs and worsened the homelessness crisis since the state’s adoption of this as the only model in 2016. SB 1284 will improve the state’s response to homelessness by taking an all-of-the-above Housing First Plus approach. SB 1284 will open up alternatives currently curtailed by Housing First-only regulations. This will increase the options available for the homeless and will

make an immediate impact. This bill could provide opportunities for emergency shelters, nonprofits, wrap-around services and interim, supportive, and transitional housing. SB 1284 will help maximize existing resources by extending the California Environmental Quality Act exemption sunset in SB 450, Chapter 344 of the Statutes of 2019 (Umberg) to 2030. That legislation exempted motels, hotels, and hostels from CEQA when they create transitional and supportive housing, and has been a bright spot in the state's response to homelessness. Extending the sunset will provide a more consistent, longer-term regulatory and planning framework.”

- 2) *Homelessness numbers in California.* According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, in January 2020, California had 28% of the nation's homeless population (about 162,000 individuals)¹. California also comprises 51% of the nation's unsheltered homeless population, which includes people living in vehicles, abandoned buildings, parks, or on the street.
- 3) *What are the effects of homelessness?* Homelessness increases the risk of developing health problems, and it increases the possibility of trauma, especially as a result of physical or sexual assault. It can also turn a relatively minor health problem into a serious illness. Unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness possess major and worsening health conditions while homeless. According to the *Health Conditions Among Unsheltered Adults in the U.S.* report by the California Policy Lab, unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness were nearly three times as likely as sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness to report that mental health conditions contributed to loss of housing (50% to 17%).² Unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness face harsher living conditions, putting them at higher risk of using alcohol and other substances to cope, which may result in disrupting relationships, loss or prevented employment, or inability to locate housing. The California Policy Lab also found that unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness are more than five times as likely to report a substance use condition (75% vs. 13%).

Single unsheltered homeless women in particular are at risk of developing substance abuse issues while living on the streets. They are more at risk of sexual assault and use drugs to stay awake at night to protect themselves from

¹ Meghan Henry, Tanya de Sousa, Caroline Roddey, Swati Gayen, and Thomas Joe Bednar. *The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress*. (United States Department of Housing and Community Development, January 2020). <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

² Janey Rountree, Nathan Hess, and Austin Lyke. “Health Conditions Among Unsheltered Adults in the U.S.” (California Policy Lab, October 2019). <https://www.capolicylab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Health-Conditions-Among-Unsheltered-Adults-in-the-U.S.pdf>

attack. Some individuals need services in addition to housing and would benefit from the range of safety net and behavioral health services available from their city or county.

- 4) *Why are so many experiencing homelessness in California?* Modern housing and homelessness policy can be traced back to the 1970s and '80s as national social and economic policies towards housing began to change. At that time, public housing, created to provide safe and affordable rental housing for low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities under the National Housing Acts of 1934 and 1937, began to deteriorate due to poor maintenance. In 1974, the Housing Community and Development Act ended most new construction of public housing and the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) was created in its place. This new program allowed eligible tenants to pay only a portion of their rent (based on their income) and shifted funds from public housing authorities to the private sector. The goal was to eliminate concentrations of low-income people in housing developments. In 1981, the Reagan administration dismantled federal affordable housing funding. From 1978 to 1983, the funding for low- to moderate-income housing decreased by 77%. Social policies contributing to the rise of homelessness included the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill during the mid-1980s. Additionally, in the 1980s, the proportion of the eligible low-income families who received federal housing subsidies declined. In 1970, there were 300,000 more low-cost rental units (6.5 million) than low-income renter households (6.2 million). By 1985, however, the number of low-cost units had fallen to 5.6 million, and the number of low-income renter households had grown to 8.9 million, a disparity of 3.3 million units.

In recent years, an increasing number of people, including unaccompanied youth, older adults and families, have found themselves living on the street, in shelters, or in other transitional housing arrangements, such as living with friends and family, for the first time. The causes of homelessness are varied and complicated. Economic hardship, high cost of housing, separation from the family, domestic violence, death of the family breadwinner, mental or behavioral health, and substance use disorders can all contribute to a person experiencing homelessness.

While there may be a perception that people experience homelessness due to inability or disinterest in sustaining employment because of mental health or substance use issues, many individuals and families experiencing homelessness have, or recently had, jobs. A study by the California Policy Lab found that 74% of homeless individuals in Los Angeles County had a record of employment between 1995 and 2018 prior to becoming homeless; 47% were

employed within four years before their first experience of homelessness; and 19% were employed in the quarter in which they became homeless³. However, the average annual earnings of study participants was only \$9,970 in the year prior to experiencing homelessness.

So what are the primary drivers leading to increases in homelessness?

- a) *Available housing is not affordable.* The lack of affordable housing plays a significant role in causing individuals to become homeless or creates obstacles for individuals experiencing homeless to transition into stable housing. The median home price in California is \$771,270 in 2022, which is double the nationwide median. Notably, on April 20th, the Orange County Register highlighted that the median home price topped \$1 million in 45 of its 83 zip codes in Orange County⁴. In terms of rental markets, California contains all 10 of the top 10 most unaffordable counties for a two-bedroom apartment and holds eight of the top ten most unaffordable metropolitan areas. In addition, almost three million enter households, almost half of rental households in California, are low-income (50-80% of the Area Median Income, or AMI), very low-income (30-50% AMI), or extremely low-income (0-30% AMI). As a result, many Californians are rent burdened (spend more than 30% of their income on rent). By income level, almost 90% of extremely low-income, 85% of very low-income, and 63% of low-income households are rent burdened.

- b) *There is not enough housing.* The lack of supply is the primary factor underlying California's housing crunch. The state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) estimates that California needs to build 180,000 new homes a year to keep up with population growth⁵. More recently, HCD noted in its statewide housing plan that California must plan for more than 2.5 million homes over the next eight-year cycle, and no less than one million of those homes must meet the needs of lower-income households. This represents more than double the housing planned for in the last eight-year cycle.⁶

³ Till Von Watcher, Geoffrey Schnorr, and Nefara Riesch. *Employment and Earnings Among LA County Residents Experiencing Homelessness*. (California Policy Lab, February 2020). <https://www.capolicylab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Employment-Among-the-Homeless-in-Los-Angeles.pdf>

⁴ Jonathan Lansner. "Orange County median home price tops \$1 million for the first time". (Orange County Register, April 20, 2022). <https://tinyurl.com/4f2k8wxy>

⁵ *California's Housing Future: Challenges and Opportunities*. (California Department of Housing and Community Development, February 2018). https://www.hcd.ca.gov/policy-research/plans-reports/docs/sha_final_combined.pdf

⁶ *A home for every Californian*. (Department of Housing and Community Development, March 2022). <https://statewide-housing-plan-cahcd.hub.arcgis.com/>

For reference, during the 1990's California averaged only 110,000 new housing units per year. During the early 2000s, production increased significantly, reaching a peak of 212,000 units in 2004 before plummeting to historic lows during the recession. Unfortunately, the downward trend continues; in June 2019, residential permits were down 38% compared to June 2018, and continued that trend in 2020. California recorded only 7,909 housing permits in June 2020, down 12% from June 2019. While this was the most permits the state has recorded since March, it was the lowest June total since 2014, showing the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The multifamily housing permit total of 2,745 was the lowest figure yet in 2020 and less than half the June average over the previous five years. The fact is that California has under-produced housing every single year since 1989.

- 5) *What are the primary solutions to ending and preventing homelessness?* More housing at all income levels, and in particular, more housing affordable to the lowest income earners. According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, in a May 2019 report, “when housing costs are more affordable and housing opportunities are more readily available, there is a lower likelihood of households becoming homeless, and households who do become homeless can exit homelessness more quickly and with greater likelihood of sustaining that housing long-term. To reduce the negative impacts of housing instability, and to end homelessness as quickly and efficiently as possible, communities are increasingly focused on expanding the supply of housing that is affordable to renter households at lower income levels, as well as ensuring that people experiencing and exiting homelessness have access to such housing.”⁷

A report released by the National Low Income Housing Coalition on April 21, 2022 found that in the Sacramento metro area, very low-income renters face a shortage of more than 78,000 affordable and available homes.⁸ Additionally, the report found that only 41 affordable and available rentals exist in the Sacramento region for every 100 very low-income renter households, according to the coalition's analysis. The shortage is exacerbated by the fact that low-income renters find themselves competing against higher-income renters in the private market, which cannot sufficiently compensate for the deficit. The report, focused on federal solutions, stated that the shortage can only be addressed through sufficient long-term federal investments in affordable

⁷ *The Importance of Housing Affordability and Stability for Preventing and Ending Homelessness.* (US Interagency Council on Homelessness, May 2019). https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Housing-Affordability-and-Stability-Brief.pdf

⁸ Yoon-Hendricks, Alexandria. *78,000 low-income Sacramentans can't find an affordable home to rent, report finds.* (Sacramento Bee, April 21, 2022). https://www.sacbee.com/news/equity-lab/article260609137.html?ac_cid=DM636661&ac_bid=-371228598

housing programs designed to serve households with the greatest needs. The same conclusion, however, can be attributed to the entire state of California.

Beginning largely in 2017⁹, the State of California and the voters have taken significant steps to invest billions of dollars for affordable housing construction, homeownership opportunities, and flexible homelessness solutions, as well as investments in infrastructure necessary to support these projects.¹⁰ The Legislature has also created streamlined development approval processes and reduced opportunities for local governments to disapprove of quality housing projects and homeless shelters, which have sped-up the approval of these processes, and reduced costs associated with unreasonable project delays.¹¹ Further, the state has increased planning requirements so that local governments create an environment to facilitate the creation of housing, and in particular, affordable housing construction¹², and provided grants directly to local governments for these purposes.

According to Cal-ICH, between 2017 and 2020, Continuums of Care (CoCs) across California have increased efforts to address the homelessness crisis by serving 40% more people experiencing homelessness (176,412 in 2017 compared to 246,142 in 2020)¹³. But in many areas of the state, despite these efforts, for every person housed, another two fall into homelessness. There is no denying more can and should be done; however with limited resources, the state should focus limited investments on evidence-based programs that ensure housing stability.

- 6) *What is housing first?* Housing first approaches homelessness by providing permanent, affordable housing for families and individuals as quickly as possible, then providing supportive services to prevent their return to homelessness. This strategy is an evidence-based model that focuses on the idea that homeless individuals should be provided shelter and stability before underlying issues can be successfully addressed. Under the housing first approach, anyone experiencing homelessness should be connected to a permanent home as quickly as possible, and programs should remove barriers to

⁹ “2017 Legislative Housing Package”. (Senate Housing Committee, October 2017).

<https://shou.senate.ca.gov/sites/shou.senate.ca.gov/files/2017%20Housing%20Legislative%20Package.pdf>

¹⁰ “Background on Financing Programs for Affordable Housing”. (Senate Housing Committee, October 2021).

<https://shou.senate.ca.gov/sites/shou.senate.ca.gov/files/Housing%20Finance%2010.2021.pdf>

¹¹ “Overview of Housing Issues in California”. (Senate Housing Committee, October 2021).

<https://shou.senate.ca.gov/sites/shou.senate.ca.gov/files/Overview%20of%20housing%20issues%20-%2010.2021.pdf>

¹² “Housing Element and RHNA Law: Recent Reforms”. (Senate Housing Committee, October 2021).

<https://shou.senate.ca.gov/sites/shou.senate.ca.gov/files/RHNA%20reform%20fact%20sheet%20-%2010.2021.pdf>

¹³ California Interagency Council on Homelessness. “Homeless Data Integration System”. (2021)

<https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/hdis.html>

accessing the housing, like requirements for sobriety or absence of criminal history. It is based on the “hierarchy of need:” people must access basic necessities—like a safe place to live and food to eat—before being able to achieve quality of life or pursue personal goals. Housing first values choice not only where to live, but whether to participate in services. This approach contrasts to the “housing readiness” model where people are required to address predetermined goals before obtaining housing. In other words, housing readiness means housing is “earned” and can also be taken away, thus returning to homelessness.

- 7) *What type of housing is considered housing first?* Programs using housing first generally fall into two categories:
- a) Supportive housing, which is a home made affordable through long-term rental assistance, paired with intensive services promoting housing stability.
 - b) Rapid re-housing, which connects a family or individual to a home affordable through short-to medium-term rental assistance, along with moderate services designed to allow that household to increase their income sufficiently to be able to afford the apartment over the long-term.
- 8) *Who else employs housing first principles?* The federal government has shifted its focus to housing first over the last decade, starting under the Bush administration, and housing programs financed by HUD utilize core components of this strategy. Since the implementation of the housing first model, chronic homelessness in the U.S. experienced a 27% decrease between 2010 and 2016.

In 2005, over 10 years before California, Utah implemented a statewide housing first model prioritizing permanent, affordable housing to people experiencing homelessness without mandating participation or continuation in supportive services to receive or retain that housing. Housing first reduces the overall costs incurred when localities provide social services to people where they live, rather than allowing them to continue to cycle through jails, emergency rooms, and treatment centers. Since its implementation, Utah has decreased its chronically homeless population from 1,932 in 2005 to 493 in 2019, a 74% decrease.

Using Utah as the model, housing first was embraced by California in 2015 through SB 1380 (Mitchell, Chapter 847, Statutes of 2016) which requires all housing programs in the state to adopt this model.

- 9) *Housing first fact-checks.* Those who criticize housing first tend to argue three main points: (a) housing first is “one size fits all”, (b) housing first does not provide adequate treatment to clients, and (c) housing first is not effective.
- a) *Housing first is the flexible, low-barrier homelessness solution.* Housing first is not housing only, nor does it preclude financing emergency shelters or other interim housing solutions. Rather, it means that the needs of people experiencing homelessness vary person by person, family by family. To that end, some people merely need stable, affordable housing while struggling with economic hardships, while others need wraparound services to address physical, behavioral, or substance abuse challenges.
- b) *Housing first does not mean housing only – it means housing “first”.* Housing first means that a person does not have to earn housing, whether interim or permanent; rather people are provided housing first, and in addition to any additional supports specific to their individual or familial needs. If anything, housing first is the opposite of “one-size-fits-all.”
- c) *Housing first is the data driven solution keeping people housed, longer.* According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, housing first has been tested again and again, and the overwhelming volume of research supports housing first; this is why federal and state homelessness programs currently require applicants to comply with housing first principles. For example, the Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative at the University of California San Francisco conducted a randomized control trial of a permanent supportive housing intervention in Santa Clara County on a housing first basis for those with the highest needs. Of those who received treatment, 86% were successfully housed and remained housed for three years. There was also a sharp drop in utilization of emergency psychiatric services among the treatment group. Further, providing people experiencing homelessness with housing and wrap around services is incredibly cost effective and reduces burdens on the taxpayer, who pay for emergency services and jails¹⁴.
- d) *Housing first does not hinder homeless shelters or navigation centers from receiving state funds.* For example, HEAP funds received by the County of Orange added an additional 250 year-round beds, and Round 1 of HHAPP received by the County of Orange provided critical funds to construct the Yale Navigation Center.

¹⁴ Maria C. Raven, Margot Kushel, Matthew J. Niedzwiecki. *A randomized trial of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless persons with high use of publicly funded services.* (University of California San Francisco, September 2020). <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1475-6773.13553>

- e) *Housing first saves the taxpayers money.* According to the most comprehensive homelessness cost study conducted in the United States released in 2015, by prioritizing housing opportunities for persistently homeless individuals with the highest costs, it is possible to obtain savings that more than offset the cost of housing. In Santa Clara County, the average pre-housing public cost was \$62,000 and the average post-housing cost was \$20,000, or a nearly \$43,000 annual reduction¹⁵. Another cost study, conducted in Los Angeles in 2009 found that public costs are overall reduced by 79% when homeless individuals are provided with permanent supportive housing¹⁶.
- 10) *Housing first topline takeaways.* The federal and state government recognized that housing first is the only evidence-based model for solving homelessness. Here are the key reasons:
- a) Tenants accessing housing first programs are able to move into housing faster than programs offering a more traditional approach.
 - b) Tenants using housing first programs stay housed longer and offer more housing stability than other programs.
 - c) Over 90% of tenants accessing housing first programs are able to retain housing stability.¹⁷
 - d) In general, tenants using housing first programs access services more often, have a greater sense of choice and autonomy, and are far less costly to public systems than tenants of other programs.
- 11) *But what about sober living facilities?* HUD has offered guidance for recovery housing or “sober living environment” options to ensure communities have effective housing and services options for people who have substance abuse disorders. This guidance provides that while HUD emphasizes the housing first approach, HUD also recognizes the importance of providing “individual choice to support various paths towards recovery.” Some people

¹⁵ Daniel Flaming, Halil Toros, and Patrick Burns. *Home Not Found: The Cost of Homelessness in Silicon Valley* (Economic Roundtable, 2015). http://economicrt.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Home_Not_Found_2015.pdf

¹⁶ Daniel Flaming, Patrick Burns, and Michael Matsunaga. *Where we Sleep: Costs when Homeless and Housed in Los Angeles*. (Economic Roundtable, 2009). http://economicrt.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Where_We_Sleep_2009.pdf

¹⁷ Ann Elizabeth Montgomery, Lindsay L Haill, Vincent Kane, and Dennis P. Culhane. *Housing Chronically Homeless Veterans: Evaluating the Efficacy of a Housing First Approach to HUD-VASH*. (Journal of Community Psychology, March 2013). <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jcop.21554>

pursuing recovery from addiction express a preference for an abstinence-focused residential or housing program where they can live among and be supported by a community of peers who are also focused on pursuing recovery from addiction – environments that are provided by Recovery Housing programs. However, this guidance states that supporting individual choice must also mean that a community is ensuring that housing options are available for people at all stages of recovery, including people who continue to use drugs or alcohol.¹⁸ In other words, if a person chooses an abstinence-focused/sober living program and relapses, in order to comply with housing first principles, it should not be treated as an automatic cause for eviction or termination. Therefore, recovery housing may offer individuals a choice to refrain from abusing substances, but if that person relapses or requires additional treatment to stabilize, the solution is not to return them and their families to the street.

- 12) *Let's be clear.* This bill would eliminate the requirement that state homelessness programs comply with housing first principles. California cannot be a housing first state and also fund non-housing first compliant programs. This bill would instead authorize state homelessness funds to finance programs that require a client to earn their housing and authorizes a client to be evicted should they relapse while in recovery. With the increased focus on accountability and state priority towards investing in data-driven programs that solve homelessness, this would likely lead to more people experiencing homelessness by diverting funds from programs with proven outcomes.
 - a) *What about “successful” non-housing first programs?* The author notes a handful of programs operated in California that have demonstrated “positive results” and are not following housing first principles. These programs are laudable for the work they do to help those that are indeed successful, but as a general matter, the evidence does not support the notion that non-housing first programs are successful in keeping people housed. As a state policy, and with limited resources, the state should focus on solutions that are evidence-based and data driven, reduce barriers to maintaining and accessing housing, and are least likely to return people to the streets. Should non-housing first programs wish to continue to operate and demonstrate success on an individual basis, they can access local and private investments.
 - b) *Relapse means automatic evictions.* The author notes that the programs proposed to be funded do not automatically evict someone for relapsing. While the programs highlighted by the author may not automatically evict a tenant for relapse or substance abuse as a general matter, others who do

¹⁸ “Recovery Housing Policy Brief”. (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, December 2015). <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Recovery-Housing-Policy-Brief.pdf>

automatically evict would qualify for state funds under the provisions in this bill. In turn, this would return families to the street. Housing first provides that if a tenant is disruptive to the other tenants, they can be evicted; it also provides, however, that relapse or substance abuse *alone* may not be a reason to evict a tenant. If homelessness programs offer choice consistent with HUD guidance, detailed above in Comment 11, they do not violate housing first principles.

- c) *What about court-ordered sobriety?* The author maintains that programs that wish to serve those who are serving a court order to maintain sobriety cannot comply with housing first principles; this is of particular importance for mothers seeking custody of their children. According to the opposition, however, housing first does not hinder a court order from standing, and bears no relationship to a person's housing situation. Should a person violate a court order, specified sanctions provided by the court will occur (such as penalties related to child custody). This would be no different from anyone living in a non-state subsidized housing unit who is subject to a court order.

Given that this bill would authorize the financing of programs that are not evidence based, increase barriers to accessing and maintaining housing, and increase the risk of individuals returning to the streets and financial burden on taxpayers, the committee may wish to restore the requirement for housing first policies to be a threshold requirement for state homelessness funds.

- 13) *Extending CEQA exemption for interim housing projects.* CEQA applies when a development project requires discretionary approval from a local government agency. When a local agency has the discretion to approve a project, its CEQA evaluation begins with deciding whether an activity qualifies as a project subject to CEQA review. If an activity is deemed a "project," the agency decides whether it is exempt from compliance with CEQA under either a statutory or a categorical exemption. Statutory exemptions are activities the Legislature has excluded from CEQA despite potential environmental impacts. If a project is statutorily exempt, it can be implemented without a CEQA evaluation. Many housing are subject to review under the CEQA.

In 2019, the legislature passed SB 450 (Umberg, Chapter 344, Statutes of 2019), which exempted, until January 1, 2025, interim motel housing projects from the requirements of CEQA. This bill would eliminate that sunset, which would facilitate the construction of interim units for persons experiencing homelessness.

- 14) *Author's amendments in committee.* **The author is proposing to amend the bill to extend the sunset to January 1, 2030, rather than eliminate the sunset all together. Due to timing, the committee may wish to consider making this change as committee amendments.**
- 15) *Opposition.* Those writing in opposition are opposed to the elimination of the housing first policy from state homelessness programs.
- 16) *Triple referral.* This bill passed out of the Senate Human Services Committee on April 19, 2022 on a 3-0 vote. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the unprecedented nature of the 2022 Legislative Session, all Senate Policy Committees are working under a compressed timeline. This timeline does not allow this bill to be referred and heard by more than two committees as a typical timeline would allow. In order to fully vet the contents of this measure for the benefit of Senators and the public, this analysis includes information from the other committees included in the original referral. This bill has also been referred to the Environmental Quality Committee.

According to the Senate Environmental Quality Committee:

“SB 1284 indefinitely extends the application of an existing CEQA exemption for interim motel housing projects, which convert hotels, motels, residential hotels, and hostels to supportive or transition housing. About 15 projects have utilized this exemption since its inception two years ago, most of the projects helping implement Project Homekey. Since the utilization of this exemption has, so far, been primarily tied to a program that uses both State and Federal funds, would it be more appropriate to extend the exemption’s sunset to allow the Legislature another “check in” point on the exemption’s efficacy? Originally enacted in 2020, the exemption was given a five year sunset to provide the Legislature with a future opportunity to re-examine the exemption and evaluate if modifications are needed. Normally, the Senate Environmental Quality Committee would be the committee charged with evaluating such extensions, but because of legislative hearing limitations, the committee does not get that opportunity. Because the exemption does not sunset until 2025, begs the question – what’s the rush?”

RELATED LEGISLATION:

SB 450 (Umberg, Chapter 344, Statutes of 2019) — exempted, until January 1, 2025, interim motel housing projects from the requirements of CEQA.

SB 1380 (Mitchell, Chapter 847, Statutes of 2016) — required a state agency or department that funds, implements, or administers a state program that provides housing or housing-related services to people experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, to adopt guidelines and regulations to include housing first policies. Also establishes the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC) – now referred to as CalICH – to oversee implementation of the housing first regulations and, among other things, identify resources, benefits, and services that can be access to prevent and end homelessness in California.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Friday, April 22, 2022.)

SUPPORT:

None received.

OPPOSITION:

California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Housing California
SV@Home Action Fund
Western Center on Law & Poverty

-- END --