



AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HIGH ROADS JOBS ACT (AB 2011)

Government Code §§ 65912.100-65912.140

INTRODUCTION

The Affordable Housing and High Road Jobs Act of 2022 (Chapter 647, Statutes of 2022), commonly referred to as “AB 2011,” was signed into law on September 28, 2022. The statute aims to address California’s housing shortage by facilitating and streamlining the approval process for qualifying multifamily housing developments on commercially zoned sites. By allowing housing developments in these locations “by-right,” without discretionary review and hearings, AB 2011 removes review process barriers and expedites the construction of much-needed affordable and mixed-income housing. The law took effect on July 1, 2023, and remains in effect until January 1, 2033 unless otherwise extended.

The Housing Law Fact Sheets provide an overview of existing laws which the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has statutory authority to enforce. The fact sheet does not constitute legal advice but is intended to be a resource for local agencies and decision-makers within California, including members of City Councils, Boards of Supervisors, and Planning Commissions.

KEY PROVISIONS

AB 2011 creates an optional streamlined, ministerial review process for housing projects on sites that allow commercial uses (office, retail, and parking). The ministerial process means that eligible projects cannot be denied based on subjective local discretion, are exempt from CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act), and must be evaluated solely based on the project’s compliance with the requirements of AB 2011. The statute also prohibits local governments from imposing additional fees or requirements based on a project’s eligibility for streamlined approval.

The statute contains two pathways:

- ▶ One hundred percent affordable lower income developments, and
- ▶ Mixed-income developments meeting specified affordability levels.

In addition to the affordable housing requirements, a development must comply with an array of other criteria for site eligibility and development-specific requirements (e.g., environmental criteria, replacement housing, limitations for vacant sites, and specified densities, among others). There is some variation in the requirements between the two different project pathways.

Labor Requirements. In exchange for streamlined review, developers must agree to provide the required affordable units and adhere to prevailing wage and labor standards in construction, requiring construction workers to be paid at least the general prevailing wage rate. For projects of 50 units or more, developers must also provide access to apprenticeship programs and healthcare expenditures for workers.

Exempt and Replace. The statute also allows local governments to exempt parcels from AB 2011 eligibility – and replace them with other parcels – if the local government

provides specific documentation and findings, including demonstrating that there would be no net loss in residential capacity.

Reporting. Local governments are required to report any AB 2011 projects as part of the annual progress reports (APR) due to HCD annually on April 1.

RECENT HCD TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE LETTERS

[City of Santa Ana](#),
December 10, 2024

Parcel exemptions are allowed only if local governments provide written findings demonstrating no net loss in housing capacity, including for lower-income units, and requires replacement sites to meet fair housing (AFFH) standards. The letter also confirms that exemptions are valid only if formally adopted through an ordinance with sufficient analysis.

LEGISLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Campus Development Zone, Site Criteria

[AB 893](#), Fong (2025); amended Gov. Code, §§ 65912.101, 65912.104, 65912.114, 65912.121, 65912.122, 65912.123, and 65912.124, and added Gov. Code, § 65912.103.5

AB 893 extends AB 2011’s by-right, streamlined, ministerial review process to qualifying student housing developments in “campus development zones” as defined in the statute. Additionally, AB 893 clarifies that a “site” for the purposes of AB 2011 compliance is only the area of the parcel(s) “being physically disturbed by construction.”

Objective Standards, Affordability and Site Criteria

[AB 2243](#), Wicks (2024); amended Gov. Code, §§ 65852.24, 65912.101, 65912.111, 65912.112, 65912.113, 65912.114, 65912.121, 65912.122, 65912.123, and 65912.124 and added Gov. Code, § 65912.106

AB 2243 builds upon AB 2011 by making comprehensive clarifications and changes. Some of these changes expanded where streamlined housing development could occur, for example, to allow mixed-income housing projects on regional mall sites and within proximity of a freeway provided the project incorporates specified building features. Other changes included clarifications about how AB 2011 works in combination with the State Density Bonus Law and how local inclusionary housing requirements apply to mixed-income developments.