

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 423, as introduced, Wiener. Land use: streamlined housing approvals: multifamily housing developments.

Existing law, the Planning and Zoning Law, authorizes a development proponent to submit an application for a multifamily housing development that is subject to a streamlined, ministerial approval process, as provided, and not subject to a conditional use permit, if the development satisfies specified objective planning standards, including, among others, that the development proponent has committed to record, prior to the issuance of the first building permit, a land use restriction or covenant providing that any lower or moderate-income housing units required, as specified, remain available at affordable housing costs, as defined, or rent to persons and families of lower or moderate-income for no less than specified periods of time. Existing law repeals these provisions on January 1, 2026.

This bill would authorize the Department of General Services to act in the place of a locality or local government, at the discretion of that department, for purposes of the ministerial, streamlined review for development on property owned by or leased to the state. The bill would delete the January 1, 2026, repeal date, thereby making these provisions operative indefinitely.

This bill would modify the above-described objective planning standards, including by deleting the standard that prohibits a multifamily housing development from being subject to the streamlined, ministerial approval process if the development is located in a coastal zone, and by providing an alternative definition for “affordable housing costs” for a development that dedicates 100% of units, exclusive of a manager’s unit or units, to lower income households. The bill would, among other modifications, delete the objective planning standards requiring development proponents to pay at least the general prevailing rate of per diem wages and utilize a skilled and trained workforce and would instead require a development proponent to certify to the local government that certain wage and labor standards will be met, including a requirement that all construction workers be paid at least the general prevailing rate of wages, as specified. The bill would require the Labor Commissioner to enforce the obligation to pay prevailing wages. By expanding the crime of perjury, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would specify that the requirements to pay prevailing wages, use a workforce participating in an apprenticeship, or provide health care expenditures do not apply to a project that consists of 10 or fewer units and is not otherwise a public work.

This bill would define “objective planning standards” to exclude specified standards, including local building codes, fire codes, other codes requiring detailed technical specifications, and standards that are not reasonably ascertainable by the local government within specified time limits, as described.

Existing law requires a local government to approve a development if the local government determines the development is consistent with the objective planning standards. Existing law requires, if the local government determines a submitted development is in conflict with any of the objective planning standards, the local government to provide the development proponent written documentation of the standards the development conflicts with and an explanation for the conflict within certain timelines depending on the size of the development. Existing law, the Housing Accountability Act, prohibits a local

agency from disapproving a housing development project, as described, unless it makes specified written findings.

This bill would instead require approval if a local government's planning director or any equivalent local government staff, including all relevant planning and permitting departments, determines the development is consistent with the objective planning standards. The bill would make conforming changes. The bill would prohibit a local government from requiring a development proponent to provide consultant studies, as described, or other studies or materials that are unnecessary to ascertain consistency with the objective planning standards.

The bill would, for purposes of these provisions, establish that the total number of units in a development includes (1) all projects developed on a site, regardless of when those developments occur, and (2) all projects developed on sites adjacent to a site developed pursuant to these provisions if, after January 1, 2023, the adjacent site had been subdivided from the site developed pursuant to these provisions.

Existing law authorizes the local government's planning commission or any equivalent board or commission responsible for review and approval of development projects, or as otherwise specified, to conduct any design review or public oversight of the development.

This bill would remove the above-described authorization to conduct public oversight of the development and would only authorize design review to be conducted by the local government's planning commission or any equivalent board or commission responsible for design review.

By imposing additional duties on local officials, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The bill would include findings that changes proposed by this bill address a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal affair and, therefore, apply to all cities, including charter cities.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for specified reasons.

DIGEST KEY

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes