

SB 50 and Similar Legislation Update

SB 50 (Wiener): Although the bill failed in the Senate last month, the author immediately introduced two new “placeholder” bills. It is widely expected that he will use one or the other of these bills sometime this year as a vehicle for re-introducing many of the same provisions from SB 50, perhaps as early as this month (the Senate deadline for introducing new bills is February 21). We have also heard from the California Fire Chiefs Association, who expressed serious concern that SB 50 “would have exacerbated our WUI [Wildland Urban Interface] issues and would not have fixed the core issues.” See message from Chief McGlaughlin of the Cal Chiefs: <http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Email-Message-from-Chief-Michael-McLaughlin.pdf>. We will continue to monitor and as necessary raise concerns, as “SB 50-like” bills move forward in the legislature in other forms.

AB 1279 (Bloom): This housing bill passed in the Assembly last year and is currently pending in three Senate committees, including the Environmental Quality Committee (our Senator Ben Allen is the committee chair and Senator Henry Stern, representing Malibu & Calabasas, is a member; both opposed SB 50 and expressed concern about safety risks for VHFHSZ areas due to increased density; Senate committee hearing dates not yet scheduled as of this writing). SB 1279 would mandate increased density (4-plexes allowed by right in single family zones) in so-called “high resource” areas and/or areas of “high opportunity.” The bill includes exemptions for the coastal zone and VHFHSZ areas -- but also contains the same unclear “exception to the exception” which we objected to in connection with SB 50. We have asked for clarification as to whether the bill applies to the Palisades and Brentwood and also requested that Asm. Bloom remove the “exception to the exception.” See recent message to Assemblymember Bloom, approved by the PPCC and BCC Chairs (cc’s to Senators Allen & Stern); we will attempt to follow up: <http://pacpalicc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Message-to-Asm.-Bloom-re-AB-1279.pdf>. See the bill text: http://www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB1279.

SB 330 (Skinner): This complicated housing bill passed in the legislature and went into effect as of 1/1/20. In a nutshell, the bill mandates that local agencies provide for vesting rights for certain discretionary development projects subject to the bill’s provisions, via streamlined preliminary application processes. The City Planning Dept. has now developed procedures for the bill’s implementation. See various links to information about these procedures on the Planning Dept. website: <https://planning.lacity.org/development-services/preliminary-application-review-program>.

*By Chris Spitz, PPCC Secretary
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