



NEWS ADVISORY

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Contact:
Matthew Hymel

COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR

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Marin County Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Drive
Suite 325
San Rafael, CA 94903
415 473 6358 T
CRS Dial 711

mhymel@marincounty.org
www.marincounty.org

Daniel Eilerman

DEPUTY COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR

Marin County Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Drive
Suite 325
San Rafael, CA 94903
415 473 7364 T
CRS Dial 711

Deilerman@marincounty.org
www.marincounty.org

Housing Density Bill Heads to Governor's Desk

Assemblyman Levine's AB 1537 approved by California Senate, Assembly

San Rafael, CA – A Marin County-sponsored bill that would recognize the County and two of its cities as suburban rather than metropolitan for the purposes of future housing densities will be placed on the desk of Governor Jerry Brown following its approval Thursday in the California Senate and Assembly concurrence Friday.

Assembly Bill 1537, authored by Assemblymember Marc Levine of San Rafael, would lower the default density of future housing developments from 30 units per acre to 20 units if Brown signs the bill. The Governor has until September 30 to act on the bill.

Marin County, the City of Novato and the City of San Rafael were designated by the state as metropolitan when default densities were first developed in 2004. Marin and its cities were then assigned the same default affordable housing density as the City of San Francisco simply because they are contiguous with San Francisco and included in the San Francisco Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Many residents in Marin have voiced concern over the metropolitan designation because it is much more aligned with the character of large cities than with suburban areas such as Sonoma County. Marin's remaining cities and towns are already at the more suburban density of 20 units per acre, and AB 1537 will create a common suburban density of 20 units per acre countywide.

In a recent joint statement, Levine and Marin County Supervisor Kate Sears, who serves as the current Board of Supervisors President, wrote that, "AB 1537 is a common-sense solution to a 10-year-old problem. There is no doubt that Marin is better characterized as a suburban county, and it is time state law reflected that fact."

AB 1537 is limited to altering the law in Marin only and would apply to the next eight-year housing cycle from 2015-2023.

"Marin County has sought several times in recent years to amend the

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County's default housing density to be more consistent with its suburban character," Sears added, "and this bill with bipartisan support would enable the County to meet its affordable housing responsibilities while better reflecting the unique qualities in each of our communities.

"Assemblymember Levine should be commended for his tireless efforts in advancing this bill through the Legislature. We will need to work hard to urge the Governor's signature on the bill."

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