

SENATE BILL SB-24

Introduced by Senator Aisha Wahab (D-10)

An act relating to Energy: affordability and efficiency program.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB-24, Aisha Wahab (D-10). Energy: affordability and efficiency program.

Existing law authorizes the California Public Utilities Commission to regulate public utilities and establish programs relating to energy efficiency, energy conservation, and assistance for utility customers. The existing law also provides programs intended to reduce energy costs for qualifying low-income households.

This bill would establish the California Energy Affordability and Efficiency Program within the California Public Utilities Commission to expand access to energy-efficiency improvements for residential customers experiencing high energy costs. The program would prioritize households that experience a high energy burden and households located in disadvantaged or historically underserved communities.

The bill would require electrical and gas corporations subject to the jurisdiction of the commission to participate in the program as directed by the commission and to coordinate existing energy-efficiency resources to improve access for eligible customers.

The bill would be implemented using existing energy-efficiency program resources and other funds lawfully available to the commission. This bill would not appropriate funds from the General Fund.

Vote: Majority. Appropriations/fiscal: yes. Local program: yes.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following::

- a) California faces a significant shortage of housing that contributes to high housing costs for renters and prospective homeowners.
- (b) Communities throughout California benefit when housing development is predictable, transparent, and responsive to local housing needs.
- (c) Reducing unnecessary administrative delays can lower development costs and allow housing to be constructed more efficiently.
- (d) The state should encourage the production of housing while maintaining requirements intended to promote affordability and responsible development.

SEC. 2. The Housing Affordability and Production Grant Program is hereby established within the Department of Housing and Community Development.

- (a) The department shall administer the program and award grants to eligible cities and counties.

(b) A city or county shall be eligible for a grant if it adopts procedures that satisfy all of the following requirements:

- (1) Establishes publicly available processing timelines for qualifying housing development applications.
- (2) Publishes applicable housing development standards, fees, and application requirements on its internet website.
- (3) Establishes a designated point of contact for applicants seeking approval of qualifying housing developments.
- (4) Provides applicants with written notice identifying incomplete application materials within a reasonable period established by the department.
- (5) Demonstrates that the jurisdiction is taking measurable steps to facilitate the development of housing consistent with its adopted housing plan.

SEC. 3.

(a) For purposes of this act, "qualifying housing development" means a residential development project that satisfies the standards established by the Department of Housing and Community Development and is consistent with applicable state and local housing requirements.

(b) In awarding grants, the department shall prioritize jurisdictions that demonstrate all of the following:

- (1) Significant housing affordability challenges.
- (2) A shortage of housing relative to identified regional or local housing needs.
- (3) A commitment to increasing the production of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

SEC. 4.

(a) A city or county receiving a grant pursuant to this act shall use the funds for activities that improve the efficiency and transparency of its housing approval process.

(b) Eligible activities may include all of the following:

- (1) Updating permitting systems and online application systems.
- (2) Training local planning and permitting staff.
- (3) Improving public access to housing development requirements and fees.
- (4) Establishing systems to track the status of housing development applications.
- (5) Other activities approved by the department that directly improve the timely processing of qualifying housing developments.

SEC. 5.

(a) The sum of thirty million dollars (\$30,000,000) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of

Housing and Community Development for purposes of implementing this act.

(b) The department may use no more than 5 percent of the amount appropriated pursuant to subdivision (a) for program administration, technical assistance, and evaluation.

(c) The remaining funds shall be distributed as grants to eligible cities and counties.

SEC. 6.

(a) The Department of Housing and Community Development shall establish program guidelines no later than July 1, 2026.

(b) The department shall begin accepting grant applications no later than January 1, 2027.

SEC. 7.

Nothing in this act shall be construed to exempt a housing development from applicable health, safety, environmental, building, or housing requirements established by state law.

SEC. 8.

The Department of Housing and Community Development shall submit a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2029, describing the number of jurisdictions receiving grants, the amount of funding distributed, and the activities funded pursuant to this act.