



April 2, 2021

Hon. David Chiu, Chair  
Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: OPPOSE AB 68 (Salas) as amended 3/18/21**

Dear Chairman,

Livable California, a 501(c)4 non-profit organization, provides policy education affecting all Californians and represents over 10,000 followers committed to critical aspects of state policy. We support truly affordable housing and land use decisions made at the local level of government.

We Oppose AB 68 which creates a housing appeals committee in the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). An applicant for a conditional use permit or other discretionary approval for a housing development project could appeal the decision of a city or county to this committee, asking it to overturn a locally denied application or conditions or an approval with conditions that render the project infeasible. This is unreasonable and inconstituent with local needs.

Do we really want to use public resources to review thousands of projects, when there are already local appeal boards, state courts and many other publicly-funded avenues for a project to be well considered and appealed?

The committee would not have jurisdiction if a city has permitted an unspecified percentage of low income housing. This furthers the weaponization of RHNA, which used to be a collaborative process, but now is now being used as a divisive tool by the state.

This bill is part of a disturbing trend in which HCD is being thrust into the role of a state housing policing division. That trend includes the governor's 2021 budget, which contains a plan to create a Housing Accountability Unit (HAU) within HCD, and other bills proposed this year.

California is overproducing market-rate housing, but the state is falling further behind each year in meeting targets for affordable housing in the lower income

categories. We are deeply concerned over efforts to shift blame to the cities and away from the state's failure to fund or to produce low-income or moderate-income housing. This dates to 2011, [when legislators defunded affordable housing](#).

Only the state can make a dent, but we see no serious funding. Meanwhile, cities are punished for failures that they have no resources to correct. Low-income and affordable housing requires major funding. The state should focus on helping the cities fund affordability, not punish them with ineffective bills like AB 68.

We strongly **OPPOSE AB 68**.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of Livable California

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Hall", written over a horizontal line.

Rick Hall, President

T Keith Gurnee, Member

Carey White, Member

Isaiah Madison, Member