



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA

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City of Glendale, California

September 11, 2025

The Honorable Gavin Newsom

Governor of California

1021 O Street, Suite 9000

Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: State Housing Mandates and AB 130's Impact on Local Communities

Dear Governor Newsom,

Since the elimination of redevelopment agencies (RDAs) in 2012, the City of Glendale's ability to retain local control over development has been chipped away year after year by a litany of housing bills designed to expand ministerial or by-right approval processes. While we respect the urgency of California's housing crisis, the way forward must be through collaboration with cities to allow growth in ways that make sense for our communities. Instead, cities have been virtually shut out of the process.

Recent laws have weakened local control, overridden adopted general plans, community plans, specific plans and zoning, and has left residents seeking explanations from officials when state mandates limit their options.

The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process exemplifies this disconnect. RHNA assigns impossible housing targets that do not, in practice, produce the level of affordable housing intended. Housing Elements across the state have been locked in limbo for years, leaving cities like Glendale exposed to draconian penalties—loss of critical funding, legal challenges, and the Builder's Remedy. Despite years of compliance efforts, these laws have failed to deliver affordability while increasing distrust between residents, their local government, and government in general.

Most recently, Assembly Bill 130, signed into law on June 30, 2025, has further stripped cities of their ability to manage growth responsibly. By creating new statutory CEQA exemptions for qualifying infill housing projects, AB 130 eliminates one of the last meaningful tools cities had to study and mitigate environmental and neighborhood impacts.

Projects like the Glendale Garden Apartments demolition and redevelopment housing project—and soon, the former Sears site on Central Avenue—now move forward without Environmental Impact Reports and without the City's ability to address neighborhood impacts on a case-by-case basis.



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Local control over development continues to erode. Each year, numerous bills are signed into law that override locally adopted general plans, disregard zoning and land use standards, and chip away at the ability of residents and elected officials to shape growth in a coordinated, community-driven manner.

Laws such as SB 423, SB 4, SB 9 and SB 10 have already diminished local planning authority. AB 130 is now another example of Sacramento removing discretion and silencing local voices.

Even more troubling, proposals like SB 79 will override General Plans altogether and dictate height and density without regard to local zoning or community input. Glendale residents deserve better than one-size-fits-all mandates imposed without regard for context or consequence.

Significant and dramatic changes to policy continue to erode trust in local government, compromising the City's ability to craft policies that meet State objectives and respect local goals. The City has been proactive in housing production, and these measures have been punitive despite significant success. From the largest affordable housing development under construction in the state, to significant production of housing units and ADUs, to an award-winning Section 8 team; Glendale has been committed to its role and responsibility in producing housing while only receiving punitive approaches akin to cities that have avoided their responsibility.

Governor, Glendale is committed to doing its part to address California's housing crisis, and prior to the dissolution of redevelopment agencies was best positioned to undertake affordable housing development. But the steady stream of laws stripping away local control is undermining public trust, disempowering residents, and producing outcomes that are not aligned with community needs. We urge your administration to pause, reassess, and work with cities to restore balance—supporting housing growth while respecting local planning authority.

Respectfully,


Ara Najarian
Mayor
City of Glendale