

Senate Bill 2 (Cedillo) Fact Sheet

Summary: SB 2 strengthens state law by ensuring that every jurisdiction identifies potential sites where new emergency shelters can be located without discretionary review by the local government. It also increases protections for providers seeking to open a new emergency shelter, transitional housing or supportive housing development, by limiting the instances in which local governments can deny such developments. Applicable to all cities and counties in California, SB 2 takes effect January 1, 2008, and will impact all housing element updates due after this date, as well as those that were due prior to 2008, but are being submitted for the first time after January 1, 2008. Subject to important limitations described below, SB 2:

- Requires all cities and counties (“localities”) to provide at least one zoning category in which emergency shelters can be located without discretionary approval from the local government. The zoning category must be identified in the locality’s housing element, and include sites with sufficient capacity to meet the local need for emergency shelter.
- Requires that all localities provide at least one such site.
- Expands the Housing Accountability Act, to prohibit localities from denying a proposal to build an emergency shelter, transitional housing or supportive housing if it is needed and otherwise consistent with the locality’s zoning and development standards.

Key Elements: The changes created by SB 2 should be thought of in two categories: (1) Planning for emergency shelters; and (2) siting of emergency shelters, transitional housing and supportive housing.

Planning for Emergency Shelters

Each locality must identify in its housing element at least one zoning category in which homeless shelters are allowed, without a conditional use permit or other discretionary review. More particularly, the locality must:

- **Identify Need:** Under current law, the housing element must include an estimate of the number of persons in need of emergency shelter in the jurisdiction. SB 2 requires the analysis to consider both seasonal and annual need.
- **Provide sites for new emergency shelters:** SB 2 requires the local government to show in its housing element that it has one or more zoning categories that allow emergency shelters without a conditional use permit or other discretionary review. The local government cannot use discretionary criteria to deny the project; if it meets certain objective criteria, the shelter must be approved.

The identified zone or zones must have sufficient capacity to meet all of the locality’s identified need for emergency shelter. For example, if a locality determines that it has an unmet need of 100 persons who are homeless, the zone or zones identified must consist of sites that have sufficient capacity to accommodate a shelter or shelters for 100 people. Regardless of the identified need, each jurisdiction must identify at least one such site.

- **Rezone If Necessary:** If the locality does not currently have such a zone or the zone is not sufficient, it must include a program to amend its zoning ordinance to provide a sufficient zone or zones within one year of the adoption of its housing element.

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- **Eliminate Onerous Standards:** The local government can establish objective development and management standards for the operation of emergency shelters, such as the size, parking standards, lighting, and others set forth in the law. However, the locality must demonstrate that any management or development standards as well as any permit processing standards that it applies are objective and actually encourage the creation of emergency shelters.
- **Exceptions for Compliant Cities:** If the local government can demonstrate that it has an emergency shelter or shelters that meet all of its existing need, it must still designate a zone or zones where emergency shelters are permitted, but it may require a conditional or discretionary use permit. In addition, any city with an existing by-right process for emergency shelters that is in compliance with the standards set forth in SB 2 need only describe its ordinance and how it meets the requirements of the law.

Finally, the bill gives credit to jurisdictions that are successfully implementing a supportive housing program model under the jurisdiction's 10-year plan to End Chronic Homelessness, by allowing a reduction in the need to account for supportive housing units available in the community. To take advantage of this credit, the jurisdiction must show that the units are (1) identified in the plan; and (2) either currently vacant or have all of the necessary funding to allow construction during the planning period.

- **Multi-Jurisdictional Agreements:** Localities may meet some of their need by entering into an agreement with up to two other adjacent local governments to provide a joint facility provided the emergency shelter will be developed within two years of the beginning of the planning period. For example, two adjoining cities and a county may agree to jointly fund an emergency shelter, and count that shelter toward their identified need. The participating jurisdictions must adopt an agreement which, among other things, allocates a portion of the new shelter capacity to each jurisdiction.
- **Transitional and Supportive Housing:** The bill clarifies that the local government must analyze any constraints to the development of supportive housing, transitional housing or emergency shelters. It also provides that transitional housing and supportive housing must be treated the same as any other residential use within the same zone. For example, when supportive housing is allowed in a multifamily residential zone, the local government cannot impose any additional restrictions on supportive housing than what are imposed on other multifamily units.

Siting of Emergency Shelters, Transitional and Supportive Housing

The bill also ensures that local governments do not unreasonably deny approval for needed emergency shelters, transitional housing or supportive housing. The California Housing Accountability Act (formerly referred to as the Anti-NIMBY statute) prohibits discrimination against certain types of permanent housing for lower-income households. SB 2 expands this law to cover emergency shelters, and clarifies that it protects transitional and supportive housing, as well.

As a result, except under very limited exceptions, if a new emergency shelter is proposed on a site that is zoned to allow that use, and the local government has not met the need for emergency shelter identified in its housing element, the local government must approve the shelter. Similarly, transitional or supportive housing projects that are consistent with the zoning for the proposed site may not be denied if the city has not yet met its need for new housing units affordable to the income levels to be served by the proposed project, except under limited circumstances.