

June 25, 2024

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Housing Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SUPPORT – AB 2485 (Carrillo) – Increasing Transparency and Accuracy of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment Determination

Dear Chair Skinner:

On behalf of the Madera County Transportation Commission, I am pleased to write in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 2485, which seeks to ensure an accurate and transparent Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) determination.

The RHNA is a state-mandated, local program in which California communities plan for housing to welcome all our current and future residents resulting from population, employment, and housing growth. At the beginning of this process, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) provides a RHNA determination to each regional Council of Governments (COG). The COGs receive the RHNA determination from HCD and develop a methodology to distribute the need to individual cities and counties, which must then plan for their share of the regional need by updating the Housing Elements of their General Plans.

Given the importance of the RHNA program to alleviate the state's housing crisis, accompanied by the sheer magnitude of needed housing compared to what has been built in the past, there is a severe risk to the credibility of the process if it is insufficiently transparent, credible, and robust. AB 2485 would mitigate such risks by improving the development of the RHNA determination and ensuring its accuracy and transparency in two pivotal ways. First, AB 2485 would establish procedures for HCD to publicize its data sources, analyses, and methodology before finalizing a region's regional determination. Second, AB 2485 requires HCD to establish and convene a panel of experts to advise the department on its assumptions, data, and analyses.

If a local Housing Element is based on an inaccurate RHNA determination, that could directly translate to housing units that need to be accounted for and thus remain unbuilt. This is even more critical given that RHNA accounts for future growth and current needs. In a March 2022 letter to the Legislature, the California State Auditor found that two of the three COG regions it studied had received underassessed housing needs. Therefore, the determinations provided to each region and the housing allocation provided to each jurisdiction must be as accurate as possible while ensuring that the communities using these numbers are confident in that accuracy.

MCTC is committed to the RHNA policy goals of AB 2485, and we are pleased to support this critical bill. We look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure its successful passage. Please get in touch with our legislative advocate, Gus Khouri, at gus@khouriconsult.com or 916-605-8975 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Patricia Taylor
Executive Director

cc: Members of the Senate Housing Committee
The Honorable Juan Carrillo, Assemblymember, 39th District
The Honorable Marie Alvarado-Gil, Senator, 4th District
The Honorable Anna Caballero, Senator, 14th District
The Honorable Jim Patterson, Assemblymember, 8th District
The Honorable Esmeralda Soria, Senator, 27th District
Alison Hughes, Chief Consultant, senate Housing Committee