



# CITY OF MERCED

**MERCED**

March 24, 2025

Assemblymember Matt Haney  
Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee  
California State Capitol  
Sacramento CA 95814

**RE: AB 36 (Soria): Streamlining Prohousing Designations – SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Haney:

On behalf of the City of Merced, I am pleased to write in support of AB 36 (Soria), which integrates the application for the Prohousing Designation Program (PDP) with the housing element update cycle to help small prohousing local governments with limited resources better qualify for state housing and infrastructure programs.

AB 36 directs the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to use the information cities with populations under 50,000 persons and counties under 200,000 already provide in their housing elements to determine their eligibility for the PDP. Additionally, the bill extends the time until prohousing designations expire for an additional two years.

The City of Merced, located in California's Central Valley, is a growing community committed to sustainable development and housing accessibility. With a population of approximately 90,000, Merced serves as a regional hub for education, commerce, and agriculture. Home to the University of California, Merced, the city is focused on fostering economic growth while addressing the housing needs of its residents. Through proactive policies and strategic planning, Merced continues to work toward expanding housing opportunities and infrastructure to support its diverse and evolving community.

The PDP designates local governments going above and beyond the requirements of state housing law to promote housing development in their communities as "prohousing", rewarding them with priority access to critical housing and infrastructure programs. However, the application for the PDP is complex and requires extensive documentation, making it difficult for rural jurisdictions with limited staff to apply even when they have adopted strong prohousing policies. AB 36 eases the administrative burden on smaller cities and counties by having HCD analyze the information local governments already provide in their housing elements to



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determine whether they qualify as prohousing. This minimizes unnecessary duplication of work by local governments with limited resources without lowering the standards to be designated as prohousing. To combat California's housing crisis, we must equitably recognize and incentivize the work local governments of all sizes are doing to promote housing development.

For these reasons, the City of Merced is proud to support AB 36 and respectfully requests an "AYE" vote.

Sincerely,

Matthew Serratto  
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