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CBIA Sponsors Bill to Preserve Solution to Severe Housing Crisis with Affordable Climate and Fire Resilient Homes in Master Planned Communities

SACRAMENTO - The California Building Industry Association (CBIA) announced today that it is sponsoring legislation to protect California's ability to meet the urgent need for more homes by preserving the development of fire-safe and climate resilient master planned communities.

The Wildfire Land Use Planning Act will be introduced this week by Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva (D-65) and principal co-author, Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh. The measure seeks to address California's housing shortage and climate change concerns by creating high standards for homebuilding in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

"More homes that middle class families can afford are urgently needed to address California's severe housing crisis," said Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva. "Development of carefully planned fire-safe and climate resilient communities is an important strategy to meet our state's housing needs and climate goals."

"Homeownership remains a cornerstone to building generational wealth, but inequities in homeownership persist," said Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh. "We need more homes that are energy-efficient, fire-resilient and affordable so middle-income families, including younger Californians, can enjoy the benefits of homeownership while being cognizant of a changing landscape as it relates to very high fire hazard severity zones."

Master-planned communities built to modern standards offer a tremendous opportunity to provide critically needed climate resilient and fire-safe housing.

"Given the severity of our current housing crisis, and evidence that fire-safe and energy efficient building standards work, development of thoughtful master planned communities is a key strategy for meeting California's housing needs," said CBIA President and CEO Dan Dunmoyer. "We appreciate the leadership of Assemblymember Quirk-Silva and Senator Ochoa Bogh in addressing California's housing and climate crises."

New master planned communities must go through a strenuous environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act and are planned, approved and implemented with numerous fire-safety and energy efficiency features and measures. California Building Code standards adopted over a decade ago, known as Chapter 7A standards, effectively reduce fire risks to homes built in the wildland-urban interface areas. When homes are built with these standards as part of a properly planned and mitigated master planned community, the risk of significant structural loss is extremely low.

The Wildfire Land Use Planning Act will require additional robust wildfire protection requirements for future master planned communities without undermining already approved projects that incorporate modern building standards. Safety requirements for homebuilding in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones will include:

- Fire-hardened homes built to the latest Chapter 7A standards
- Community-wide fuel breaks, fire-resistant landscaping, and green belting
- Perpetual funding, maintenance and enforcement through an Home Owners Assoc.
- Appropriate and reliable fire access and evacuation routes
- Adequate water supplies (studied pursuant to SB 610)
- Residential fire sprinklers
- Undergrounded project utilities
- Community design and siting to minimize fire risks (e.g., slope setbacks)
- New fire stations, fire equipment and/or funding for firefighters to provide for a rapid initial fire attack where it did not previously exist.

The need for more homes in California is dire. According to [California's Department of Housing and Community Development](#), California's current housing challenges include:

- Not enough housing being built: During the last ten years, housing production averaged fewer than 80,000 new homes each year, and ongoing production continues to fall far below the projected need of 180,000 additional homes annually.
- Increased inequality and lack of opportunities: Lack of supply and rising costs are compounding growing inequality and limiting advancement opportunities for younger Californians.
- Too much of peoples' incomes are going toward rent: The majority of California renters — more than 3 million households — pay more than 30 percent of their income toward rent, and nearly one-third — more than 1.5 million households — pay more than 50 percent of their income toward rent.
- Fewer people becoming homeowners: Overall homeownership rates are at their lowest since the 1940s, and Black and Latino homeownership rates are the lowest among California ethnic groups.

About the California Building Industry Association

The California Building Industry Association is a statewide trade association based in Sacramento representing thousands of member companies including homebuilders, trade contractors, architects, engineers, designers, suppliers and industry professionals in the homebuilding, multi-family and mixed-use development markets.

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