

Recent laws to address California's housing supply and homelessness crisis are being credited as the end of single-family zoning. The State Legislature has passed numerous pieces of housing legislation in each legislative session. This year, more than 30 individual pieces of housing legislation were enacted into law.

However, some bills removed infrastructure fees and mitigations that cities rely on for impacts and city services. Many bills contain environmental exemptions and few require affordable housing, doing virtually nothing to increase the supply of desperately-needed affordable housing. In particular, working class and communities of color could be at risk.

Among the housing laws passed in recent years is the ability to convey an Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADU) as separate property. Another is the property does not have to be "owner-occupied." The theory is increasing supply reduces price. However, when building additional housing, the other housing surrounding it tends to reflect local market rates, rather than suppressing prices. Selling or renting such units is subject to the open economy. Homeowners and investors are finding that ADU real estate strategies compliment their long-term rental portfolios.

The outcome is while increasing the supply of smaller housing, the price is still unattainable by many. Low-income and minority communities often are exposed to cumulative environmental burdens. Increasing population density by concentrating people through suburban lot splits near uses such as airports, ports, and railyards increases the amount of people exposed to pollutants and other potential safety issues. Where is the equity in that?