

Senate Bill Extends and Expands CEQA Streamlining Process

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Governor Gavin Newsom recently signed into law [Senate Bill \(SB\) 7](#), the “Housing + Jobs Expansion & Extension Act”, which extends and expands California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining provisions. As previously discussed in our February blog post, [“California Senate Returns Its Focus to Housing in 2021-2022 Legislative Session,”](#) SB 7 is the first bill from the Senate’s “Building Opportunities for All” housing package to be signed and enacted this year. SB 7 extends through 2025 the streamlined CEQA administrative and judicial review procedures developed for Environmental Leadership Development Projects (ELDPs) under Assembly Bill (AB) 900 in 2011. AB 900 established a process to expedite legal challenges for large housing, clean energy, and manufacturing projects with a capital investment of at least \$100 million. In an effort to increase housing and job opportunities in California, SB 7 expands streamlining eligibility to smaller affordable housing projects. Specifically, housing projects on infill sites with an investment between \$15-\$100 million that meet specified labor and environmental standards and include at least 15 percent affordable housing are now eligible under SB 7. SB 7 also clarifies that the deadline to resolve legal challenges to ELDPs under the expedited judicial review process is 270 days from the filing of the certified record of proceedings, including appeals to the court of appeal and the Supreme Court.

After signing SB 7, Governor Newsom commented: “[c]utting red tape to save time and remove barriers to production helps us meet the urgent need for more housing while creating good jobs and preserving important environmental review.” Twenty projects have been approved under AB 900, but by extending eligibility to smaller affordable housing projects, SB 7 now broadens the ability of affordable housing developers to take advantage of these CEQA streamlining opportunities.

The other bills that comprise the Senate’s “Building Opportunities for All” housing package continue to make their way through legislative committees, and we will track their progress throughout the legislative session.

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