



ASSEMBLY MEMBER

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DISTRICT 54



AB 2910: Adaptive Reuse Building Regulations

Bill Summary

[AB 2910](#) enables Prohousing jurisdictions with compliant Housing Elements to adopt alternative building regulations to facilitate the conversion of commercial or industrial buildings to residential units.

Existing Law

Authorizes a city or county to adopt alternative building standards for the conversion of commercial or industrial quarters to living and work quarters (HSC Sec. 17958.11).

Provides that alternative building standards for living and work quarters shall apply in geographic areas specifically designated for their occupancy or expressly permitted in a redevelopment area (HSC Sec. 17958.11).

Provides that alternative building standards for living and work quarters are not required to comply with state building standards but must protect the public health, safety, and welfare (HSC Sec. 17958.11).

Background

California Health and Safety Code Section 17958.11 was enacted in 1979 to allow local jurisdictions to establish alternative standards for conversion projects that would not be allowed otherwise in a traditional change of use project. However, this law narrowly applies to joint living and work quarters given the context at the time that focused on creating safer living standards for housing for artists, who often illegally occupied commercial and industrial spaces as artist-in-residence units.

Living and work quarters can be occupied by a family that is maintaining a common household but

not more than four unrelated persons. The space must have cooking facilities and bathrooms that meet state building standards. There must also be adequate working space reserved for and regularly used by at least one person living in the building. Commercial and industrial buildings converted to living and work quarters are not subject to all state building standards however, any alternative building standards local governments adopt must protect against public health, safety, and welfare concerns.

Need for AB 2910

The COVID-19 pandemic spurred a significant shift in the way people work, reducing the amount of time spent working in offices and increasing the amount of work done on a hybrid schedule or entirely remotely. However, trends in remote and hybrid work have stabilized with day-to-day office occupancy hovering around 50 percent in city centers across California, while office vacancy rates generally continue to climb as tenants allow their leases to expire or downsize.

Adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial buildings has the potential to provide quality, infill residential units, particularly in places that lack vacant sites for new housing developments, offering a potential solution to meeting both housing supply and environmental sustainability goals.

In order to provide a foundation for alternative standards for conversions of offices to new uses, including housing and hotels, both the California Health and Safety Code and local building codes must be updated to provide expanded flexibility for a broad range of adaptive reuse projects.

AB 2910 enables Prohousing jurisdictions with compliant Housing Elements to adopt alternative building regulations to facilitate the conversion of commercial or industrial buildings to residential units.

Before a city or county may adopt alternative building regulations, the local jurisdiction must submit their proposed regulations to the Department of Housing and Community Development, Building Standards Commission, Energy Commission, State Fire Marshal, and Public Utilities Commission. The state entities may offer technical assistance or request revisions to the proposed regulations, within a specified timeframe, in order to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

If revisions are requested, the local jurisdiction shall have a specified timeframe to respond with the requested revisions or submit written findings justifying why the requested revisions are not necessary to protect public health, safety, and welfare. The state entities will then have a specified timeframe to approve or deny the proposed alternative building regulations.

Support

Central City Association of Los Angeles (Sponsor)

For More Information

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