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BAHFA to Place \$20 Billion Affordable Housing Bond Measure on November Ballot

First-of-its-Kind Measure to Help Build and Preserve More Than 70,000 Homes



Credit: Joey Kotfica

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The [Bay Area Housing Finance Authority \(BAHFA\)](#) today adopted a resolution to place a general obligation bond measure on the November 5 general election ballot in each of the nine Bay Area counties to raise and distribute \$20 billion for the production of new affordable housing and the preservation of existing affordable housing throughout the region. BAHFA is jointly governed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)'s Executive Board and by the BAHFA Board, which is comprised of the same membership as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

Today's unanimous vote by the BAHFA Board marks the final discretionary step in the process to place the measure on the November ballot. Under state law, each Bay Area county will now take a non-discretionary, ministerial vote to place the measure on the ballot in that county, in accordance with election deadlines.

The BAHFA bond measure currently would require approval by at least two-thirds of voters to pass. Voters throughout California this November will consider Assembly Constitutional Amendment 1 (ACA 1) — which would set the voter threshold at 55 percent for voter approval of bond measures for affordable housing and infrastructure. If a majority of California voters support ACA 1, the 55 percent threshold will apply to the BAHFA bond measure.

“Today's vote is the culmination of so many years of effort by so many people all around our region,” observed BAHFA Chair and Napa County Supervisor Alfredo Pedroza. “The Bay Area's longstanding housing affordability problems affect all of us, our friends, our neighbors and our family members. This vote is about preserving opportunity for everyone.”

The proposed BAHFA bond measure calls for 80 percent of the funds to go directly to the nine Bay Area counties (and to the cities of San Jose, Oakland, Santa Rosa and Napa, each of

which carries more than 30 percent of their county's low-income housing need), in proportion to each county's tax contribution to the bond. In consultation with its cities and towns, each county would determine how to distribute bond funds to best meet its jurisdictions' most pressing housing needs. These distributions would include:

Alameda County: \$2 billion

Contra Costa County: \$1.9 billion

Marin County: \$699 million

Napa County: \$118 million

San Francisco County: \$2.4 billion

San Mateo County: \$2.1 billion

Santa Clara County: \$2.4 billion

Solano County: \$489 million

Sonoma County: \$553 million

City of Napa: \$246 million

City of Oakland: \$765 million

City of San Jose: \$2.1 billion

City of Santa Rosa: \$242 million

The remaining 20 percent, or \$4 billion, would be used by BAHFA to establish a new regional program to fund affordable housing construction and preservation projects throughout the Bay Area. Most of this money (at least 52 percent) must be spent on new construction of affordable homes, but every city and county receiving a bond allocation must also spend at least 15 percent of the funds to preserve existing affordable housing.

Almost one-third of funds may be used for the production or preservation of affordable housing, or for housing-related uses such as infrastructure needed to support new housing.

The California Constitution currently does not allow bond funds to be used for tenant protections such as rental assistance, but planned investments in new housing and affordable housing preservation will protect tens of thousands of low-income renters and vulnerable residents.

The BAHFA Board today also adopted resolutions approving the Authority's Business Plan and its Regional Expenditure Plan, which explain the prioritization for use of the funds that would be directly administered by BAHFA.

Oversight and accountability provisions to be included in the BAHFA bond measure include the creation of a special bond proceeds account; establishment of a Citizens' Oversight Committee that would review the expenditure of bond proceeds and report to the BAHFA and ABAG Executive Boards on whether the funds were spent appropriately; an independent annual performance audit; a requirement that all bond-projects be consistent with state laws on labor standards; a requirement that administrative costs not exceed the amount prescribed in state law; and a prohibition against any public official who voted to send the ballot measure to the voters bidding on any work funded with proceeds from the bond.

The ABAG Executive Board voted unanimously at its April meeting to adopt a resolution approving BAHFA's Business Plan and its Expenditure Plan, as well as to endorse placement of the bond measure on the November ballot. In her remarks preceding the vote, ABAG President and Napa County Supervisor Belia Ramos noted, "This is a remarkable milestone moment for our region. Housing stability is essential for our community to thrive, and this proposal is a once-in-a-generation opportunity."