Bill Summary
AB 1907 would remove barriers to help accelerate the construction of desperately needed housing for families and individuals experiencing homelessness throughout California.

Existing Law
Establishes the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the state’s broadest environmental law used to protect the environment from adverse impacts that may result from construction projects (Public Resources Code Sections 21000-21178 and Title 14 CCR, Section 753, and Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387).

Exempts from the requirements of CEQA certain activities approved by the City of Los Angeles related to supportive housing and emergency shelters (Public Resources Code Section 21080.27).

Background
In August 2019, the California Department of Housing and Community Development released their Regional Housing Needs Assessment citing a need for more than 1.3 million housing units built in southern California in the next decade.

In November 2019, the Los Angeles Times released polling results that showed that 95 percent of voters identified homelessness as a top concern. In fact, homelessness has rapidly increased throughout the state – including Los Angeles City by 16 percent, Sacramento County by 19 percent and San Francisco by 30 percent.

In an effort to address the lack of homeless housing, AB 1197 (Santiago) was passed in 2019 to speed up the environmental review process for emergency and supportive housing projects in the City of Los Angeles. It is estimated that this law will save between 12 and 18 months for many projects, resulting in about $2 billion in savings over the next five years. In just two months of its enactment, Los Angeles City approved a 154-bed shelter in Venice, nine permanent supportive housing projects, and three other homeless shelters.

Need for AB 1907
California is facing an unprecedented housing and homelessness crisis that requires an urgent response. With a shortage of 1.4 million affordable homes in California, we need to find ways to build more affordable housing, along with emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing for the more than 150,000 people experiencing homelessness in California.

Although CEQA was originally designed to protect the environment, opponents of low-income and homeless housing projects too often wield it as a weapon to stall these projects. In recognizing the importance of this environmental law and the urgent need to get people off the streets and into housing, AB 1907 balances environmental and labor protections with the need to get affordable homes built more quickly.

Specifically, AB 1907 would exempt from CEQA emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing and certain affordable housing projects throughout California. The affordable housing projects must be 100 percent affordable and receive funding from either the state’s Multifamily Housing Program or two federal programs (the HOME Investment Partnership Program and the Community Block Grant Program) – which already require rigorous review and labor protections. All projects would also have to be approved by local municipalities.

AB 1907 targets a narrow subset of homeless housing and affordable housing developments—the types of housing California’s lowest-income households desperately need. This bill removes barriers to accelerate housing construction while still ensuring we are protecting the environment, public health and the safety of our vulnerable communities.
Support
California Housing Consortium (co-sponsor)
Los Angeles Business Council (co-sponsor)
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (co-sponsor)
Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing (co-sponsor)
Abundant Housing Los Angeles
Bay Area Council
California Community Foundation
Central City Association Los Angeles
Century Housing
Corporation of Supportive Housing
Enterprise Community Partners
Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles Mayor
Hollywood Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles City Council
Los Angeles County Business Federation
Los Angeles Family Housing
National Community Renaissance
Orange County Business Council
Related California
United Way of Greater Los Angeles
Watts Investment Partners

Opposition
None on file.

For More Information
Marilyn Limon, Legislative Director
Assembly Member Miguel Santiago
916.319.2053 | Marilyn.Limon@asm.ca.gov