

## California Senate OKs Real Estate Fee to Fund More Housing

The California state Senate has approved a new fee on real estate transactions to help generate hundreds of millions of dollars for affordable housing.

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The Senate approved Atkins measure, SB2, that imposes a \$75 fee on real estate transaction documents such as deeds and notices with a cap of \$225 per transaction. The fee is expected to generate between \$200 and \$300 million annually for affordable housing projects. The bill now goes to the Assembly.

by SOPHIA BOLLAG, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — The California state Senate approved a new fee Thursday on real estate transaction documents to generate hundreds of millions of dollars for affordable housing.

The legislation would impose a \$75 fee on documents such as deeds and notices, with a cap of \$225 per transaction. It's expected to generate between \$200 and \$300 million annually for affordable housing projects.

It passed 27-12 with all Democratic votes and now heads to the Assembly.

An estimated 1.5 million California families lack access to affordable housing, and lawmakers are pushing a series of bills aimed at addressing the problem. California also has disproportionately high homelessness rates.

"When you use this money to build more housing, you generate more income more tax, more jobs and it helps spur the economy," said Sen. Toni Atkins, a San Diego Democrat who authored the bill. "This will make a difference for middle income families."

Republican opponents disagreed, saying it would hurt middle class people trying to buy homes.

"I want to solve that problem, but I can't do it on the backs of the emerging people who have worked hard, trying to get their first house or move their family into a home that would accommodate their growing family," said Sen. Joel Anderson, a Republican from Alpine.

Several Republicans said the Legislature should roll back regulations on housing construction instead of passing Atkins' bill. Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown has expressed similar concern about spending on subsidized housing before removing burdensome building restrictions.

Democrats argue that addressing the housing crisis will require a combination of measures that include funding for subsidized units and streamlining construction.

A number of housing bills are advancing through the Legislature, but none have passed both houses and secured Brown's signature.

The Senate also passed a bill giving Marin County a pass from complying with certain housing density laws. The San Francisco Bay Area county is already exempt from some laws through 2023 and lawmakers voted to extend that through 2028.