



Messaging Guide

Californians for Homes and Jobs

A coordinated communications approach is a key part of our strategy to pass a package of four bills that will increase the supply of affordable homes for Californians and create well-paying jobs. Our organizations have taken a support position on:

AB 1335 (Atkins), AB 35 (Chiu and Atkins), AB 90 (Chau), and AB 1056 (Atkins)

We are providing this messaging guide to:

- Ensure that our broad coalition is consistent in messaging.
- Give you the tools to support the campaign in your communications with the media, your networks and affiliates, online, and with social media.

What's included:

- 1) Key Messages
- 2) Tips for staying “on message”
- 3) Dos and Dont's
- 3) Words and Phrases to Use

There are of course other bills that our industry is supporting at the state and local level. Over the next few months we will also develop integrated messaging to support those efforts as well. If you have any questions about this messaging guide or how to become more involved in the campaign to pass the package of Californians for Homes and Jobs bills, feel free to contact:

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Key messages

(1) California's severe shortage of affordable homes has driven the state's poverty rates to the highest in the nation. The average rent in California has soared to \$1,240 – far out of reach for one in three Californians, including workers critical to the growth of our economy like agricultural workers, restaurant staff, grocery clerks, retail employees, and recent college graduates in entry-level jobs. Those who struggled to make rent before the foreclosure crisis face even more uncertainty in today's rental market. They risk joining the 130,000+ Californians who are homeless on any given night.

(2) California's business leaders say increasing the supply of affordable homes is priority #1 for building a stronger economy. Rents and mortgages within the reach of working families are critical to maintaining California's business competitiveness. Silicon Valley CEOs list housing affordability as the "biggest challenge" facing businesses, and business groups including the California Building Industry Association, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Orange County Business Council, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Los Angeles Business Council insist California needs to increase the supply of housing options affordable to workers, so companies can compete for the talent that drives California's economy.

(3) The Building Homes and Jobs package of bills represents the state commitment local leaders need to jumpstart construction on shovel-ready affordable developments. Construction on thousands of shovel-ready affordable homes can't move forward without state investment that developers can combine with local, federal, and private financing in order to make affordable development financially feasible.

(4) Four housing-finance bills will get California building again to create jobs and make safe, affordable homes available to Californians struggling to make ends meet. Together, AB 1335, AB 35, AB 90, and AB 1056 will:

- ✓ Create a diversified set of housing development funding for affordable homes.
- ✓ Help businesses attract and retain the talent that fuels California's economy.
- ✓ Reduce homelessness, resulting in significant savings to taxpayers and reducing strain on our health and criminal justice systems.
- ✓ Generate an estimated 29,000 jobs for every \$500 million investment in affordable homes.
- ✓ Deploy these dollars in California communities through a successful private/public partnership model.

(5) Urgent action is needed. With funds from successful state housing bonds (Props. 46 and 1C) exhausted and the complete elimination of redevelopment, the availability of state dollars that leverage private investment and federal and local funds is at a historic low. Since 2007, funding for the development and preservation of affordable homes has plummeted 79 percent, from more than \$1.5 billion annually to nearly nothing. This critically threatens housing production and the jobs that go with it. *Failure to act now will leave too many Californians without an affordable place to live and make it incredibly challenging, if not impossible, for thousands of California businesses to remain competitive.*

Staying on Message

Staying on message is important to:

- **Define the terms of the debate**, rather than let our opponents do so. While our opponents want to talk about *taxes*, we want to keep bringing the conversation back to *homes* and *jobs*.
- **Make sure we are heard**. Our message is most powerful when we all say the same thing and say it consistently. The 25th time we've repeated our message may be the first time a key legislator hears it.
- **Appeal to our targets**. There are as many reasons to care about affordable homes as there are people who need a safe place to live. We've developed messages that particularly target the key elected officials whose support we need to pass these funding bills.

Message Delivery Do's and Don'ts

1) **DO** connect *homes* with *jobs* and *the economy*.

2) **DO** localize your message, when possible, with **specific**:

- Supporting facts on the affordability crisis in your area
- Specific people, occupations who need affordable places to live
- Companies or sectors who face a workforce challenge because of housing costs
- Examples of successful affordable home developments
- Stories of families and individuals who have benefitted from affordable homes

3) **DO** communicate the urgency for state leaders to act to get California building again.

1) **DON'T** be drawn into a debate with the opposition around their message. Instead, point back to the affordability crisis and its impact on the economy and people in your community, and point to the package of solutions that will create jobs and build homes.

2) **DON'T** focus too much on the mechanics of the legislation; instead point to the benefits it will bring by creating homes and boosting the economy.

Word Choice Matters!

Research conducted in California (and other states across the nation) reveals a number of consistent findings. Many of the words and phrases we use are actually working **against us**. The minute we trigger negative images in the minds of the people we're talking to, we lose them. Here are some ways to avoid triggering negative images, so your audience can better understand who needs affordable homes and why these homes should be a part of every community.

Instead of . . .



"Affordable housing"
"Low-income housing"
"Subsidized housing"
"Projects"

Say . . .



"Affordable homes"
"Homes affordable to all"
"Affordable places to live"
"Developments"

Instead of . . .	Say . . .	Why it matters . . .
<p>Affordable housing <i>or</i> Low-income housing <i>or</i> Subsidized housing <i>or</i> Projects</p>	<p>Affordable homes <i>or</i> Homes affordable to all <i>or</i> Affordable places to live <i>or</i> Developments</p>	<p>See photos on previous page.</p> <p>We're talking about real people. Real people don't say, "I'm going to my housing after work." They say, "I'm going <i>home</i> after work."</p> <p>The word "home" is associated with a set of values. It connotes safety and stability. It's where children do homework; it's where you raise your family.</p>
<p>Units</p>	<p>Apartments <i>or</i> Homes</p>	<p>Similar to the example above, people don't think of themselves as living in a "unit." Their apartment, or duplex, or house is their "home."</p> <p>The word "home" is associated with a set of values. It connotes safety and stability. It's where children do homework; it's where you raise your family.</p>
<p>Low-income <i>or</i> Poor</p>	<p>People struggling to make ends meet <i>or</i> People struggling to live within their means <i>or</i> People struggling to get by on tight budgets <i>or</i> People on fixed incomes</p> <p>Give examples of people who fall into</p>	<p>When many people hear "low-income," most think of a group of individuals that does not include them or even people who they know and with whom they interact every day. This creates an "us" versus "them" separation that often works against us.</p> <p>"Budget" implies "responsibility" and living within one's means, which we all must do, regardless of our income</p>

	<p>this income range: Grandparents on fixed incomes, grocery clerks, preschool teachers, veterans, restaurant workers, hotel cleaning staff</p>	<p>level.</p>
Housing developers	Home builders	<p>Polling has shown people have a more-favorable association with "home builder" than with "housing developer."</p>
Area median income (AMI)	<p>Give actual examples of occupations/people who fall within the income range to which you're referring.</p> <p>For example, pre-school teachers, EMTs/ambulance drivers, paralegals, cashiers, grandparents on fixed incomes, veterans, recent college graduates, young families starting out, and people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Avoid jargon.</p> <p>It's important to put a face to those who need affordable homes. This includes people who work in the community, but cannot afford to live there.</p>
Low-income (LI), very low-income (VLI), extremely low-income (ELI)	<p>Give actual examples of occupations/people who fall within the income range to which you're referring.</p> <p>For example, pre-school teachers, EMT/ambulance drivers, paralegals, cashiers, grandparents on fixed incomes, veterans, recent college graduates, young families starting out, and people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Avoid jargon.</p> <p>It's important to put a face to those who need affordable homes. This includes people who work in the community, but cannot afford to live there.</p>
Workforce housing	<p>Give actual examples of occupations/people who fall within the income range to which you're referring.</p> <p>For example, pre-school teachers, EMT/ambulance drivers, paralegals, cashiers, veterans, recent college graduates, young families starting out,</p>	<p>Avoid jargon.</p> <p>"Workforce housing" means different things to different people and only serves to cause confusion. Instead, you can talk about "hardworking people, but name specific occupations that match the income levels of those whom you are talking about.</p>
"Dense" / "density"	"Compact" or "more-compact"	<p>People get nervous when they hear about "density" levels, particularly when they are deliberately misled by</p>

		<p>pictures of developments that are at much higher "density" levels than that which is being proposed in their neighborhood. Try to refer to "compact" or "more-compact" developments. The term seems to carry less negative connotations.</p> <p>Talk about "efficient use of land."</p>
"Inclusionary"	"Mixed income"	<p>Avoid jargon.</p> <p>"Inclusionary" is an industry term that most non-housers haven't heard and, because of this, the concept hasn't polled well; however, support changes when the concept is described as housing development that includes homes affordable to people at different income levels or "mixed-income" developments.</p>

Remember:

- **Your job is to tell your story:** Do not feel you need to be the expert in every aspect of the bills or every housing program. Your job is to deliver your perspective on why home matters. If you get a question you cannot answer, tell the person you will get back to them with an answer, and contact Karen, Mike, or Nikki, and we will help.
- **Be a good listener:** Understanding the perspective of the people with whom we are talking is often key to our ability to effectively communicate with them. Do not just deliver your message. Pay attention to nuances and actively listen to the questions you receive.
- **Use inclusive language:** Make the conversation more inclusive, using pronouns such as "we" and "our." This creates a greater sense of ownership in the housing problem and can go a long way in softening opposition.