

SB 375, by Sen. Darrell Steinberg, is a CBIA-supported bill designed to clarify the land-use rules of AB 32, the state law aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The enactment of SB 375 was critical to guiding the California Air Resources Board (CARB) in implementing the land-use elements of AB 32, the “Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006”.

The Governor of CA described SB 375 this way: “this landmark bill takes California's fight against global warming to a whole new level, and it creates a model that the rest of the country and world will use.”

Here is the official digest of the new law.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 375, Steinberg. Transportation planning: travel demand models: sustainable communities strategy: environmental review.

Existing law requires certain transportation planning activities by the Department of Transportation and by designated regional transportation planning agencies, including development of a regional transportation plan. Certain of these agencies are designated under federal law as metropolitan planning organizations.

Existing law authorizes the California Transportation Commission, in cooperation with the regional agencies, to prescribe study areas for analysis and evaluation. This bill would require the commission to maintain guidelines, as specified, for travel demand models used in the development of regional transportation plans by metropolitan planning organizations. The bill would require the commission to consult with various agencies in this regard, and to form an advisory committee and to hold workshops before amending the guidelines. This bill would also require the regional transportation plan for regions of the state with a metropolitan planning organization to adopt a sustainable communities strategy, as part of its regional transportation plan, as specified, designed to achieve certain goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks in a region. The bill would require the State Air Resources Board, working in consultation with the metropolitan planning organizations, to provide each affected region with greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for the automobile and



light truck sector for 2020 and 2035 by September 30, 2010, to appoint a Regional Targets Advisory Committee to recommend factors and methodologies for setting those targets, and to update those targets every 8 years. The bill would require certain transportation planning and programming activities by the metropolitan planning organizations to be consistent with the sustainable communities strategy contained in the regional transportation plan, but would state that certain transportation projects programmed for funding on or before December 31, 2011, are not required to be consistent with the sustainable communities strategy process. To the extent the sustainable communities strategy is unable to achieve the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, the bill would require affected metropolitan planning organizations to prepare an alternative planning strategy to the sustainable communities strategy showing how the targets would be achieved through alternative development patterns, infrastructure, or additional transportation measures or policies. The bill would require the State Air Resources Board to review each metropolitan planning organization's sustainable communities strategy and alternative planning strategy to determine whether the strategy, if implemented, would achieve the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. The bill would require a strategy that is found to be insufficient by the state board to be revised by the metropolitan planning organization, with a minimum requirement that the metropolitan planning organization must obtain state board acceptance that an alternative planning strategy, if implemented, would achieve the targets. The bill would state that the adopted strategies do not regulate the use of land and are not subject to state approval, and that city or county land use policies, including the general plan, are not required to be consistent with the regional transportation plan, which would include the sustainable growth strategy, or the alternative planning strategy. The bill would also require the metropolitan planning organization to hold specified informational meetings in this regard with local elected officials and would require a public participation program with workshops and public hearings for the public, among other things.

The bill would enact other related provisions.

Because the bill would impose additional duties on local agencies, it would impose a state-mandated local program. The Planning and Zoning Law requires each city, county, or city and county to prepare and adopt a general plan for its jurisdiction that contains certain mandatory elements, including a housing element. Existing law requires the housing element to identify the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

Existing law requires the housing element, among other things, to contain a program which sets forth a 5-year schedule of actions of the local government to implement the goals and objectives of the housing element. Existing law requires the program to identify actions that will be undertaken to make sites available to accommodate various housing needs, including, in certain cases, the rezoning of sites to accommodate 100% of the need for housing for very low and low-income households.

This bill would instead require the program to set forth a schedule of actions during the planning period, as defined, and require each action to have a timetable for



implementation. The bill would generally require rezoning of certain sites to accommodate certain housing needs within specified times, with an opportunity for an extension time in certain cases, and would require the local government to hold a noticed public hearing within 30 days after the deadline for compliance expires. The bill would, under certain conditions, prohibit a local government that fails to complete a required rezoning within the timeframe required from disapproving a housing development project, as defined, or from taking various other actions that would render the project infeasible, and would allow the project applicant or any interested person to bring an action to enforce these provisions. The bill would also allow a court to compel a local government to complete the rezoning within specified times and to impose sanctions on the local government if the court order or judgment is not carried out, and would provide that in certain cases the local government shall bear the burden of proof relative to actions brought to compel compliance with specified deadlines and requirements.

Existing law requires each local government to review and revise its housing element as frequently as appropriate, but not less than every 5 years. This bill would extend that time period to 8 years for those local governments that are located within a region covered by a metropolitan planning organization in a nonattainment region or by a metropolitan planning organization or regional transportation planning agency that meets certain requirements. The bill would also provide that, in certain cases, the time period would be reduced to 4 years or other periods, as specified.

The bill would enact other related provisions. Because the bill would impose additional duties on local governments relative to the housing element of the general plan, it would thereby impose a state-mandated local program.

(3) The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a lead agency, as defined, to prepare, or cause to be prepared, and certify the completion of, an environmental impact report (EIR) on a project that it proposes to carry out or approve that may have a significant effect on the environment or to adopt a negative declaration if it finds that the project will not have that effect. CEQA also requires a lead agency to prepare a mitigated negative declaration for a project that may have a significant effect on the environment if revisions in the project would avoid or mitigate that effect and there is no substantial evidence that the project, as revised, would have a significant effect on the environment.

This bill would exempt from CEQA a transit priority project, as defined, that meets certain requirements and that is declared by the legislative body of a local jurisdiction to be a sustainable communities project. The transit priority project would need to be consistent with a metropolitan planning organization's sustainable communities strategy or an alternative planning strategy that has been determined by the State Air Resources Board to achieve the greenhouse gas emission reductions targets. The bill would provide for limited CEQA review of various other transit priority projects. The bill, with respect to other residential or mixed-use residential projects meeting certain requirements, would exempt the environmental documents for those projects from being required to



include certain information regarding growth inducing impacts or impacts from certain vehicle trips.

The bill would also authorize the legislative body of a local jurisdiction to adopt traffic mitigation measures for transit priority projects. The bill would exempt a transit priority project seeking a land use approval from compliance with additional measures for traffic impacts, if the local jurisdiction has adopted those traffic mitigation measures.

(4) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

