



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2015 Bay Area Council Poll: As Housing Crisis Worsens, Attitudes Soften on Housing Density, Regulation, Fees

More residents OK with easing regulations, lowering fees and increasing density

BAY AREA, CA – As the Bay Area’s housing crisis worsens, results of the *2015 Bay Area Council Poll* released today find that a growing number of residents support reducing fees and regulations on new development, streamlining environmental reviews and allowing higher population densities in their cities. Almost 67 percent said that trying to find a place to live in the Bay Area has gotten harder over the past year.

Residents also are not interested in building just any housing, the poll finds. A significant 76 percent say the focus should be on building workforce housing for low- and middle-income residents. When asked to show on a map where they think housing is needed most urgently, the overwhelming majority of residents from around the region point to a city where home prices and rents are soaring to stratospheric heights: San Francisco.

[View the 2015 Bay Area Council Poll results on housing>>](#)

Only the drought ranked higher than housing on a list of the Bay Area’s biggest problems, and when housing costs and overall cost of living are combined they together far surpass our dry conditions as an area of top concern. San Francisco is the only county where housing costs generate more concern than the drought.

“Water isn’t the only thing that’s in short supply in the Bay Area,” said Jim Wunderman, President and CEO of the Bay Area Council. “Our region is growing, our economy is humming but the housing shortage could be our Achilles heel. We need a bold regional response to our historic housing crisis that is on par with the aggressive and immediate action we’re taking to combat the drought.”

Residents have some clear thoughts on how to hasten new housing. Support for reducing fees and regulations on new housing, which can add tens of thousands of dollars and more per unit to the cost of housing, increased from 61 percent in 2014 to 65 percent in

the *2015 Bay Area Council Poll*, with a statistically noticeable six-point bump among those that strongly agree.

Reforming state environmental laws, such as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), to speed the delivery of new housing also got strong support, with 61 percent of those surveyed for the *2015 Bay Area Council Poll* agreeing. A recent report by Bay Area Council member Holland & Knight law firm found that 62 percent of CEQA lawsuits statewide between 1997 and 2012 targeted urban infill housing. CEQA also was cited recently by the state Legislative Analyst's Office as a primary culprit behind California's historic housing drought, sky-high prices and nation-leading poverty level.

Reflecting just how dire the situation is, 50 percent of residents said they would support new housing even if that means their city would become more densely populated. Not a tectonic shift from 2014, when the figure tallied 47 percent, but not insignificant in a region where density is often considered a four-letter word. Acceptance of increased density is highest in the counties of Santa Clara (56 percent), Alameda (55 percent) and San Francisco (53 percent).

When it comes to accepting new housing in their neighborhood, San Francisco residents are most amenable at 61 percent followed by Alameda County (59%) and Santa Clara (58%). San Mateo County residents (47%) are far less accepting of new housing in their backyards, followed closely by Contra Costa and North Bay counties (46%).

The poll results come as the Bay Area's regional housing and transportation planning agencies begin work on the next round of Plan Bay Area, the region's long-range housing and transportation blueprint. As input into Plan Bay Area, the Bay Area Council is currently preparing a Regional Economic Strategy that in the coming weeks will make a series of recommendations for speeding up housing production.

The *2015 Bay Area Council Poll*, which was conducted by Oakland-based public opinion research firm EMC Research, surveyed more than 1,000 residents online about a range of issues related to economic growth, housing and transportation, drought, education and workforce.

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About the Bay Area Council

The Bay Area Council is a business-sponsored, public-policy advocacy organization for the nine-county Bay Area. The Council proactively advocates for a strong economy, a vital business environment, and a better quality of life for everyone who lives here. Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council is widely respected by elected officials, policy makers and other civic leaders as the voice of Bay Area business. Today, approximately 275 of the largest employers in the region support the Bay Area Council and offer their CEO or top executive as a member. Our members employ more than 4.43 million workers and have revenues of \$1.94 trillion, worldwide.