

Bill Would Expand Housing for Tens of Thousands of Homeless in California

Legislation Make More Unused Land Available for Relocatable Housing Units

SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES, April 12, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- State Senator Josh Becker (D-San Mateo), together with the nonprofit housing developer DignityMoves announced Senate Bill 634 co-sponsored by SPUR and Bay Area Council to facilitate the construction and deployment of “opportunity” housing units – relocatable housing placed on unused land – that have the potential to house tens of thousands of low-income Californians.



Standard DignityMoves Prefab Cabin

Challenge: Traditionally-constructed housing in California takes a long time to build and is very expensive. Many local governments are working hard but face massive challenges to building sufficient amounts of housing, particularly for very low-income households. Meanwhile, public entities have thousands of parcels of excess land not currently being used.

Solution: “Opportunity” housing is an innovative solution that takes advantage of vacant land to build relocatable housing units. This model is already working in cities like Santa Barbara, San Francisco, and Rohnert Park. SB 634 makes this type of housing easier and faster to scale statewide, and will pave the way for new housing by asking public entities to make unused land available and convert these otherwise squandered assets into what California desperately needs – more low-income housing.

“There is a missing rung on the housing ladder: nothing exists between shelter and ‘affordable’ housing,” said Elizabeth Funk, CEO of DignityMoves. “The overwhelmingly positive response to our first few opportunity communities has made us think what more this model could do to provide desperately needed housing to low-income households in the state”

Some of the biggest barriers to solving homelessness and our housing shortage in California are addressed by SB 634:

Land costs: There are very few productive uses for land that is only available for a few years. Because it's relocatable, opportunity housing can be built on public or private land that has future intended use and therefore is not suitable for permanent development.

Building costs: Using innovative prefabricated and modular construction, relocatable housing can be built quickly and inexpensively while meeting the state building standards for temporary housing that ensure high-quality and safety. Further, philanthropy and private financing can help fund these significantly less expensive projects.

Permitting: Because units are in place temporarily, "opportunity" housing does not have a permanent impact on zoning or environmental standards and can thus benefit from a wide range of process exemptions and massively streamlined approvals. A DignityMoves project in San Francisco received final permit approvals in less than 3 weeks – a remarkably short amount of time for a housing project of any kind.

What is DignityMoves?

DignityMoves Interim Supportive Housing Communities are places where people can come in from encampments, along the freeways, riverbeds, and streets to stabilize and begin a path toward healing and self-sufficiency. Each resident has their own private room with a door that locks, AC/heat, a desk, Wi-Fi, onsite bathrooms and showers, laundry facilities and three meals a day. Residents can also bring their belongings, partners, and pets.

One of the more significant advantages of the DignityMoves model is its mobility. By taking services directly to those in need, the program can reach individuals who might otherwise be unable or unwilling to access traditional congregate shelters and support services. This approach has proven highly effective, with DignityMoves achieving an impressive success rate in connecting individuals with housing health care and employment.

DignityMoves is a unique program that offers a comprehensive range of services to the [homeless](#), including housing, employment resources, medical and mental health care, and substance abuse support. The program is staffed by teams of highly trained professionals dedicated to helping the homeless in Santa Barbara County regain their dignity and rebuild their lives. Each DignityMoves resident has their own case manager.

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Photo Link, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Wt4dkd79_QoY9ARpso-P71KsHms1EEoz

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