



MARIN BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

POLICY GUIDELINES

Approved and Adopted August 12, 2015

.....

The vision of Marin Builders Association (MBA) is to help create a political climate in Marin that encourages profitable building through decreased regulation, lower fees, Green Building practices, as well as, more governmental accountability, transparency and efficiency. The MBA works to promote the significant positive impact of the building industry to elected officials and the community.

The purpose of this document is to provide a clear and public stance on what we as an organization support. If you have any questions, please contact Legislative Analyst, Casey Mazzoni at 415.462.1220 or casey@marinbuilders.org or CEO Rick Wells at 415.462.1220 or rick@marinbuilders.org

.....

- **Support Local Bidder Preference Program:** We support the adoption of local bidder preference programs in Marin County. Local bidder preference programs lead to a healthy local business environment, which promotes a healthy economy, lower regional unemployment and a higher standard of living.
- **Support a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program:** We support the establishment of a PACE program modeled after the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program (SCEIP). SCEIP offers property owners the opportunity to finance energy and water efficient property improvements through the property tax system. It is an innovative new effort to improve energy efficiency, water conservation and renewable energy generation, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This supports our membership by the county supporting private work of professional contractors.
- **Support Fixed Building and Planning Fee Structures:** We support the adoption of fixed fees in lieu of time and materials billing by local planning and building departments.

Charging fixed amounts allow our members to firmly budget fee costs into their projects. It also incentivizes local government staff to finish tasks in a timely and efficient manner. We acknowledge that in the private sector the use of time and materials is often necessary due to the uncertainty of work flow. Using fixed fees will prevent local building companies from being overcharged and mistreated.

- **Support the strict enforcement of unlicensed contractors:** We support the enforcement and the prosecuting of unlicensed contractors. Unlicensed contracting is part of California's estimated annual \$60 to \$140 billion dollar underground economy. These individuals do not pay taxes, have insurance or bonds. It is not unusual for them to be involved in other illegal activities as well. By law, anyone in California who contracts for or bids on a construction project valued at \$500 or more (total labor and materials) must be licensed by the Contractors State License Board (CSLB). The MBA will work with the CSLB on an ongoing basis to protect our licensed contractors.
- **Support Local Marin Governments in Building Department Process Improvements:** We support local governments in the implementation of efficiencies and improved customer service programs. We encourage planning and building departments to implement programs that gather data and set benchmarks. Measurable data collected will give departments vital information to evaluate the success of the department and make corrections if necessary. The MBA will work with municipalities to help reach out to members and solicit their feedback to help improve the process for everyone.
- **Support a Diverse Housing Stock:** California is a desirable place to live, especially Marin County. Yet not enough housing exists. Community resistance to housing, environmental policies, lack of fiscal incentives for local governments to approve housing, and limited land constrains new housing construction has caused a crisis. High housing costs are problematic for households and the State's Economy. Amid high housing costs, many households make serious trade-offs to afford living here. Households with low incomes, in particular, spend much more of their income on housing. Faced with expensive housing options, workers in California's coastal communities commute 10 percent further each day than commuters elsewhere, largely because limited housing options exist near major job centers. Lastly, the state's high housing costs make California a less attractive place to call home, making it more difficult for companies to hire and retain qualified employees, likely preventing the state's economy from meeting its full potential. A diverse housing stock makes for a well balanced community that will put less strain on limited natural resources and a strained infrastructure.
- **Support the public process:** We believe any project that complies with all the zoning and code standards and does not request a specific variance should be viewed favorably by elected officials. California's complex, difficult-to-navigate regulations are imposing unnecessary costs on businesses, taxpayers, and consumers. The regulatory processes are excessively prescriptive and process-oriented—and over time many have departed significantly from their original legislative intent.

- **Support Water Efficiency Measures and Conservation Efforts:** We support the development of long and short term water efficiency incentives and programs. We pledge to educate and offer trainings for our members on conservation best practices and technologies in our industry. We encourage municipalities to improve capital infrastructure with a focus on enhancing the local water supply.
- **Support California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Reform:** We support meaningful changes to CEQA. Despite the current stringent environmental laws and local planning requirements, public and private projects throughout the state are commonly challenged under CEQA even when a project meets all other environmental standards of existing laws. In addition, many lawsuits are brought or threatened for non-environmental reasons and often times these lawsuits seek to halt environmentally desirable projects like clean power, restoration, infill and transit. Lastly, CEQA is a factor in restricting California's lack of housing supply, which leads to higher housing costs that burden working families and low income residents, and serve as a drag on our economy.
- **Opposed to Discriminatory and Publicly Funded Project Labor Agreements (PLA & PSA):** In the interest of maintaining the bidding processes and natural competitive balance that currently serve the construction industry fairly and impartially, the Marin Builders Association is opposed to any Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) that are discriminatory in nature and utilize public funds

Project Labor Agreements are negotiated agreements between project owners and labor groups that specify certain work rules, conditions and practices related to hiring and labor disputes.

It is undeniable that most Project Labor Agreements create a bidding process that is less competitive, and less inclusive. In addition, PLAs can generate yet another level of administration and bureaucracy to a process that is already heavily regulated.

The current system of market driven competition and regulations regarding building codes, working conditions and prevailing wages has sufficiently managed the building industry, and should not be altered in this way.