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Newsletter Number 14

WHAT COMPLIANCE LOOKS LIKE

You can't un-wreck your city

www.wakeca.org

Affordability, Safety, and Local Accountability

PROJECT WATCH

Problematic, Failed, Abandoned



The massive SF Marina Safeway project — bordered by National Parkland, classified as “urban uses” to qualify for ministerial approval.

Compliance means submission — and California actually has a **Housing Strike Force** to compel cities to step aside and allow impactful projects, backed by threats of fines, lawsuits, and loss of housing and transit funding. There's a reason people are so upset with what **density bonuses** and the **builder's remedy** are producing. We've started the image compilation — you can see them here:

PROJECT WATCH →

— or use the **MUST SEE** button on our wakeca.org homepage.

Marina Safeway Project (pictured above) — in-person community update, Thursday 7/23. [MEETING INFO →](#)

ACTION: Add to Our Visual Library

We want to know about the projects affecting your community. Are they blocking evacuation routes? Creating a traffic nightmare? Extending into sensitive environments? A picture's worth a thousand words. Please send images, links, and notes to info.WAKEUPCA@gmail.com.

THE CRACKDOWN BEGINS

California Sues Five Cities

We've been on this story. Governor Newsom's warnings began in March against **15 cities** — all with extenuating circumstances. These issues were well known to the Governor and AG Bonta, yet their threatening rhetoric only increased as the cities scrambled to comply.

Half Moon Bay Mayor **Debbie Ruddock** joined a WAKE UP call in

March to describe her city's unique bind: its boundaries fall *entirely* under the jurisdiction of the Coastal Commission.

On **July 16**, five of the 15 cities were sued over non-compliant plans. The court was asked to consider fines — which can range from **\$100,000 to \$600,000 per month** — and to temporarily strip each city's authority to approve nonresidential development while forcing approval of certain residential projects.

GOVERNOR NEWSOM — “NO MORE EXCUSES”

“California can't solve the housing crisis while some cities sit on their hands and dare us to do something about it. ... so now they'll answer for it in court. ... no city gets a pass.”

Interestingly, the state's press release never describes the specific deficiencies — it simply recites the order of events.

MAYOR DEBBIE RUDDOCK, HALF MOON BAY · JULY 16

“We're also disappointed that the State has ignored the fact that the City has made substantial progress on actual housing development programs, including affordable housing for our most vulnerable residents. ... The whole purpose of this process is to create more housing in our community, which is exactly what Half Moon Bay has achieved.”

The *San Francisco Chronicle* framed it as the state escalating a campaign to **build affordable housing**, accusing the cities of missing legal deadlines to file their plans.

That's a mischaracterization. Housing law does far more to **undermine** affordable housing than to build it — the state mandates

the plans but **does not provide the financing**, and HCD can reject a submission on subjective grounds, restarting a cycle that wastes months.

THE COMPLICATING ISSUE

Caught Between the State Mandate and the Constitution

The City approved a ground lease for a senior farmworker housing project in May. A group has challenged the action with a certified petition to place it on the November ballot. The Council is under heavy state pressure to move forward — but it has a precedent to weigh: a Livermore group that was refused a ballot after legally gathering signatures sued, and the refusal was **found unconstitutional** last year.

And a third hitch is moving through Sacramento. **AB 2676** would bar cities from enforcing a housing-related initiative or referendum unless HCD approves it first, and would void any measure the department finds would limit housing. The bill even declares its intent to apply *retroactively*, to actions already pending. Since the local referendum is a constitutionally protected power, as affirmed last year, how can a law just override it?

The city is caught between the state mandate and the constitution, and they'll be punished if they don't ignore the referendum.

**Is this how our state should treat our cities?
Our Constitution?**

Sources: Governor's Office press release · San Francisco Chronicle · Coastside News · AB 2676 analysis

OUR MONDAY CALLS

We hear you — these are outrageous, exasperating times.

But we need to move past our grievances and focus on **information and action**. Our calls bring together a unique spectrum of people: newcomers, activists, experts in related fields, and elected officials. That range is a strength — and it's time to tighten our structure so the calls stay productive for everyone in the room.

WAKE UP is statewide and our time is short, so a few asks: keep comments **brief and on the topic at hand**, remember that hyper-local issues don't always land, and, as always, we stay **non-partisan**. The goal is simply to be productive.

Going forward, we'll be working from an **agenda** published in the Monday reminder. We'll continue to have time for questions and discussion. If there's a future topic you'd like to hear about or speak to, please let me know.

WAKE UP Zoom
Monday, July 20 · 5:00 PM

REGISTER FOR THE ZOOM

Already registered once? Look for the confirmation link Zoom emailed you, and reuse that same link every time. No need to register again.

SUPPORT THE WORK

As we grow, so do our expenses

DONATE TO WAKE UP

WAKE UP CALIFORNIA is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization. Contributions are not tax-deductible as charitable contributions.

— Amy Kalish, President and Co-Founder

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