



SB 50 was shelved: Here's what you need to know

By Matt Levin and Ben Christopher, CALmatters, May 17, 2019

“Very few people can claim to have seen this coming.

“In a procedural vote, Senate Bill 50 failed to advance from the state Senate Appropriations Committee.

“Its fate dealt an unexpected setback to pro-development forces in the state Capitol and a major victory for defenders of local control over housing decisions. It also throws an obstacle into Gov. Gavin Newsom's path as he tries to goad the state into building a lot more housing.

“Sen. Scott Wiener's new and broader coalition was instrumental in getting the bill through two earlier committee votes, and gave proponents confidence it could be shepherded through the state Senate without significantly more pushback.

“But supporters didn't count on Sen. Anthony Portantino, a Democrat from the La Cañada Flintridge area and the chair of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. Portantino's district includes Pasadena, whose city representatives were some of the bill's most vocal opponents.

“ ‘My preference has always fallen on the side of incentives for local governments to accomplish goals,’ Portantino said in a statement, expressing concerns about the bill's ‘unintended consequences,’ including gentrification and discouraging public transit expansion.

“The bill was among those Portantino's committee suffocated as it sifted through its biannual suspense file — a rapid-fire approach to legislation that allows lawmakers to quickly pass favored bills while quietly dispatching others, either by holding them in committee or redesignating them ‘two-year bills,’ effectively killing them for a year. The Senate Appropriations Committee considered 355 bills in its appropriations lightning round that day.

“The bill's death could jeopardize a broader housing package — including tenant protections.

“With the premature demise of the signature ‘strong production’ bill of the year, the coalition that backed the bill may have a harder time sticking together in support of the tenant protection bills that remain — for example, San Francisco Democratic Assemblyman David Chiu's AB 1482, an anti ‘rent gouging’ bill opposed by the state's landlord lobby.

“Many of the bill's backers expressed frustration that the governor and Senate leader Toni Atkins didn't do more to help shepherd SB 50 through the legislative process. California



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YIMBY asked supporters to call Sen. Atkins and ask her to 'do everything in her power' to bring the bill back. 'She has the ability to go to the Rules Committee, pull the bill out of Appropriations, and send it to the floor. It's her Senate.'

"But in a statement released the day after the bill was put on pause, Atkins said in a statement, 'I will not circumvent the decision made by the Appropriations Committee Chair on SB 50. Short of significantly amending the bill and limiting its applications in large swaths of the state, there was no path to move forward this year.' "

[**Read the full article here.**](#)