

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

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July 10, 2024

Christina Rivera, County Administrator
County of Sonoma
575 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

RE: County of Sonoma Rezone Implementation – Letter of Technical Assistance

Dear Christina Rivera:

The purpose of this letter is to provide technical assistance regarding the implementation of Program 4 (Actions to Meet Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)) to rezone sites to accommodate the RHNA and to allow by-right processing of sites identified in previous housing elements pursuant to Government Code section 65583.2, subdivision (c).

On December 21, 2023, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) sent a Letter of Inquiry to the County of Sonoma (County) regarding the completion of Program 4. On January 11, 2024, HCD received Resolution No. 23-0579 and Ordinance No. 6457 from the County. HCD reviewed the documentation submitted by the County and has determined that, while the resolution and ordinance meet most requirements of state law, the County must demonstrate those rezonings meet all requirements in Government Code section 65583.2, subdivisions (h) and (i). Specifically, the ordinance does not indicate how the County permits owner-occupied and rental multifamily uses by-right for developments in which 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower-income households.¹ By-right means local government review must not require a conditional use permit, planned unit development permit, or other discretionary review or approval that that would constitute a “project” for purposes of Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code.²

HCD requests that the City revise its zoning ordinance or provide written documentation clearly demonstrating the rezones meet these statutory requirements. If needed, a copy of the revised ordinance should be transmitted to HCD. HCD will review the documentation and issue correspondence before taking any action authorized by Government Code section 65585, subdivisions (i) and (j). Such action may include

¹ Gov. Code, § 65583.2, subd. (h)

² Gov. Code, § 65583.2, subd. (i)

issuance of written findings (Corrective Action Letter) and revoking HCD's finding that the County's housing element is in substantial compliance with Housing Element Law and/or referral to the California Office of the Attorney General.

HCD provides the County until August 10, 2024 to provide a written response to these findings. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Reid Miller at Reid.Miller@hcd.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melinda Coy", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Melinda Coy
Proactive Housing Accountability Chief