

Assembly Bill No. 325

CHAPTER 767

An act to amend Sections 65009, 65587, and 65755 of the Government Code, relating to land use.

[Approved by Governor October 12, 2013. Filed with
Secretary of State October 12, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 325, Alejo. Land use and planning: cause of actions: time limitations.

The Planning and Zoning Law requires an action or proceeding against local zoning and planning decisions of a legislative body to be commenced and the legislative body to be served within a year of accrual of the cause of action, if it meets certain requirements. Where the action or proceeding is brought in support of, or to encourage or facilitate the development of, housing that would increase the community's supply of affordable housing, a cause of action accrues 60 days after a certain notice is filed or the legislative body takes a final action in response to the notice, whichever occurs first.

This bill would authorize the notice to be filed any time within 180 days after specified zoning and planning decisions, but would set a 270-day period for notice with respect to an adopted or revised housing element that is found to substantially comply with law, and a 2-year period for notice with respect to an adopted or revised housing element that is found not to substantially comply with law. This bill would also establish a 6-month limitations period for the commencement of an action or proceeding arising from a notice subject to the 270-day period, a one-year limitations period for the commencement of an action or proceeding arising from a notice subject to the 2-year period, and a 180-day limitations period for the commencement of an action or proceeding arising from a notice subject to the 180-day period. The bill would declare the intent of the Legislature to modify a specified court opinion. The bill would also provide that in an action or proceeding subject to these provisions, no remedy pursuant to specified provisions of law shall abrogate, impair, or otherwise interfere with the full exercise of the rights and protections granted to a tentative map application or a developer, as prescribed. The bill would make further conforming changes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting Section 2 of this act to modify the court's opinion in *Urban Habitat Program v. City of*

Pleasanton (2008) 164 Cal.App.4th 1561, with respect to the interpretation of Section 65009 of the Government Code.

SEC. 2. Section 65009 of the Government Code is amended to read:

65009. (a) (1) The Legislature finds and declares that there currently is a housing crisis in California and it is essential to reduce delays and restraints upon expeditiously completing housing projects.

(2) The Legislature further finds and declares that a legal action or proceeding challenging a decision of a city, county, or city and county has a chilling effect on the confidence with which property owners and local governments can proceed with projects. Legal actions or proceedings filed to attack, review, set aside, void, or annul a decision of a city, county, or city and county pursuant to this division, including, but not limited to, the implementation of general plan goals and policies that provide incentives for affordable housing, open-space and recreational opportunities, and other related public benefits, can prevent the completion of needed developments even though the projects have received required governmental approvals.

(3) The purpose of this section is to provide certainty for property owners and local governments regarding decisions made pursuant to this division.

(b) (1) In an action or proceeding to attack, review, set aside, void, or annul a finding, determination, or decision of a public agency made pursuant to this title at a properly noticed public hearing, the issues raised shall be limited to those raised in the public hearing or in written correspondence delivered to the public agency prior to, or at, the public hearing, except where the court finds either of the following:

(A) The issue could not have been raised at the public hearing by persons exercising reasonable diligence.

(B) The body conducting the public hearing prevented the issue from being raised at the public hearing.

(2) If a public agency desires the provisions of this subdivision to apply to a matter, it shall include in any public notice issued pursuant to this title a notice substantially stating all of the following: “If you challenge the (nature of the proposed action) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the (public entity conducting the hearing) at, or prior to, the public hearing.”

(3) The application of this subdivision to causes of action brought pursuant to subdivision (d) applies only to the final action taken in response to the notice to the city or clerk of the board of supervisors. If no final action is taken, then the issue raised in the cause of action brought pursuant to subdivision (d) shall be limited to those matters presented at a properly noticed public hearing or to those matters specified in the notice given to the city or clerk of the board of supervisors pursuant to subdivision (d), or both.

(c) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (d), no action or proceeding shall be maintained in any of the following cases by any person unless the action or proceeding is commenced and service is made on the legislative body within 90 days after the legislative body’s decision:

(A) To attack, review, set aside, void, or annul the decision of a legislative body to adopt or amend a general or specific plan. This paragraph does not apply where an action is brought based upon the complete absence of a general plan or a mandatory element thereof, but does apply to an action attacking a general plan or mandatory element thereof on the basis that it is inadequate.

(B) To attack, review, set aside, void, or annul the decision of a legislative body to adopt or amend a zoning ordinance.

(C) To determine the reasonableness, legality, or validity of any decision to adopt or amend any regulation attached to a specific plan.

(D) To attack, review, set aside, void, or annul the decision of a legislative body to adopt, amend, or modify a development agreement. An action or proceeding to attack, review, set aside, void, or annul the decisions of a legislative body to adopt, amend, or modify a development agreement shall only extend to the specific portion of the development agreement that is the subject of the adoption, amendment, or modification. This paragraph applies to development agreements, amendments, and modifications adopted on or after January 1, 1996.

(E) To attack, review, set aside, void, or annul any decision on the matters listed in Sections 65901 and 65903, or to determine the reasonableness, legality, or validity of any condition attached to a variance, conditional use permit, or any other permit.

(F) Concerning any of the proceedings, acts, or determinations taken, done, or made prior to any of the decisions listed in subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), (D), and (E).

(2) In the case of an action or proceeding challenging the adoption or revision of a housing element pursuant to this subdivision, the action or proceeding may, in addition, be maintained if it is commenced and service is made on the legislative body within 60 days following the date that the Department of Housing and Community Development reports its findings pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 65585.

(d) (1) An action or proceeding shall be commenced and the legislative body served after the accrual of the cause of action as provided in this subdivision, if the action or proceeding meets both of the following requirements:

(A) It is brought in support of or to encourage or facilitate the development of housing that would increase the community's supply of housing affordable to persons and families with low or moderate incomes, as defined in Section 50079.5 of the Health and Safety Code, or with very low incomes, as defined in Section 50105 of the Health and Safety Code, or middle-income households, as defined in Section 65008 of this code. This subdivision is not intended to require that the action or proceeding be brought in support of or to encourage or facilitate a specific housing development project.

(B) It is brought with respect to the adoption or revision of a housing element pursuant to Article 10.6 (commencing with Section 65580) of Chapter 3, actions taken pursuant to Section 65863.6, or Chapter 4.2

(commencing with Section 65913), or to challenge the adequacy of an ordinance adopted pursuant to Section 65915.

(2) (A) An action or proceeding challenging the adoption or revision of a housing element that the Department of Housing and Community Development has found to substantially comply with the requirements of Article 10.6 (commencing with Section 65580) of Chapter 3 shall be commenced, and the legislative body shall be served, within six months after the accrual of the cause of action as provided in this subdivision.

(B) An action or proceeding challenging the adoption or revision of a housing element that the Department of Housing and Community Development has found does not substantially comply with the requirements of Article 10.6 (commencing with Section 65580) of Chapter 3, where the legislative body has failed to change the draft element or amendment to substantially comply with the requirements of Article 10.6 or has adopted the draft element or amendment without change and made findings pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 65585, shall be commenced, and the legislative body shall be served, within one year after the accrual of the cause of action as provided in this subdivision.

(C) An action or proceeding challenging an action taken pursuant to Section 65863.6, or Chapter 4.2 (commencing with Section 65913), or to challenge the adequacy of an ordinance adopted pursuant to Section 65915 shall be served within 180 days after the accrual of the cause of action as provided in this subdivision.

(3) (A) A cause of action brought pursuant to this subdivision shall not be maintained until 60 days have expired following notice to the city or clerk of the board of supervisors by the party bringing the cause of action, or his or her representative, specifying the deficiencies of the general plan, specific plan, zoning ordinance, or other action described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1). A cause of action brought pursuant to this subdivision shall accrue 60 days after notice is filed or the legislative body takes a final action in response to the notice, whichever occurs first.

(B) This notice may be filed at any time within 270 days after an action described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2), two years after an action described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2), or 180 days after an action described in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (2).

(4) A notice or cause of action brought by one party pursuant to this subdivision shall not bar filing of a notice and initiation of a cause of action by any other party.

(5) After the adoption of a housing element covering the current planning period, no action shall be filed pursuant to this subdivision to challenge a housing element covering a prior planning period.

(e) Upon the expiration of the time limits provided for in this section, all persons are barred from any further action or proceeding.

(f) Notwithstanding Sections 65700 and 65803, or any other provision of law, this section shall apply to charter cities.

(g) Except as provided in subdivision (d), this section shall not affect any law prescribing or authorizing a shorter period of limitation than that specified herein.

(h) Except as provided in paragraph (4) of subdivision (c), this section shall be applicable to those decisions of the legislative body of a city, county, or city and county made pursuant to this division on or after January 1, 1984.

SEC. 3. Section 65587 of the Government Code is amended to read:

65587. (a) Each city, county, or city and county shall bring its housing element, as required by subdivision (c) of Section 65302, into conformity with the requirements of this article on or before October 1, 1981, and the deadlines set by Section 65588. Except as specifically provided in subdivision (b) of Section 65361, the Director of Planning and Research shall not grant an extension of time from these requirements.

(b) Any action brought by any interested party to review the conformity with the provisions of this article of any housing element or portion thereof or revision thereto shall be brought pursuant to Section 1085 of the Code of Civil Procedure; the court's review of compliance with the provisions of this article shall extend to whether the housing element or portion thereof or revision thereto substantially complies with the requirements of this article.

(c) If a court finds that an action of a city, county, or city and county, which is required to be consistent with its general plan, does not comply with its housing element, the city, county, or city and county shall bring its action into compliance within 60 days. However, the court shall retain jurisdiction throughout the period for compliance to enforce its decision. Upon the court's determination that the 60-day period for compliance would place an undue hardship on the city, county, or city and county, the court may extend the time period for compliance by an additional 60 days.

(d) (1) If a court finds that a city, county, or city and county failed to complete the rezoning required by subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 65583, as that deadline may be modified by the extension provided for in subdivision (f) of that section, the court shall issue an order or judgment, after considering the equities of the circumstances presented by all parties, compelling the local government to complete the rezoning within 60 days or the earliest time consistent with public hearing notice requirements in existence at the time the action was filed. The court shall retain jurisdiction to ensure that its order or judgment is carried out. If the court determines that its order or judgment is not carried out, the court shall issue further orders to ensure that the purposes and policies of this article are fulfilled, including ordering, after considering the equities of the circumstances presented by all parties, that any rezoning required by subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 65583 be completed within 60 days or the earliest time consistent with public hearing notice requirements in existence at the time the action was filed and may impose sanctions on the city, county, or city and county.

(2) Any interested person may bring an action to compel compliance with the deadlines and requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of

subdivision (c) of Section 65583. The action shall be brought pursuant to Section 1085 of the Code of Civil Procedure. In any such action, the city, county, or city and county shall bear the burden of proof.

SEC. 4. Section 65755 of the Government Code is amended to read:

65755. (a) The court shall include, in the order or judgment rendered pursuant to Section 65754, one or more of the following provisions for any or all types or classes of developments or any or all geographic segments of the city, county, or city and county until the city, county, or city and county has substantially complied with the requirements of Article 5 (commencing with Section 65300):

(1) Suspend the authority of the city, county, or city and county pursuant to Division 13 (commencing with Section 17910) of the Health and Safety Code, to issue building permits, or any category of building permits, and all other related permits, except that the city, county, or city and county shall continue to function as an enforcement agency for review of permit applications for appropriate codes and standards compliance, prior to the issuance of building permits and other related permits for residential housing for that city, county, or city and county.

(2) Suspend the authority of the city, county, or city and county, pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 65800) to grant any and all categories of zoning changes, variances, or both.

(3) Suspend the authority of the city, county, or city and county, pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 66410), to grant subdivision map approvals for any and all categories of subdivision map approvals.

(4) Mandate the approval of all applications for building permits, or other related construction permits, for residential housing where a final subdivision map, parcel map, or plot plan has been approved for the project, where the approval will not impact on the ability of the city, county, or city and county to properly adopt and implement an adequate housing element, and where the permit application conforms to all code requirements and other applicable provisions of law except those zoning laws held to be invalid by the final court order, and changes to the zoning ordinances adopted after such final court order which were enacted for the purpose of preventing the construction of a specific residential development.

(5) Mandate the approval of any or all final subdivision maps for residential housing projects which have previously received a tentative map approval from the city, county, or city and county pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 66410) when the final map conforms to the approved tentative map, the tentative map has not expired, and where approval will not impact on the ability of the city, county, or city and county to properly adopt and implement an adequate housing element.

(6) Mandate that notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 66473.5 and 66474, any tentative subdivision map for a residential housing project shall be approved if all of the following requirements are met:

(A) The approval of the map will not significantly impair the ability of the city, county, or city and county to adopt and implement those elements or portions thereof of the general plan which have been held to be inadequate.

(B) The map complies with all of the provisions of Division 2 (commencing with Section 66410), except those parts which would require disapproval of the project due to the inadequacy of the general plan.

(C) The approval of the map will not affect the ability of the city, county, or city and county to adopt and implement an adequate housing element.

(D) The map is consistent with the portions of the general plan not found inadequate and the proposed revisions, if applicable, to the part of the plan held inadequate.

(b) Any order or judgment of a court which includes the remedies described in paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of subdivision (a) shall exclude from the operation of that order or judgment any action, program, or project required by law to be consistent with a general or specific plan if the court finds that the approval or undertaking of the action, program, or project complies with both of the following requirements:

(1) That it will not significantly impair the ability of the city, county, or city and county to adopt or amend all or part of the applicable plan as may be necessary to make the plan substantially comply with the requirements of Article 5 (commencing with Section 65300) in the case of a general plan, or Article 8 (commencing with Section 65450) in the case of a specific plan.

(2) That it is consistent with those portions of the plan challenged in the action or proceeding and found by the court to substantially comply with applicable provisions of law.

The party seeking exclusion from any order or judgment of a court pursuant to this subdivision shall have the burden of showing that the action, program, or project complies with paragraphs (1) and (2).

(c) Notwithstanding Section 65754.4 or subdivisions (a) and (b), in any action or proceeding brought pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 65009, no remedy pursuant to this section or injunction pursuant to Section 65754.5 shall abrogate, impair, or otherwise interfere with the full exercise of the rights and protections granted to (1) an applicant for a tentative map pursuant to Section 66474.2, or (2) a developer pursuant to Sections 65866 and 66498.1.