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## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



# SOLANO COUNTY

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April 18, 2022

The Honorable Tim Grayson  
California State Assembly  
1021 O St., Ste. 5510  
Sacramento, CA 95814

### **RE: – SUPPORT, AB 2561, Planning and Zoning: Benicia Arsenal Historic District**

On behalf of the Solano County Board of Supervisors, I write in support of your AB 2561, which seeks to include the Benicia Arsenal Historic District as an exemption under the Planning and Zoning Law – which authorizes certain projects to use an accelerated approval process to build housing.

The City of Benicia, in Solano County, is one of the state's oldest cities and was founded in May of 1847. The U.S. Benicia Arsenal was acquired in 1849 by the federal government and is among the oldest establishments in the city. In 1964, Benicia took ownership of the former Arsenal lands and leased the properties to Benicia Industries. While some of the properties are still owned by the City of Benicia, most are privately owned. One of the sub-districts of the Benicia Arsenal Historic District, Jefferson Ridge, is home to the nation's most impressive collection of mid-19th century military architecture.

In 2017, SB 35, or the Planning and Zoning Law, was enacted to streamline housing construction in order to combat California's housing crisis. However, due to its unique makeup the Benicia Arsenal Historic District does not qualify for an exemption from SB 35 – despite it exempting most other historic structures. The Benicia Arsenal Historic District should be exempt because of its local, state, and national significance. The Arsenal grounds are an integral part of both Benicia and Solano County as a whole. While we recognize the importance of providing Californians with affordable and available housing, achieving this goal should not come at the cost of our state's historic lands.

Thus, we assert our full support of AB 2561 to protect the Benicia Arsenal Historic District's historic integrity. AB 2561 carves a narrow exemption in the Planning and Zoning Law to protect this important district while maintaining the efficacy of the Planning and Zoning Law for all other non-exempt districts.

For these reasons, Solano County is pleased to support AB 2561 and would like to thank you for your authorship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John M. Vasquez".

John M. Vasquez,  
District 4 Supervisor and Chair  
Solano County Board of Supervisors

### **CC:**

Honorable Bill Dodd, Member, California State Senate  
Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Member, California State Assembly

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Honorable Lori Wilson, Member, California State Assembly  
Solano County Board of Supervisors  
Karen Lange, Legislative Advocate