

What's New in Government Affairs

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LOCAL

LOMITA: This week the City Council considered rent control in mobile home parks. After opposition from mobile home manufacturers and local REALTORS®, the City Council decided against rent control. Manufacturers demonstrated that mobile home costs actually rise when the underlying land cost is kept down, thus creating a housing shortage instead of making it more affordable. Special thanks to Lomita REALTORS® George Kivett and David Popelka for bringing concerns about rent control to the Lomita City Council.

LOS ANGELES: A judge tossed out portions of a city law approved last year that allows developers to build taller buildings in exchange for setting aside some units for affordable housing, according to the Los Angeles Times. The ordinance passed in 2008 following approval of Senate Bill 1818, which required local governments to permit denser projects if they include affordable housing.

ASK ABOUT THE REDONDO BEACH BUDGET: On April 28, ask city officials about the 2009-2010 budget, streamed live. Mayor Mike Gin will introduce a Q&A with Budget & Finance Commissioner David Goodman and City Manager Bill Workman in the Council Chambers on April 28 at 6:00 p.m. This real time forum is open to the public and will be broadcast over cable channels 8 and 41, and streamed over the City's web site. You may also phone in your questions at (310) 937-6675, email or text to budget@redondo.org during the webcast, or be a member of the "in studio" audience. View a full transcript and recording on redondo.org starting April 30.

STATE

WONDERING WHY C.A.R. OPPOSES AB 957? State bill AB 957 requires that in the first and subsequent sale of a foreclosure, only the buyer can choose title and escrow providers. Currently some lenders selling their own foreclosed properties are demanding control. C.A.R. understands and sympathizes with the desire to ensure that buyers are not being taken advantage of by lenders in the sales transaction. However, C.A.R. has a longstanding policy of supporting the negotiability of all terms of a sale, including the choice of title and escrow providers. C.A.R. supports good faith negotiations and fair dealing, and supports full compliance with RESPA.

FEDERAL

MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTION SAFE, FOR NOW: Last March, President Obama's proposed budget called for reducing itemized deductions for households making more than \$250,000 per year. However NAR announced in the April 21 NAR President's Podcast that the mortgage interest deduction was not addressed in Congress' passage of the 2009 federal budget. We are pleased that federal government leaders heard our concerns about protecting homeownership and preserving this deduction. NAR does not expect further tax legislation until this fall.

IS THE STIMULUS BILL WORKING? The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) raised loan limits to 2008 levels and offered an \$8,000 tax credit to first time buyers. But is it helping? NAR noted that sales are up in March over January 2009, including more multiple bids, and median prices are rising in some areas.

Why Government Affairs?

Every city makes decisions on taxes, point-of-sale, signs, rent control, property rights, and more. This impacts your client's ability to buy, sell, or develop their properties and your ability to do business. The South Bay Association of REALTORS® Government Affairs Program protects and advocates for you. For more information, call SBAOR Government Affairs at (310)326-3010 ext. 715