

BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIAN

Letter to the editor: Salas stepped up

September 19, 2017

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Last month in these pages I called upon Assemblyman Rudy Salas to lend his support to important bills to address the state's unprecedented housing crisis. Now I would like to thank him for his critical support.

After decades of work to create a permanent source, and years of successive near-misses in the state legislature, legislative members passed landmark legislation, SB 2 by Sen. Toni Atkins, last week that will create the state's first-ever dedicated source of funding for affordable housing. An estimated \$250 million to \$300 million annually will be generated to help local governments and housing developers build, rehabilitate, acquire, and preserve affordable housing for California's working families, the elderly, and homeless.

SB 2 was one of the signature bills in a 12-bill housing package that Gov. Jerry Brown, Senate President Pro Tempore Kevin de Leon, and Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon had committed to pass after the summer recess to address California's historic housing crisis.

The passage of SB 2, however, was by no means assured, and the stakes couldn't have been higher. Salas stepped up and exhibited guts.

SB 2 is the capstone of the most prolific legislative session ever for affordable housing. After decades of falling short, the combination of new funding and land use reforms that will eliminate local obstacles to affordable housing production won't solve the state's entire affordable housing problem. But it will help to stimulate new supply and new opportunities that will make a significant dent in the problem for years to come.