

JAN. 10, 2017, 1:23 P.M.

California governor: We're not spending more on low-income housing because it's too expensive to build



California Gov. Jerry Brown on Tuesday (Rich Pedroncelli / AP)

Gov. Jerry Brown delivered the same message on housing in his new state budget that he did last year: California's primary problem is that it's too expensive to build here.

"We've got to bring down the cost structure of housing and not just find ways to subsidize it," Brown said in a news conference Tuesday where he unveiled the budget.

Brown proposed no new funding for low-income housing subsidies in the budget and said he wouldn't support any housing legislation that would increase budgetary spending. Citing lower state revenues and uncertainty surrounding federal dollars, Brown also axed the \$400 million he had agreed to spend on low-income housing subsidies last year [if lawmakers signed off on the governor's plan to streamline some local development regulations](#).

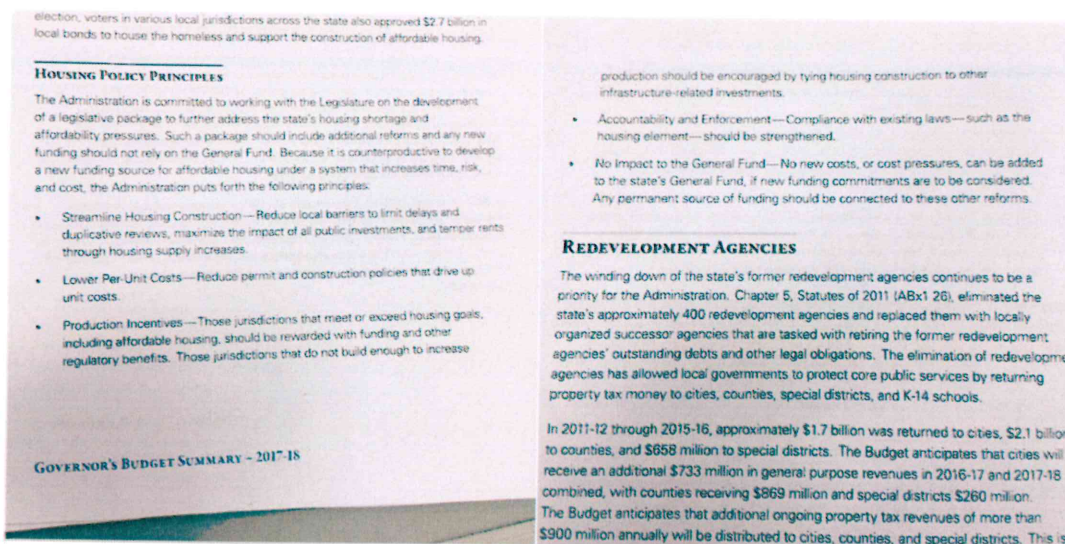
Instead, Brown made clear he would again support new laws that would make it easier to build new homes, lower costs to develop low-income housing and provide financial incentives for cities that meet housing production goals.

“What we can do is cut the red tape, cut the delays, cut whatever expenses we can afford to do without to make housing more affordable and therefore increase the stock and therefore hopefully bring down the costs,” he said.

The state is building at least 100,000 fewer units a year than it needs to to keep pace with population growth, [according to a Brown-administration report released last week](#), and the lowest-income residents are the most squeezed. One-third of the California renters spend more than half their income on housing, and the state’s homeless population is dramatically higher than the rest of the country.

Exactly what new housing legislation looks like remains to be seen. Brown was criticized last year for unrolling his housing-streamlining plan without input from lawmakers.

“The last time we pushed it pretty hard, and some people said we didn’t collaborate enough,” Brown said. “So we’re setting principles out so we can collaborate.”



Liam Dillon ✓

@dillonliam



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11:54 AM - 10 Jan 2017



31



16