

Building affordable housing may be too costly

By Angela Hart, Sacramento Bee

After a decades-long battle with California's building industry, developers who want to fast-track housing production – especially in cities that have not built enough housing to keep pace with rising demand – will be required to pay higher wages and benefits to construction workers beginning Jan. 1.

Five of 15 housing bills signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown this year include so-called prevailing wage rules for employers and contractors to pay laborers higher wages and benefits for new construction projects.

The requirements, reached after more than a year of negotiations between powerful labor groups and state Democratic lawmakers, represent the biggest expansion of union-backed pay mandates for construction workers since the late 1990s.

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