



Member, Board of Supervisors
District 6

City and County of San Francisco

JANE KIM

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

Supervisor Kim Calls For Hearing on Below-Market-Rate (BMR) Housing Program
Questions Whether Language or Other Barriers Are Blocking Fair Access to Available Units

San Francisco, CA – At the April 26 Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Kim called for a hearing on the City’s current inclusionary below-market-rate housing program to determine whether reforms are needed to ensure that the process is fair and does not erect unnecessary barriers to families and individuals who are eligible but who cannot speak fluent English or who may need additional support when it comes to completing applications.

“In November 2014, I called for an initial report on the Below-Market-Rate policies that the City oversees when it comes to an important source of new affordable housing units in the City: the inclusionary ownership units in our BMR program. During that hearing, I was shocked to discover that our own policies were limiting opportunities for members of our community who do not speak proficient English, such as the lack of translated application forms in languages that over 30% of our City’s population use as their first language,” explained Supervisor Kim.

Chris Durazo, Coordinator and Case Manager at the Bill Sorro Housing Program, said, “The time is ripe to examine if improvements promised at that hearing have been made or whether the stories that have been shared with us about people being treated as second class citizens because of language, about applicants being told to get to the back of the line because they’ve filled out a line or two incorrectly on their application, are true. If they are, it’s absolutely unacceptable. The City should be doing everything it can to remove barriers to housing, let alone allowing these barriers to continue to exist.”

The City’s inclusionary housing program is based on the concept that as the City develops more high-end luxury housing, new residents create a demand for low to moderate income workers in San Francisco. A 2006 study established that for every 100 units built, approximately 20-40 low to moderate income jobs are created in San Francisco. Therefore, private developments are required to build on-site below-market-rate units, build off-site affordable units, or pay an in-lieu affordable housing fee to mitigate the demand for new low to moderate income housing.

The hearing called by Supervisor Kim will be heard on May 5th at the Government Audit and Oversight Committee. It will focus specifically on the preferred option of on-site BMR units to ensure there is a diversity of families and individuals at different income levels residing in new residential developments.