

April 2, 2025

Assembly Commerce and Labor
Nevada State Legislature
401 S. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Re: Opposition to AB540

To Whom it May Concern:

The Building & Construction Trades of Northern Nevada strongly opposes the exemption on prevailing wage for affordable housing in AB540. Our state is in serious need of more affordable housing, but creating an exemption for prevailing wage on projects funded by the Nevada Attainable Housing Account and the Nevada State Infrastructure Bank is counterproductive. It also ignores the great work building affordable housing that the Nevada State Infrastructure Bank is already doing in our state, both in Northern and Southern Nevada.

Down in Southern Nevada, Desert Pines is the biggest affordable housing project in Nevada's history, and one of the biggest in the country – and it's built with one hundred percent union labor and prevailing wage. In Northern Nevada, we have Carville Park Apartments, which is a one hundred percent Section 8, senior-preference affordable housing complex – also built with one hundred percent union labor and prevailing wage. These are models of how affordable housing can and should be built in our state. These projects represent the largest individual investment in affordable housing in the state, creating over 1600 units.

Additionally, when these projects don't use prevailing wage, workers make substantially less – often little enough that they themselves may qualify to live in the units they're building. When we talk about bridging the Nevada housing gap, there are two sides to that bridge. One side is housing supply. The other is wages sufficient to afford the housing available in your community. When the government exempts public dollars from prevailing wage, they drive down the wages for the whole region, which hurts working families.

When construction workers on affordable housing projects can't afford housing themselves because they are being underpaid, the housing gap only gets wider. Solving the problem requires addressing both sides of the gap. We therefore strongly oppose AB540 and urge the committee to do likewise.

Sincerely,

Rob Benner
Executive Secretary-Treasurer
Building & Construction Trades Council of Northern Nevada