



*Lilypad Homes*

## **Press Release**

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### **California Housing that Costs Less than Tiny Homes**

Governor Brown signed junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs) into law this week. The statute, AB 2406 (Thurmond), provides an innovative and adaptive solution to the housing crisis that allows for flexible in-law apartments created from spare bedrooms in homes. These rental units offer the lowest development costs for any new housing, including tiny homes! JADUs also offer the smallest impact on the environment and greatest benefit to communities, as they make both renting and owning a home in California more affordable now without the need for government subsidies.

The State is responding to the intersection of three fundamental demographic and economic shifts that are transforming our society: one, the rapidly increasing number of retirees who wish to remain in their homes and age in place; two, the shift toward couples and individuals living alone in single-family homes; and three, the high cost of living, particularly in popular urban coastal communities like the Bay Area and greater Los Angeles.

Given these stressors, more and more people are turning to their homes as a resource to generate additional income, or to house loved ones or caregivers. Prior to Brown signing AB 2406, short-term vacation rental was the only legal option accessible to people already struggling to keep up with rising costs. Now a sensible and inexpensive permitting process has been created to allow homeowners to permanently house others without compromising the privacy and security of either party. These units remain connected to the home through an interior door that can be doubled up and secured.

JADUs offer the lowest price point in the housing equation for a number of reasons. Permitting and connection fees are greatly reduced, parking and fire sprinkler requirements have been eliminated, and these units share central systems so no fire separation is needed. The small scope of work includes adding an efficiency kitchen that consists of a sink and a series of standard outlets for plug-in appliances. No 220V or gas is allowed. An exterior door is created if it does not already exist, along with an entry landing for access. Finally, insulating the walls provides sound and temperature attenuation.

Many are looking at PACE programs created through Energy Upgrade California as a possible financing source for development of these new small homes. This would apply to JADUs any ADU that more efficiently uses existing living space and does not increase the size of a single-family home. And there will be further energy savings from better utilization of the built environment and carbon emission reductions by creating housing that allows people to live in the communities where they work.

The measure got started in Marin County where a small, women-run nonprofit, Lilypad Homes, worked with community and agency leaders to institute the model in local permitting code, with funding provided by the Marin Community Foundation and the County of Marin. All eyes are on California to see if they can make this housing model a reality for the hundreds of thousands of families who are grappling with the cost of remaining in their homes and the tens of thousands who come to California every month to take advantage of the thriving economy and beautiful landscape.