



February 6, 2025

The Honorable Chris Ward  
California State Assembly  
1021 O Street, Suite 6350  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 253 (Ward): Permitting Review Act: Residential Building SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Ward,

On behalf of the Council of Infill Builders, a statewide organization of real estate professionals committed to improving California through infill development, I write to support Assembly Bill 253, which will speed up the approval process for new infill homes by allowing home builders to hire a licensed and certified third-party reviewer for to expedite housing permit applications, if the local government cannot or does not complete their permit review within 30 days.

California is currently experiencing a significant housing crisis characterized by an acute shortage of homes to meet the needs of its residents. Although various laws enacted in recent years have streamlined the process to legalize more housing developments (known as "entitlements"), our members struggle with cities in California that still have slow and unpredictable permitting and inspection processes after these entitlements are granted. On average, it takes 271 days—approximately nine months—to obtain a building permit for a fully-entitled apartment building with five or more units. This prolonged timeline for housing production can make it financially unviable for small, local builders, potentially jeopardizing smaller housing projects.

AB 253 aims to accelerate the availability of housing by allowing home builders to hire licensed third parties to review and approve permits for specific projects. This program is applicable to housing projects that consist of 10 units or fewer and are a maximum of four stories tall. The third-party reviewers must be licensed engineers or architects who have no financial interest in the projects or permits. By expediting the permitting process for fully entitled projects, policymakers can effectively increase housing production without incurring additional costs.

For these reasons, we support AB 253 and thank you for your work to address this need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mott Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mott Smith, Chair, Board of Directors  
Council of Infill Builders