



President | Jeff Janes, C.B.O.
Building Official
City of Sonora

Vice President | Raj Patel, P.E., C.B.O.
Building Official
City of Pico Rivera

Secretary/Treasurer | Mike Brinkman, C.B.O.
Building Official
City of Newman

Past President | Brad Wungluck, C.B.O.
Deputy Director, Development Services
City of Manteca

Director | Doug Hughes, C.B.O.
Chief Building Official
Town of Windsor

Director | John Weight
Executive Officer
Los Angeles Building & Safety

Director | Sara Retmier, C.B.O.
Chief Building Official
City of Beaumont

Advisory Council | Ian Livingston, CASp, C.B.O.
Building Official
CSG Consultants, Inc.

Advisory Council | Addison Smith
Chief Executive Officer
JAS Pacific

 916.457.1103

 www.calbo.org

 1111 16th Street
Sacramento, California 95814

March 7, 2025

The Honorable Christopher M. Ward
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 253 – OPPOSITION

Dear Assemblymember Ward:

With regret, we write to inform you of our **OPPOSITION** to Assembly Bill 253 (AB 253). As you know, AB 253 seeks to expedite plan check of residential housing in California by enabling permit applicants to self-select third party plan reviewers under specified circumstances. Not only do we feel that this bill would jeopardize public safety in the name of expediency, but we feel that it undermines the public sector altogether. We appreciate your willingness to hear our concerns as summarized below.

Public Safety. Public sector staff are mandated by state law to complete and maintain certifications on the applicable codes, standards, and regulations that apply to the structures they plan check and inspect. Not only are public sector staff required to understand model codes and their applicable state amendments, they must also demonstrate knowledge of local codes specific to their community. As an organization of code officials, it is our fiduciary responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of the citizenry that we serve.

Expediency. Faster does not always mean better, and although working through the public process of permitting by a local jurisdiction can feel time-consuming, it ensures that overall building, life, and fire safety codes are followed holistically. Plan check is only one piece of the development puzzle. When a third-party plan checker is not familiar with local ordinances specific to a community, this will only delay permitting further.

Planning. California is a large and diverse state, which has created a necessary role for local planning departments to look past today's needs with a vision for tomorrow. The Planning, Community Development, and Building Departments in most California cities and counties are seamlessly connected to ensure that the laudable and progressive goals are furthered. Adding a permittee selected third party plan reviewer to the mix does nothing to further goals outside of expedited housing.

Letter of Opposition – AB 253

Page Two

Equity. Multi-family housing is often the answer for communities susceptible to marginalization. Although your proposal cites successes in Florida, Texas, and Tennessee, we see development projects differently in California ensuring that goals of sustainability, energy efficiency, accessibility, and overall equity are community considerations.

Public Sector Fiduciaries. As an organization of local government officials, we believe in the public sector. We do not subscribe to the sentiment that our values are antiquated or that our work on behalf of the public is less pragmatic than our private sector counterparts. Working with the public sector ensures that first and foremost, the needs of the public are central to all decisions being made. We are not working to further private sector profits in the name of less restriction and accountability; rather, we are connected to the communities that we serve given that we inhabit them as well.

We have appreciated your active engagement with our organization and know that although we disagree on this policy, you understand our position. Our organization remains committed to our shared goal of expanded safe, affordable, and sustainable housing in California.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew Wheeler", followed by a period.

Matthew Wheeler, DPPD
Executive Director

CC: Assembly Committee on Housing & Community Development

