



LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA
CITIES



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities



April 9, 2026

The Honorable Alex Lee
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 6330
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1997 (Lee): Housing development approvals: Timelines and processes
As amended on April 7, 2026 – Notice of Opposition**

Dear Assemblymember Lee:

On behalf of the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the American Planning Association California Chapter (APA), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the Urban Counties of California (UCC), we write to respectfully express our opposition to AB 1997. While we appreciate the recent technical amendment clarifying that local governments are not responsible for the approval processes of independent third-party agencies, as well as the exclusion of the smallest local agencies from the bill's provisions, we continue to be concerned with costs and staff resource allocations required by the bill, particularly while local agencies are reeling from federal cuts, struggling to maintain vital safety net services and grappling with capacity constraints at all levels.

AB 1997 would require, for any type of housing project above \$10 million in construction costs, that local agencies assign a single staff person across all elements of the planning, permitting and building process. Due to the technical nature of planning, environmental review, building permitting, and public works processes related to required improvements— not to mention the *constantly* evolving state mandates and regulations that apply to each of these areas— local agencies routinely employ specialized staff that are dedicated to specific aspects of this work. By requiring concierge service with a single staff person who, by necessity, must have expertise across each area, AB 1997 would dramatically increase local government staffing costs, without any new guaranteed funding source to support such specialized services. These costs can only be borne through increased fees on development applicants— a controversial topic in both the state legislature and local legislative bodies—or through allocations from over-subscribed local general funds that are increasingly under pressure to maintain basic safety net services. This is all to assume a local agency even has the capacity to assign one person to a project, which will ultimately pull them away from other important work, many of which has been mandated by the state. A better approach to this issue would be permissive, allowing an opt-in with the project applicant bearing the actual costs of any additional staffing required by this level of service.

Similarly, the arbitrary reduction in processing times for housing development projects under the Permit Streamlining Act (while ironically *increasing* processing times for all other classes of projects) will dramatically increase staffing needs, fees on development applicants, and local

government costs. While we understand that 30 days is preferable to longer than 30 days, the bill does not consider the tradeoffs as related to local government staff capacity and costs. By increasing review times for other types of applications, which could include other high-priority items, including economic development and clean energy projects, the bill essentially seeks to have those development applicants cross-subsidize housing-related approval processes. We urge the Legislature to stick with the long-standing and uniform timeframes in existing law.

For these reasons, Cal Cities, CSAC, APA, RCRC and UCC are respectfully opposed to AB 1997. Please contact Brady Guertin (Cal Cities) at bguertin@calcities.org, Mark Neuburger (CSAC) at mneuburger@counties.org, Lauren De Valencia y Sanchez (APA) at lauren@stefangeorge.com, Tracy Rhine (RCRC) at TRhine@rcrcnet.org, or Chris Lee (UCC) at clee@politicogroup.com with any questions about our position.

Sincerely,



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cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Local Government Committee
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