



June 1, 2021

Senator Marc R. Pacheco, Senate Chair
Rep. Antonio F.D. Cabral, House Chair
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Re: Senate Bill No. 2065, An Act extending the lifespan of permits held at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Senator Pacheco and Rep. Cabral:

On behalf of the women and men of the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Massachusetts (HBRA), I write to convey our strong support for S. 2065, *An Act extending the lifespan of permits held at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic*.

Massachusetts has one of the most severe housing supply shortages of any state in the country. In the last decade, the Commonwealth has had the fourth lowest rate of housing production in the nation. While the coronavirus pandemic did result in an uptick in home remodeling projects by existing homeowners, needed new housing developments were stalled or not begun because of an inability to obtain financing, buyers' COVID fears of shopping for a new home, high unemployment or anxiety of losing a job, and general market conditions brought on by the national recession.

Although the state's economy is now rebounding, home construction in Massachusetts continues to be thwarted by circumstances beyond the control of homebuilders. They include rising lumber prices due, in part, to tariffs imposed by the Trump Administration on Canadian lumber; significant shortages in building materials, supplies and appliances caused by pandemic-related struggles in manufacturing; and a continuing scarcity of skilled laborers and subcontractors that was exacerbated by the pandemic.

S. 2065 would enact a special law that would extend for two (2) years the term of certain permits and approvals concerning the use or development of real property that were "in effect or existence" from March 10, 2020 to March 10, 2021. This legislation is nearly identical to the Permit Extension Act of 2010 that was enacted during the Great Recession. Its purpose is to ensure that residential, commercial and other real estate developments that have received state or local approval during the pandemic will be able to be completed.

Obtaining state and local land use and environmental permits can be difficult, time consuming and expensive for homebuilders and developers. If these permits are not extended, thousands of desperately needed housing units might not be built because of factors related to the pandemic. In residential development, time is money. Reapplying for permits that had previously been approved would result in years of unnecessary delay and could render many developments

financially infeasible. At a minimum, such delays would add additional costs to such projects, thereby increasing the already high cost of housing in Massachusetts.

For these reasons, the HBRAMA respectfully urges the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight to promptly report S. 2065 “ought to pass.”

Very truly yours,



Matthew Anderson

President

C: Sen. Adam G. Hines, Chair, Senate Committee on Reimagining Massachusetts Post-Pandemic Resiliency

Sen. John F. Keenan, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Housing

Rep. James Arciero, House Chair, Joint Committee on Housing

Joseph Landers, Executive Director, HBRAMA

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