

January 30, 2025

Statement of Pacific Legal Foundation before the House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development in support of HB 2088, Fast-Track Permits Act

Chair Tarwater and members of the Committee:

My name is James Manley, and I am State Policy Chief at Pacific Legal Foundation. PLF is a nonprofit public interest law firm dedicated to defending Americans' liberties when threatened by government overreach. For 50 years, we have been helping Americans fight for their constitutional rights in courthouses and legislatures nationwide. We have won 18 cases at the United States Supreme Court, 17 protecting property rights.

The Fast-Track Permits Act is a crucial step toward addressing Kansas's housing crisis by streamlining permitting processes, expanding housing opportunities, and reducing regulatory barriers that contribute to high housing costs and limited supply. **Critically, this bill respects the primacy of local control of over development approval decisions—it simply requires local decisions to be streamlined and prompt.**

Kansas, like much of the nation, faces a growing housing affordability crisis. According to research by housing economist Kevin Erdmann, the United States faces a significant housing supply deficit, with estimates suggesting that millions of additional homes are needed nationwide to meet demand. HB 2088's provisions for expedited permitting address this issue directly by streamlining development, while maintaining local control of the development approval process. This bill aligns Kansas with pro-housing policies shown to improve affordability and economic opportunity.

The Fast-Track Permits Act changes nothing about the development approval process, except requiring that it be done promptly. Streamlined permitting processes reduce development costs and uncertainty. Developers often cite permitting delays as a major barrier to building new housing. Research from Pacific Legal Foundation underscores that such delays exacerbate housing scarcity and affordability challenges. By requiring municipalities to issue decisions on permit applications within 60 days, HB 2088 provides developers with the certainty needed to proceed with projects, fostering a more robust housing market.

Pro-housing policies not only make economic sense but also enjoy broad public support. Evidence from YIMBY Action shows that state lawmakers who champion housing reforms, such as zoning liberalization and streamlined approval processes, have a high rate of reelection. This reflects growing recognition among voters that increasing housing supply is key to addressing affordability concerns and improving quality of life.



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In conclusion, HB 2088 is a forward-thinking piece of legislation that addresses Kansas's housing challenges with practical and effective solutions. By streamlining permitting processes and thereby encouraging housing development, this bill lays the groundwork for a more affordable, equitable, and prosperous Kansas. We urge the committee to advance HB 2088 and ensure its swift passage.

Respectfully,

James M. Manley
State Policy Chief