



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1791		DATE: 2/4/2026
COMMITTEE: Commerce		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 11:23 PM
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I am in Support of this Bill. This Bill allows the Process to move forward and hold the Political Subdivision to some standards and timely responses.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MARCOS ZELADA-RODAS		PHONE NUMBER: 636-764-6443	
REPRESENTING: ASSOCIATED BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS, HEART OF AMERICA		TITLE: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS	
ADDRESS: 4035 DENTON RD			
CITY: KANSAS CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 64133
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: TAYLOR M WALKER		PHONE NUMBER: 602-633-8965	
REPRESENTING: BARRY GOLDWATER INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH		TITLE: STATE AFFAIRS ASSOCIATE	
ADDRESS: 500 E CORONADO ROAD			
CITY: PHOENIX		STATE: AZ	ZIP: 85004
EMAIL: twalker@goldwaterinstitute.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 4:00 PM	
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Chair Casteel and Members of the House Commerce Committee:

My name is Taylor Walker, and I am the State Affairs Associate at the Goldwater Institute. The Goldwater Institute works in courtrooms, capitols, and communities nationwide to protect constitutional rights and empower individuals to live freer lives.

As we all know, owning a home is a significant part of the American dream, and yet, it has become difficult if not impossible for many Americans to enter the housing market. New builds have failed to keep pace with demand in many sought after markets, and the result is sky high housing costs. This also means that, when localities overregulate the permit system, homeowners pay more. Time is money, and the costs of these delays are ultimately passed down to the consumer in the form of higher rents or higher purchase prices. A recent study by the National Association of Homebuilders showed that local regulation accounts for nearly a quarter of the cost to build a new home. Shockingly, that percentage skyrockets to roughly 40% of the cost to build a multi-family development.

This bill, HB 1791, requires an explicit deadline for when the locality will decide whether to grant or deny the permit. The bill as written doesn't change existing permit or licensing requirements, and it leaves localities free to impose whatever permits they want. However, this bill both fast-tracks the congested permitting process and protects the rights of individuals to make decisions regarding their own property.

Not only is the current building permit process slowed, but they can also be unpredictable due to unclear or vague permitting requirements that allow bureaucrats to inject subjectivity into the review process. These are requirements like "show good cause" or "must be aesthetically pleasing" which lawyers often struggle to decipher, much less ordinary citizens. Even worse, when a permit is wrongfully denied, applicants are often forced to go through informal administrative hearings which can be deferential and lack formal due process.

To perfect this bill, the following friendly amendment would be added to the language:

- In the event of a permit denial, the political subdivision must use "clear and unambiguous language" as to why a permit was denied. This would expedite the completion of correct permit applications and reduce frivolous denials.

- When the applicant feels that the permit was wrongfully denied, the applicant is entitled to a meaningful, unbiased hearing in a court of law. This provision would ensure independent evaluation by

an objective judicial officer rather than merely deferring back to a locality.

When applied together, all three reforms will break ground in streamlining timelines, provide certainty in the permitting process and save responsible property owners a bit of money. Thank you for your consideration and we ask that you support this good bill as amended.

**Sincerely,
Taylor Walker**



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: AARON KEISTLER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 8:10 AM	
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I oppose HB 1719.

Rigid review deadlines undermine building and life-safety protections
“One-size-fits-all” timelines ignore local staffing, complexity, and risk
Forced deadlines shift costs and liability — they do not eliminate delays
Plan review deadlines weaken local accountability and professional judgment
Fee penalties worsen staffing shortages and review backlogs
Better solutions already exist — without statutory mandates
Electronic plan review
Self-Certifications
Clear submittal checklists
Pre-application meetings
Targeted staffing investments
Optional third-party review (with municipal oversight)

Building plan review is a public-safety service, not a paperwork bottleneck — and Missouri’s communities should retain the authority to conduct it thoroughly, responsibly, and based on local conditions.



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WITNESS NAME: AMBER N SUMMERS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 3:53 PM	

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Rigid review deadlines weaken building and life-safety protections by prioritizing speed over safety. One-size-fits-all timelines fail to account for differences in project complexity, risk, and local staffing capacity. Rather than eliminating delays, forced deadlines simply shift costs and liability onto municipalities and professionals.

Mandated timelines also erode local accountability and professional judgment, while fee penalties further exacerbate staffing shortages and existing review backlogs — making the problem worse, not better.

Effective alternatives already exist without statutory mandates:

Electronic plan review systems

Self-certification programs

Clear and consistent submittal checklists

Pre-application meetings

Targeted investments in review staff

Optional third-party review with municipal oversight

Building plan review is a public-safety function, not a bureaucratic obstacle. Missouri’s communities must retain the authority to conduct thorough, responsible reviews that reflect local conditions and protect public health, safety, and welfare.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: BRAD ERWIN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 3:48 PM
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Good afternoon,

As a design professional working in multiple jurisdictions this is not the best path to securing shorter timelines on building permit submittals.

Rigid review deadlines undermine building and life-safety protections. Permit reviews help protect the health and safety of the public.

“One-size-fits-all” timelines ignore local staffing, complexity, and risk associated with project types and sizes.

Forced deadlines shift costs and liability — they do not eliminate delays. It’s also up to design professionals to produce a quality set of documents and sometimes additional review time is warranted to provide the best outcome for everyone.

Fee penalties worsen staffing shortages and review backlogs...municipal entities need more funding and quality staff, penalties won’t help.

Please consider other ways to support our local building officials in their capacity to provide this critical service.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: CODY HENDERSON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
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CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 7:13 PM
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I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to HB1791.

Mandatory review timelines can undermine building and life-safety protections by prioritizing speed over a thorough review process. Plan review is a critical safeguard to ensure compliance with building and life safety codes that protect the public. Stipulated strict deadlines increase the risk that serious safety issues are overlooked, placing occupants, first responders, and the public at risk.

“One-size-fits-all” timelines fail to account for staffing levels, project complexity, and risk. Often large projects will consist of hundreds of drawings alone. Jurisdictions vary widely in resources and workload. We would essentially be placing more pressure on individuals who may already have limited resources to complete reviews.

Forced deadlines do not eliminate delays, they shift the costs and liability to others. When reviews are rushed to avoid penalties, unresolved issues can surface later where corrections are more costly and liability exposure increases for owners, designers, and contractors.

Better solutions already exist without statutory mandates. Electronic plan review, self-certification programs, clear submittal checklists, pre-application meetings, targeted staffing investments, and optional third-party review with municipal oversight have all been successfully implemented in various municipalities across the state and in other states.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose HB1791.

Respectfully,
Cody Henderson



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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: DAVE HELMICK		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-6416
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: CITY OF JEFFERSON CITY		TITLE: PLANNING DIRECTOR
ADDRESS: 320 E MCCARTY ST		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME		
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WITNESS NAME: DENNIS COPE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
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As an architect, I have been frustrated now and then by the time it takes to get a permit. Almost always it is due to the department's workload. To impose such VERY SHORT timeliness is much too strict. It risks the permits being rushed and inadequately reviewed. This places the public at risk which is completely opposite of the intent of a permit. I suggest greater discussion and consideration for solving long permit reviews. Other options exists that do not impose risk to the public. Reducing the time it takes is an admirable goal, forcing rushed reviews is not the solution.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ERICH BURGENDORFF FRIESEN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
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CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 4:55 PM

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As an architect with over 35 years of experience design complex projects, including healthcare, laboratories and airports, I want to speak in strong opposition to this bill, as setting rigid deadlines for review timelines is inappropriate. Our buildings, especially our complex public buildings, upon which many lives depend, require detailed and through reviews. Buildings are some of the very last things that are still custom made and custom designed, rather than mass produced. Thus, reviews are variable, and dependent upon the complexity and uniqueness of a given design. Trying to predict and make a "one-size fits all" approach to planning the life safety reviews of such custom-made designs would place lives at risk, and I must oppose this effort in the strongest possible terms.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ERIK BIGGS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
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CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 4:43 PM

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This legislation removes local control and represents an overreach by the state, particularly given that Missouri does not have a statewide building or energy code. More than 80 local jurisdictions across Missouri have already adopted energy codes that exceed the 2009 standard. These communities include both large and small cities throughout the state, notably the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County, which have made deliberate policy choices to support stronger energy efficiency requirements based on local needs.

Adopting outdated energy codes would also leave Missouri lagging behind other states. The most recent edition of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) was published in 2024 and is currently available for adoption. Neighboring and peer states—such as Nebraska, Louisiana, and Texas—have adopted at least the 2015 IECC as a statewide standard, while Illinois requires compliance with the 2021 IECC. Missouri cannot remain competitive with states that have embraced modern standards if it relies on codes that are more than a decade old.

This legislation would also harm Missouri companies and their employees. Businesses that manufacture high-quality construction materials—such as high-performance windows, building enclosures, roofing products, insulation, and air-sealing systems—would lose market opportunities. Additionally, local energy consultants, architects, engineers, and heating and cooling contractors could see reduced demand for their services. These are jobs that support energy efficiency improvements in Missouri buildings and cannot be outsourced.

Finally, outdated energy codes would lead to higher utility costs and negative health impacts for Missourians. Modern energy codes such as the 2021 and 2024 IECC improve insulation, air sealing, and mechanical systems, reducing energy bills by approximately \$40 to \$50 per month. Over a 30-year mortgage, this equates to roughly \$15,000 in homeowner savings that would remain within Missouri's economy. These efficiency measures also improve indoor air quality by reducing mold, moisture, and airborne pollutants, helping to mitigate asthma and other respiratory conditions.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: GENE BOECKER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
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CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 6:05 PM
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Please defeat this bill. Mandating time for a plan review ignores the financial capabilities of the community performing the review, the number of permit applications at any given time and the varied complexities of individual projects. A plan review is performed to ascertain the safety and usability of buildings across the state. One size does not fit all. Communities vary. Projects vary. Allow the various communities to determine how best to serve the public. Please do not try to thread the needle by using a hammer.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: GEOFFREY LEWIS CROWLEY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 4:40 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Esteemed Members of the Commerce Committee,
 I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to HB 1791 because it poses significant risks to public safety and to the long-term well-being of Missouri communities. As you are aware, building plan review is not merely an administrative step or a bureaucratic delay; it is an essential safeguard that protects the public by ensuring buildings are constructed safely and in accordance with established codes. While the intention of increasing construction activity and affordability is understandable, this bill—along with similar proposed measures—overlooks the critical role of professional review and creates conditions that will ultimately undermine safety rather than improve efficiency.

As a licensed architect practicing in twenty-eight states, I can attest that most municipalities in Missouri already operate with some of the fastest and most responsive plan review processes in the country. This is not anecdotal; during a gathering last November with architects from a dozen other states, Missouri was recognized as having the second-fastest permitting timelines among the jurisdictions represented. Missouri should be proud of this standing and work collaboratively with municipalities, designers, contractors, and developers to refine an already efficient system rather than impose mandates that would restrict the very people responsible for ensuring building and life safety. There are certainly areas for improvement, but HB 1791 does not provide solutions that strengthen the system. Instead, it creates rigid timelines and penalty structures that fail to account for staffing shortages and the complexity of modern buildings, ultimately constraining the professionals tasked with protecting the public.

The bill attempts to categorize building types into simplified levels, but real-world projects do not fit neatly into broad classifications. Building safety is not a one-size-fits-all process, and compressing diverse project types into generalized categories risks overlooking unique circumstances that require a more nuanced review. Municipalities that struggle with review times typically lack adequate staffing or resources. HB 1791 does nothing to address the root causes of these delays. In fact, by imposing mandatory deadlines and fee-reduction penalties, the bill increases pressure on already overburdened departments and makes it even harder for them to attract and retain qualified plan reviewers. If the State sincerely wishes to accelerate building permit turnaround times, any legislation must include strategies to develop, fund, and support the workforce that performs this essential public safety function.

Other municipalities across the country have successfully improved review times through collaborative process redesign, technology adoption, practical workflow improvements, and investment in staffing—not through punitive measures against local governments. I would gladly

provide examples of successful models and approaches used in other jurisdictions that enhanced efficiency without compromising public safety or placing municipalities at a regulatory disadvantage. Missouri has the opportunity to become a national leader in permitting innovation, but HB 1791 moves in the opposite direction by creating unfunded mandates that will inevitably result in reduced oversight, increased construction risk, and diminished accountability.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 1791. Missouri deserves thoughtful, data-driven solutions developed hand-in-hand with the professionals responsible for designing, reviewing, and constructing the built environment. This bill does not achieve that goal, and its unintended consequences would harm rather than help the communities it seeks to support.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: GRETCHEN BLAIN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
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CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 9:17 AM

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As an Architect practicing in Missouri, I am opposed to the rigid deadlines included in this bill. They undermine our responsibility for life-safety protections that necessitate thorough review; add a 'one size fits all' approach to project that can have wildly different scales, and weaken local accountability.

Better solutions exist with the suggested statutory mandates, including but not limited to: electronic plan review options, clear submittal checklists, pre-application meetings, and targeted staffing investments. Building plan review is a public-safety service, not a paperwork bottleneck — and Missouri's communities should retain the authority to conduct it thoroughly, responsibly, and based on local conditions.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JAKE BANTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 7:57 PM

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I am submitting this testimony in opposition to this legislation. I believe that much more work needs to be done on this bill to not create an undue burden on municipalities and AHJs when reviewing permit applications. I am an architect and we strive hard to produce a set of documents that meet all locally adopted codes and ordinances. Perfection is often impossible to obtain and a thorough review from the AJH is a critical part of protecting the health, safety and welfare of the public. Additionally, it is not always architects that prepare permit applications. In that case it is especially critical to have a good thorough review by a plan examiner. Better solutions to speed up review times already exist and a forced deadline is going to have the opposite intended effect from what is desired and create liability and added costs for municipalities, developers, and designers. Missouri already has one of the quickest average review periods in the country. This one size fits all approach is not appropriate for Missouri.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JOHN LOUIS COX		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 10:03 PM
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I am an architectural designer writing in opposition to this bill. This bill puts needless stress on political subdivisions, reducing their ability to effectively deem whether projects are safe or acceptable for the public by shortening their window to review applications. While some larger subdivisions might be able to handle this increased stress, smaller subdivisions--which are at higher risks of being short staffed already--would have the crushing weight of a significantly tightened deadline. The two obvious outcomes from this bill would be increased delays for some projects (due to projects not receiving thorough reviews and requiring multiple passes rather than one thorough review), and an increased risk of improper design that fails to meet a subdivisions requirements. These outcomes would cost builders, owners, and buyers, but most importantly increase the risk of unsafe buildings for the citizens of Missouri. Voting in support of this bill is voting in support of a weaker building stock, and will serve only to make the difficult job of building review harder.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LAURA PASTINE		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:37 AM
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Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am a licensed architect in Missouri and resident of Kansas City – and am submitting my opposition to HB 1791.

My duty of practice as a licensed architect is to safeguard the life safety, health, and welfare of building occupants. A “shot clock” blanket mandate to automatically approve projects based on expedited deadlines that do not reflect the actual capacity of local municipalities who review plans for permit is reckless and creates unnecessary risk for Missourians.

The goal to cut costs does not outweigh life safety concerns – which is the purpose of the plans review process.

I cannot support HB 1791 and urge the Committee to put the welfare of Missourians first.



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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: PAT KELLY		PHONE NUMBER: 314-726-4747
REPRESENTING: MUNICIPAL LEAGUE OF METRO STL		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 11911 DORSETT RD.		
CITY: MARYLAND HEIGHTS		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63043
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: REBECCA ROOK		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 7:34 PM	

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As a licensed Architect, in Missouri, I agree with the stance of the AIA:
Rigid review deadlines undermine building and life-safety protections
“One-size-fits-all” timelines ignore local staffing, complexity, and risk
Forced deadlines shift costs and liability — they do not eliminate delays
Plan review deadlines weaken local accountability and professional judgment
Fee penalties worsen staffing shortages and review backlogs
Better solutions already exist — without statutory mandates

- a. Electronic plan review
- b. Self-Certifications
- c. Clear submittal checklists
- d. Pre-application meetings
- e. Targeted staffing investments
- f. Optional third-party review (with municipal oversight)

Building plan review is a public-safety service, not a paperwork bottleneck — and Missouri’s communities should retain the authority to conduct it thoroughly, responsibly, and based on local conditions.



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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: RHIANNON KAYE, AIA		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 8:23 PM
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I am writing in opposition to this bill.

Setting a deadline for review of permit drawings, which impact health, safety, and welfare, does not make the process more safe - it adds chaos and liability. Setting a deadline does not account for staffing load, project complexity, or level of risk, even with the different categories of project by size. There are complex projects of all sizes.

There are other ways to consider streamlining the permitting process timeline and shifting roles and resources while not diminishing the review process.

We regularly try our best to work with jurisdictions through pre-meetings and questions where possible. We refer to submittal checklists where available, and the jurisdiction should not be given a deadline for requesting more information or clarifications. Fee penalties only worsen staffing shortages.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: RICHARD SHEETS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-635-9134	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI MUNICIPAL LEAGUE		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 1727 SOUTHRIDGE DR.			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/4/2026 12:00 AM	
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ROBERT ARMSTRONG		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 4:49 PM	
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This is addressing a personal / limited issue for the benefit of one individual. Missouri's review times are already one of the best in the nation. If you can't plan ahead and wait the couple weeks for a proper safety review, you shouldn't be building in our state. This is a waste of our representatives' time.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/2/2026 3:20 PM	

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House Bill 1791 is framed as a procedural efficiency measure, but in substance it is a state-level intrusion into local land-use authority that replaces professional discretion with rigid deadlines, automatic approvals, and financial penalties—regardless of local conditions, staffing capacity, or public safety concerns.

First, HB 1791 preempts local governance by imposing uniform timelines and fee penalties on political subdivisions, even though building permitting has long been recognized as a core municipal function grounded in local police powers.

The bill substitutes legislative impatience for on-the-ground expertise, ignoring that permitting delays often arise from safety reviews, code compliance issues, or incomplete submissions—not bureaucratic indifference.

Second, the provision deeming an application “automatically completed and accepted” if a political subdivision fails to respond within five business days is legally reckless. Completeness determinations are substantive, not clerical.

This mechanism forces approval pathways to begin even when applications are materially deficient, shifting risk from applicants to taxpayers and municipalities.

Third, the bill’s mandatory fee-reduction penalties function as a coercive fiscal sanction rather than a remedial measure. Local governments are punished financially even when delays are caused by staffing shortages, disaster response, complex code interactions, or good-faith safety concerns.

This structure incentivizes speed over scrutiny—an outcome fundamentally incompatible with public safety regulation.

Fourth, subsection 8 allows contractors in disaster-declared “rebuilding areas” to commence construction without a permit at all, a carve-out that dangerously conflates urgency with exemption.

While emergency recovery requires flexibility, it does not justify eliminating pre-construction oversight for electrical, mechanical, and structural work—particularly when federal funds, insurance claims, and future habitability are at stake.

Finally, HB 1791 represents a broader pattern of legislative micromanagement of administrative

functions, undermining the constitutional balance between state authority and local control.

If the General Assembly believes permitting systems require reform, that reform should be evidence-based, collaboratively developed, and respectful of municipal autonomy—not imposed through penalties and artificial deadlines.

Efficiency is not achieved by stripping discretion from professionals or threatening municipalities with revenue loss.

For these reasons, HB 1791 should be rejected.

Footnotes:

State ex rel. St. Louis County v. State Highway Comm'n, 409 S.W.2d 149, 153 (Mo. 1966).

(Local regulation of land use and safety is a core municipal police power.)

Mo. Const. art. VI, §§ 16–19.

(Home rule authority and local self-governance protections.)

City of Springfield v. Spradlin, 787 S.W.2d 457, 460 (Mo. banc 1990).

(Legislative interference with local administrative discretion is subject to constitutional limits.)

Mathews v. Eldridge, 424 U.S. 319, 333 (1976).

(Procedural safeguards must align with the risk of erroneous deprivation—here, safety and property interests.)

Kansas City v. State, 468 S.W.3d 803, 814 (Mo. banc 2015).

(State actions affecting local finances require clear public purpose and proportional means.)



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SUSAN PRUCHNICKI		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 4:11 PM

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Plan reviews are highly technical and are critical for the health and safety of Missouri residents. It is an essential component of the construction process that it be reviewed to ensure compliance to basic safety requirements enacted by local constituents. Some projects, such as a residential deck addition, can be quickly reviewed. Others, such as complex healthcare or multifamily projects take longer and may require multiple municipal department reviews. Rushing this process and penalizing local constituents for thoroughness is not in the best interest of our residents.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: TRENT WATSON		PHONE NUMBER: 314-606-0141
REPRESENTING: AIA-MISSOURI		TITLE:
ADDRESS: PO BOX 2221		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65102
EMAIL: Trent@trentwatson.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/3/2026 8:33 PM
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In opposition to the timeline for building permits.