



November 20, 2025

San Francisco Commission Streamlining Task Force
Sent via email to commissionstreamlining@sfgov.org

Dear Chair Harrington and members of the Task Force:

I'm writing to you today to ask for your support for keeping the Building Inspection Commission intact as a governance body and preserving the Code Advisory Committee as an advisory body to the Building Inspection Commission.

The Building Inspection Commission and the Code Advisory Committee serve important roles in providing transparency and accountability in reviewing building code amendments and Department of Building Inspection (DBI) policies and initiatives, as well as safeguarding code enforcement and housing inspection priorities.

We believe this oversight is critical to the successful management of DBI. The Department enforces a highly complex series of building regulations and works directly with the property owners, designers and builders who need to navigate and adhere to these safety requirements.

Any changes to our processes, including the most well-intentioned initiatives, can significantly impact thousands of homeowners, realtors, developers, architects, engineers, contractors and construction workers who rely on building permits to make a living and build the homes, apartments, businesses and other structures that define our City.

Vetting operational changes through the Building Inspection Commission and Code Advisory Committee has allowed for substantial public input and produced more impactful process improvements. We value the members' perspectives and recognize that their insights and direction have been central to our efforts to rebuild this department.

For the past five years, DBI has focused on restoring public trust in the department and enhancing transparency. During this time, we have presented regular updates to the Commission on our reforms, proactively addressed community concerns, tracked our progress on initiatives to speed up and improve the permitting process, reported on our updated five-year strategic plan and covered many other topics to provide transparency, enable proper oversight and ensure public accountability.

In May 2021, DBI developed and published a comprehensive reforms package to address past deficiencies in the Department's processes and controls. That September, the Controller's Office issued a "public integrity review" of the Department that included a set of recommendations for strengthening its internal controls, standardizing its work and improving its processes. The Department hired a Compliance Manager to manage the DBI's own reforms and reforms recommended by the Controller's Office.

While that work continues, the Controller's Office issued a follow-up report in August 2024 confirming that DBI had implemented all of its recommended actions.

Throughout this process, the Department kept the Building Inspection Commission apprised of our work with regular updates on our reforms and progress. The Building Inspection Commission provided a public forum to inform the public of this work and assure them that the Department was prioritizing the reform initiatives.

In addition to transparency and accountability, one of the primary responsibilities of the Building Inspection Commission is to review and recommend proposed legislation to the Board of Supervisors. Without the Commission as a required part of this important process, the Department and our stakeholders would have less ability to publicly vet the proposed code changes and ensure good policy and public safety.

Public input is also a key function of the Code Advisory Committee, which is made up of industry professionals with in-depth knowledge of the codes and the Department's processes. The Code Advisory Committee is a valuable sounding board and technical review of proposed legislation and provides important perspective to inform the Commission's deliberations.

The Building Inspection Commission also reviews the Department's budget annually and hosts a well-attended public budget hearing. The Commission provides feedback on the department's spending, fee study and fee tables and priorities and serves as a critical community forum for our annual budgeting and use of the Building Inspection Fund, including funding that provides assistance to protect many of the City's most vulnerable tenants.

Finally, in addition to reviewing code compliance for construction, DBI enforces the San Francisco Housing Code to ensure habitability for tenants in the City. Members of the Building Inspection Commission serve with DBI staff and Deputy City Attorneys on the commission's Litigation Committee, which refers the most egregious code violation cases to the City Attorney for legal action.

San Francisco voters approved Prop B in June 2022 that changed the Building Inspection Commission in ways that already address several of the Task Force's stated concerns. The measure decreased the number of dedicated seats for specified groups on the Commission to three. The Mayor still appoints four seats and the President of the Board of Supervisors three seats, but now all seven seats must be confirmed by the Board of Supervisors.

I hope you'll support keeping the Building Inspection Commission intact as a governance body and preserving the Code Advisory Committee as an advisory body to the Building Inspection Commission. Please let me know if you have questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick O'Riordan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick O'Riordan
Director