

## CHAPTER 2026-63

### Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 803

An act relating to building permits and inspections; amending s. 125.56, F.S.; providing for expiration of certain building permits issued by a county; providing construction; amending s. 287.056, F.S.; requiring the Department of Management Services to enter into and maintain state term contracts for building code inspection services; creating s. 468.634, F.S.; authorizing individuals to work in specified positions, for a specified timeframe, if they meet certain requirements; amending s. 489.129, F.S.; providing that certain persons are not subject to discipline for performing a job without applicable permits and inspections if otherwise authorized by law; amending s. 553.382, F.S.; prohibiting the Department of Business and Professional Regulation from denying a building permit for certain residential manufactured buildings; requiring that certain housing units be taxed in a certain manner; creating s. 553.385, F.S.; defining the terms “local government” and “offsite-constructed residential dwelling”; requiring that an offsite-constructed residential dwelling be permitted as of right in any zoning district where certain dwellings are allowed; prohibiting a local government from adopting or enforcing a certain zoning, land use, or development regulation that treats an offsite-constructed residential dwelling differently or more restrictively than certain dwellings in the same district; providing construction; authorizing a local government to adopt compatibility standards for specified architectural features; prohibiting a local government from treating offsite-constructed residential dwellings differently than factory-built buildings based on the method or location of construction; prohibiting a local government from adopting or enforcing certain zoning, land use, or development ordinances or regulations; prohibiting local government ordinances or regulations from having the effect of excluding offsite-constructed residential dwellings; requiring that such ordinances or regulations be reasonable and uniformly enforced without distinction as to type of housing; providing that any such ordinance or regulation is void and unenforceable as applied to offsite-constructed residential dwellings; amending s. 553.77, F.S.; requiring the Florida Building Commission to develop uniform commercial and residential building permit applications by a specified date; providing requirements for a uniform commercial building permit application; amending s. 553.79, F.S.; providing for expiration of certain building permits issued by a local government; providing construction; providing prohibitions for inspection fees; requiring a local government to exempt certain owners and contractors from building permit requirements for work valued below a specified amount; providing exceptions; prohibiting a construction project from being divided into multiple projects for a certain purpose; requiring certain owners and contractors to submit a written request for exemption to the local enforcement agency with specified documentation; providing that local

governments do not have a duty to certain persons; requiring local governments to exempt certain owners and contractors from requiring a building permit for the installation of temporary residential hurricane and flood protection walls or barriers that meet certain requirements; providing an exception; requiring certain owners and contractors to submit a written request for exemption to the local enforcement agency with specified documentation; providing that local governments do not have a duty to certain persons; authorizing the Florida Building Commission to adopt rules; requiring certain local governments to issue a building permit for the installation of certain retaining walls as a whole; prohibiting such local governments from requiring building permits for each lot or parcel under certain circumstances; prohibiting a political subdivision from imposing certain requirements for glazing on certain proposed construction or restoration projects; providing an exception; defining the terms “glazing” and “primary facade”; amending s. 553.791, F.S.; revising definitions and defining terms; requiring explicit written authorization from a fee owner for a contractor to use a private provider; requiring that such authorization be submitted to the local building official; deleting the requirement that a contract for certain services be in writing; providing that a contract for certain services does not need to be submitted as part of a permit application; providing requirements for reduced permit fees; prohibiting a local jurisdiction from charging punitive administrative fees or fees for plans review services; requiring that certain documents be promptly provided to certain persons; requiring local enforcement agencies to reduce permit fees by specified percentages under certain circumstances; providing that a local enforcement agency forfeits the ability to collect fees under certain circumstances; requiring that a surcharge be calculated based on the reduced permit fee; prohibiting local governments and local building officials from requiring additional forms; requiring local enforcement agencies to create a specified registration system that must have a method to register and update registration information electronically; prohibiting local enforcement agencies from charging an administrative fee to register or update registration information; requiring private provider firms to register with the local enforcement agency, provide certain information, and update their registration within a specified timeframe after changes occur; prohibiting local enforcement agencies from altering a form adopted by the commission; deleting the requirement that a private provider’s qualification statements or resumes be included in a certain notice; deleting time restrictions for electing to use a private provider; requiring local enforcement agencies to accept a certain affidavit electronically; providing which forms and documents a local building official may review; providing notice requirements; providing that certain permits are deemed approved; providing that local enforcement agencies are not responsible for the administration or supervision of services performed by a private provider; prohibiting local enforcement agencies from requiring additional verification of certain requirements beyond that which is required at registration; revising the timeframe in which certain records must be provided; authorizing certain records to be electronically transmitted;

prohibiting local building officials from failing certain inspections; authorizing certain persons to sign certificates of compliance; providing requirements for local building officials who have knowledge that a private provider failed to perform an inspection; providing that virtual inspections may not be prohibited; requiring certain notice before an audit; prohibiting certain entities from discouraging the use of private providers; authorizing certain public entities to use a private provider firm or to employ a licensed building inspector to provide building code inspection services; amending s. 553.792, F.S.; requiring a local government to make certain decisions relating to certain building permits within a specified timeframe; amending s. 720.3035, F.S.; prohibiting an association or certain committees from requiring a building permit as a prerequisite for a certain review; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (d) of subsection (4) of section 125.56, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

125.56 Enforcement and amendment of the Florida Building Code and the Florida Fire Prevention Code; inspection fees; inspectors; etc.—

(4)

(d) A county that issues building permits may send a written notice of expiration, by e-mail or United States Postal Service, to the owner of the property and the contractor listed on the permit, no less than 30 days before a building permit is set to expire. The written notice must identify the permit that is set to expire and the date the permit will expire. A building permit issued by a county for a single-family dwelling expires 1 year after the issuance of the permit or on the effective date of the next edition of the Florida Building Code, whichever is later. However, this paragraph does not prevent a local government from extending a building permit beyond the expiration date.

Section 2. Present subsection (4) of section 287.056, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (5), and a new subsection (4) is added to that section, to read:

287.056 Purchases from purchasing agreements and state term contracts; vendor disqualification.—

(4) The department shall enter into and maintain one or more state term contracts with vendors for the purpose of providing building code inspection services as defined in s. 553.791.

Section 3. Section 468.634, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

468.634 Certification by endorsement during a state of emergency.— Notwithstanding any other law, a person may act in any of the following

positions under the direction of the local building official for a period of 1 year from the date of a declaration of a state of emergency issued by the Governor for a natural emergency, a manmade emergency, or a technological emergency as those terms are defined in s. 252.34, if such person has entered into a state term contract pursuant to s. 287.056, is qualified for such work in any state that has a mutual aid agreement pursuant to s. 252.40(2), or has held a valid license for such work in any state for 5 years immediately before the date of the declaration:

- (1) Building code inspector.
- (2) Building inspector.
- (3) Coastal construction inspector.
- (4) Commercial electrical inspector.
- (5) Electrical inspector.
- (6) Mechanical inspector.
- (7) Plumbing inspector.
- (8) Residential electrical inspector.
- (9) Residential inspector.
- (10) Plans examiner.
- (11) Building plans examiner.
- (12) Plumbing plans examiner.
- (13) Mechanical plans examiner.
- (14) Electrical plans examiner.

Section 4. Paragraph (o) of subsection (1) of section 489.129, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

489.129 Disciplinary proceedings.—

(1) The board may take any of the following actions against any certificateholder or registrant: place on probation or reprimand the licensee, revoke, suspend, or deny the issuance or renewal of the certificate or registration, require financial restitution to a consumer for financial harm directly related to a violation of a provision of this part, impose an administrative fine not to exceed \$10,000 per violation, require continuing education, or assess costs associated with investigation and prosecution, if the contractor, financially responsible officer, or business organization for which the contractor is a primary qualifying agent, a financially responsible

officer, or a secondary qualifying agent responsible under s. 489.1195 is found guilty of any of the following acts:

(o) Proceeding on any job without obtaining applicable local building department permits and inspections, unless otherwise provided by law.

For the purposes of this subsection, construction is considered to be commenced when the contract is executed and the contractor has accepted funds from the customer or lender. A contractor does not commit a violation of this subsection when the contractor relies on a building code interpretation rendered by a building official or person authorized by s. 553.80 to enforce the building code, absent a finding of fraud or deceit in the practice of contracting, or gross negligence, repeated negligence, or negligence resulting in a significant danger to life or property on the part of the building official, in a proceeding under chapter 120.

Section 5. Section 553.382, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

553.382 Placement of certain housing.—Notwithstanding any other law or ordinance to the contrary, in order to expand the availability of affordable housing in this state, any residential manufactured building that is certified under this chapter by the department may not be denied a building permit for placement ~~be placed~~ on a mobile home lot in a mobile home park, on a lot in a recreational vehicle park, or in a mobile home condominium, cooperative, or subdivision. Any such housing unit placed on a mobile home lot is a mobile home for purposes of chapter 723 and, therefore, all rights, obligations, and duties under chapter 723 apply, including the specifics of the prospectus. However, a housing unit subject to this section may not be placed on a mobile home lot without the prior written approval of the park owner. Each housing unit located on a mobile home lot and subject to this section shall be taxed as a mobile home under s. 320.08(11) and is subject to payments to the Florida Mobile Home Relocation Fund under s. 723.06116.

Section 6. Section 553.385, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

553.385 Permitting and zoning of offsite-constructed residential dwellings; parity.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Local government” means a county or municipality.

(b) “Offsite-constructed residential dwelling” means a manufactured building as defined in s. 553.36(13) which is intended for single-family residential use, or a manufactured home as defined in s. 320.01(2)(b) which is constructed in whole or in part offsite and is treated as real property.

(2)(a) An offsite-constructed residential dwelling must be permitted as of right in any zoning district where single-family detached dwellings are allowed.

(b) A local government may not adopt or enforce any zoning, land use, or development regulation that treats an offsite-constructed residential dwelling differently or more restrictively than a single-family site-built dwelling allowed in the same district.

(c) This section does not prohibit a local government from applying generally applicable architectural, aesthetic, design, setback, height, or bulk standards to offsite-constructed residential dwellings, provided such standards apply equally to site-built single-family dwellings permitted in the same district. A local government may adopt compatibility standards that are limited to the following architectural features:

1. Roof pitch.
2. Square footage of livable space.
3. Type and quality of exterior finishing materials.
4. Foundation enclosure.
5. Existence and type of attached structures.
6. Building setbacks, lot dimensions, and the orientation of the home on the lot.

(d) A local government may not treat offsite-constructed residential dwellings differently than factory-built buildings subject to s. 553.38 based on the method or location of construction.

(3) A local government may not adopt or enforce any zoning, land use, or development ordinance or regulation that conflicts with this section or s. 553.38, or that imposes different or more restrictive treatment on an offsite-constructed residential dwelling based on its method of construction or the presence of components built off site. Local government ordinances or regulations may not have the effect of excluding offsite-constructed residential dwellings and must be reasonable and uniformly enforced without any distinction as to the type of housing. Any such ordinance or regulation is void and unenforceable as applied to offsite-constructed residential dwellings.

Section 7. Present paragraphs (b) through (m) of subsection (1) of section 553.77, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as paragraphs (c) through (n), respectively, a new paragraph (b) is added to that subsection, and present paragraph (c) of that subsection is amended, to read:

553.77 Specific powers of the commission.—

(1) The commission shall:

(b) By July 1, 2027, adopt by rule a uniform commercial building permit application to be used statewide for commercial construction projects and a

uniform residential building permit application to be used statewide for residential construction projects. To the extent feasible, the uniform commercial building permit application and the uniform residential building permit application adopted by the commission must be capable of integration with existing building permit software systems used by local governments and must account for local amendments to the Florida Building Code.

(d)(e) Upon written application by any substantially affected person or a local enforcement agency, issue declaratory statements pursuant to s. 120.565 relating to new technologies, techniques, and materials which have been tested where necessary and found to meet the objectives of the Florida Building Code. This paragraph does not apply to the types of products, materials, devices, or methods of construction required to be approved under paragraph (g) (f).

Section 8. Paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (f) of subsection (1) and paragraph (a) of subsection (24) of section 553.79, Florida Statutes, are amended, and paragraphs (g), (h), and (i) are added to subsection (1) of that section, to read:

553.79 Permits; applications; issuance; inspections.—

(1)(a) Unless otherwise provided by law, after the effective date of the Florida Building Code adopted as herein provided, it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, corporation, or governmental entity to construct, erect, alter, modify, repair, or demolish any building within this state without first obtaining a permit therefor from the appropriate enforcing agency or from such persons as may, by appropriate resolution or regulation of the authorized state or local enforcing agency, be delegated authority to issue such permits, upon the payment of such reasonable fees adopted by the enforcing agency. The enforcing agency is empowered to revoke any such permit upon a determination by the agency that the construction, erection, alteration, modification, repair, or demolition of the building for which the permit was issued is in violation of, or not in conformity with, the provisions of the Florida Building Code. Whenever a permit required under this section is denied or revoked because the plan, or the construction, erection, alteration, modification, repair, or demolition of a building, is found by the local enforcing agency to be not in compliance with the Florida Building Code, the local enforcing agency shall identify the specific plan or project features that do not comply with the applicable codes, identify the specific code chapters and sections upon which the finding is based, and provide this information to the permit applicant. A plans reviewer or building code administrator who is responsible for issuing a denial, revocation, or modification request but fails to provide to the permit applicant a reason for denying, revoking, or requesting a modification, based on compliance with the Florida Building Code or local ordinance, is subject to disciplinary action against his or her license pursuant to s. 468.621(1)(i). Installation, replacement, removal, or metering of any load management control device is exempt from and shall not be subject to the permit process and fees otherwise required by this section.

(b) A local enforcement agency shall post each type of building permit application, as adopted by the commission, including a list of all required attachments, drawings, or other requirements for each type of application, on its website. A local enforcement agency ~~shall~~ must post and update the status of every received application on its ~~website~~ until the issuance of the building permit. ~~A local enforcement agency shall allow applicants to submit completed applications, including payments, attachments, drawings, or other requirements or parts of the completed permit application, must be able to be submitted electronically to the appropriate building department. Accepted methods of electronic submission include, but are not limited to, e-mail submission of applications in Portable Document Format or submission of applications through an electronic fill-in form available on the building department's website or through a third-party submission management software. A building official, at his or her discretion, may accept completed applications, including payments, attachments, drawings, or other requirements or parts of the completed permit application, may also be submitted in person in a nonelectronic format, at the discretion of the building official.~~

(c) A local government that issues building permits may send a written notice of expiration, by e-mail or United States Postal Service, to the owner of the property and the contractor listed on the permit, no less than 30 days before a building permit is set to expire. The written notice must identify the permit that is set to expire and the date the permit will expire. A building permit issued by a local government for a single-family dwelling expires 1 year after the issuance of the permit or on the effective date of the next edition of the Florida Building Code, whichever is later. However, this paragraph does not prevent a local government from extending a building permit beyond the expiration date.

(f) A local government may not require a contract between a builder and an owner, any copies of such contract, or any associated document, including, but not limited to, letters of intent, material costs lists, labor costs, or overhead or profit statements, for the issuance of a building permit or as a requirement for the submission of a building permit application. Inspection fees may not be based on the total cost of a project and may not exceed the actual inspection costs incurred by the local enforcement agency.

(g)1. A local government that issues building permits shall exempt an owner of a single-family dwelling or the owner's contractor from the requirement to obtain a building permit to perform any work valued at less than \$7,500 on the owner's property.

2. The exemption under subparagraph 1. does not apply to any of the following:

a. Work on a property that is partially or entirely located in a flood hazard area as defined by the Florida Building Code.

b. Any electrical, plumbing, structural, mechanical, or gas work performed on property containing a single-family dwelling. A construction

project may not be divided into more than one project for the purpose of evading the requirements of this paragraph.

3. To qualify for the exemption under subparagraph 1., the owner or the owner’s contractor must submit a written request for exemption to the local enforcement agency with a copy of the contract or other documentation demonstrating the nature and the value of the work to be performed.

4. A local government has no legal duty to the owner, contractor, or successors or assigns thereof for exempted work performed under this paragraph.

(h)1. A local government that issues building permits shall exempt an owner of a single-family dwelling or the owner’s contractor from the requirement to obtain a building permit for the installation of temporary residential hurricane and flood protection walls or barriers that meet all of the following conditions:

a. The wall or barrier is nonhabitable and non-load-bearing.

b. The wall or barrier is installed on the residential property of a single-family or two-family dwelling or townhouse.

c. The wall or barrier is constructed to mitigate or prevent storm surge or floodwaters from entering a structure or property.

d. The wall or barrier is installed by a contractor licensed under part I of chapter 489.

e. The wall or barrier complies with applicable local zoning, drainage, easement, and setback requirements.

2. The exemption under subparagraph 1. does not apply to work on a property that is partially or entirely located in a flood hazard area as defined by the Florida Building Code.

3. To qualify for the exemption under subparagraph 1., the owner or the owner’s contractor must submit a written request for exemption to the local enforcement agency with a copy of the contract or other documentation demonstrating the nature of the work to be performed.

4. A local government has no legal duty to the owner, contractor, or successors or assigns thereof for work performed under this paragraph.

5. The commission may adopt rules under s. 120.54 to incorporate necessary standards to implement this paragraph.

(i) If a retaining wall spans more than one lot or parcel, a local government that issues building permits must issue a permit for a retaining wall for the project as a whole and may not require a building permit for each

lot or parcel upon which a retaining wall is installed on the property of a single-family or two-family residential dwelling or a townhouse.

(24)(a) A political subdivision of this state may not adopt or enforce any ordinance or impose any building permit or other development order requirement that:

1. Contains any building, construction, or aesthetic requirement or condition that conflicts with or impairs corporate trademarks, service marks, trade dress, logos, color patterns, design scheme insignia, image standards, or other features of corporate branding identity on real property or improvements thereon used in activities conducted under chapter 526 or in carrying out business activities defined as a franchise by Federal Trade Commission regulations in 16 C.F.R. ss. 436.1, et. seq.; ~~or~~

2. Imposes any requirement on the design, construction, or location of signage advertising the retail price of gasoline in accordance with the requirements of ss. 526.111 and 526.121 which prevents the signage from being clearly visible and legible to drivers of approaching motor vehicles from a vantage point on any lane of traffic in either direction on a roadway abutting the gas station premises and meets height, width, and spacing standards for Series C, D, or E signs, as applicable, published in the latest edition of Standard Alphabets for Highway Signs published by the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads, Office of Highway Safety; or

3. Imposes a glazing requirement that results in the glazing of more than 15 percent of the surface area of the primary facade for the first 10 feet above the ground floor for a proposed new commercial or mixed-use construction or restoration project, except for individually listed contributing structures in a National Register of Historic Places district. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term:

a. “Glazing” means the installation of transparent or translucent materials, including glass or similar substances, in windows, doors, or storefronts. The term includes any actual or faux windows to be installed on a building facade.

b. “Primary facade” means the single building side housing the primary entrance to the building.

Section 9. Section 553.791, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

553.791 Alternative plans review and inspection.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Applicable codes” means the Florida Building Code and any local technical amendments to the Florida Building Code but does not include the applicable minimum fire prevention and firesafety codes adopted pursuant to chapter 633.

(b) “Audit” means the process to confirm that the building code inspection services have been performed by the private provider, including ensuring that the required affidavit for the plan review has been properly completed and submitted with the permit documents and that the minimum mandatory inspections required under the building code have been performed and properly recorded. The local building official may not replicate the plan review or inspection being performed by the private provider, unless expressly authorized by this section.

(c) “Building” means any construction, erection, alteration, demolition, or improvement of, or addition to, any structure or site work for which permitting by a local enforcement agency is required.

(d) “Building code inspection services” means those services described in s. 468.603(5) and (8) involving the review of building plans as well as those services involving the review of site plans and site work engineering plans or their functional equivalent, to determine compliance with applicable codes and those inspections required by law, conducted either in person or virtually, of each phase of construction for which permitting by a local enforcement agency is required to determine compliance with applicable codes.

(e) “Deliver” or “delivery” means any method of delivery used in conventional business or commercial practice, including delivery by electronic transmissions such as e-mail or submission through an electronic fill-in form available on the building department’s website or through a third-party submission management software.

(f) “Duly authorized representative” means an agent of the private provider identified in the permit application who reviews plans or performs inspections as provided by this section and who is licensed as an engineer under chapter 471 or as an architect under chapter 481 or who holds a standard or provisional certificate under part XII of chapter 468. A duly authorized representative who only holds a provisional certificate under part XII of chapter 468 must be under the direct supervision of a person licensed as a building code administrator under part XII of chapter 468.

(g) “Electronic signature” means any letters, characters, or symbols manifested by electronic or similar means which are executed or adopted by a party with an intent to authenticate a writing or record.

(h) “Electronic transmission” or “submitted electronically” means any form or process of communication not directly involving the physical transfer of paper or another tangible medium which is suitable for the retention, retrieval, and reproduction of information by the recipient and is retrievable in paper form by the receipt through an automated process. All notices, documents, and applications provided for in this section may be transmitted electronically and shall have the same legal effect as if physically posted or mailed.

(i) “Electronically posted” means providing notices of decisions, results, or records, including inspection records, through the use of a website or other form of electronic communication used to transmit or display information.

(j) “Immediate threat to public safety and welfare” means a building code violation that, if allowed to persist, constitutes an immediate hazard that could result in death, serious bodily injury, or significant property damage. This paragraph does not limit the authority of the local building official to issue a Notice of Corrective Action at any time during the construction of a building project or any portion of such project if the official determines that a condition of the building or portion thereof may constitute a hazard when the building is put into use following completion as long as the condition cited is shown to be in violation of the building code or approved plans.

(k) “Local building official” means the individual within the governing jurisdiction responsible for direct regulatory administration or supervision of plans review, enforcement, and inspection of any construction, erection, alteration, demolition, or substantial improvement of, or addition to, any structure for which permitting is required to indicate compliance with applicable codes and includes any duly authorized designee of such person.

(l) “Permit application” means a properly completed and submitted application for the requested building or construction permit, including:

1. The plans reviewed by the private provider, or in the case of a single-trade plans review where a private provider uses an automated or software-based plans review system pursuant to subsection (7) ~~(6)~~, the information reviewed by the automated or software-based plans review system to determine compliance with one or more applicable codes.

2. The affidavit from the private provider required under subsection (7) ~~(6)~~.

3. Any applicable fees.

4. Any documents required by the local building official to determine that the fee owner has secured all other government approvals required by law.

(m) “Plans” means building plans, site engineering plans, or site plans, or their functional equivalent, submitted by a fee owner or fee owner’s contractor to a private provider or duly authorized representative for review.

(n) “Private provider” means a person licensed as a building code administrator under part XII of chapter 468, as an engineer under chapter 471, or as an architect under chapter 481. For purposes of performing inspections under this section for additions and alterations that are limited to 1,000 square feet or less to residential buildings, the term “private provider” also includes a person who holds a standard certificate under part XII of chapter 468.

(o) “Private provider firm” means a business organization, including a corporation, partnership, business trust, or other legal entity, which offers services under this chapter to the public through licensees who are acting as agents, employees, officers, or partners of the firm. A person who is licensed as a building code administrator under part XII of chapter 468, an engineer under chapter 471, or an architect under chapter 481 may act as a private provider for an agent, employee, or officer of the private provider firm.

(p) “Registration” means the roster of authorized private provider firms held by each local enforcement agency.

~~(q)~~<sup>(p)</sup> “Request for certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion” means a properly completed and executed application for:

1. A certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion.
2. A certificate of compliance from the private provider required under subsection (15) ~~(13)~~.
3. Any applicable fees.
4. Any documents required by the local building official to determine that the fee owner has secured all other government approvals required by law.

~~(r)~~<sup>(q)</sup> “Single-trade inspection” or “single-trade plans review” means any inspection or plans review focused on a single construction trade, such as plumbing, mechanical, or electrical. The term includes, but is not limited to, inspections or plans reviews of door or window replacements; fences and block walls more than 6 feet high from the top of the wall to the bottom of the footing; stucco or plastering; reroofing with no structural alteration; solar energy and energy storage installations or alterations; HVAC replacements; ductwork or fan replacements; alteration or installation of wiring, lighting, and service panels; water heater changeouts; sink replacements; and repiping.

~~(s)~~<sup>(r)</sup> “Site work” means the portion of a construction project that is not part of the building structure, including, but not limited to, grading, excavation, landscape irrigation, and installation of driveways.

~~(t)~~<sup>(s)</sup> “Stop-work order” means the issuance of any written statement, written directive, or written order which states the reason for the order and the conditions under which the cited work will be permitted to resume.

(2)(a) Notwithstanding any other law or local government ordinance or local policy, the fee owner of a building or structure, or the fee owner’s contractor upon explicit written authorization from the fee owner, may choose at any time to use a private provider to provide plans review or building code inspection services with regard to such building or structure and may make payment directly to the private provider for the provision of such services. All such services shall be the subject of a ~~written~~ contract

between the private provider, or the private provider's firm, and the fee owner or the fee owner's contractor, upon explicit written authorization of the fee owner. A copy of such written authorization must be submitted to the local building official. The local enforcement agency may not require the contract to be provided as part of the permit application or as a condition for issuing a permit. The fee owner may elect to use a private provider to provide plans review or required building inspections, or both. However, if the fee owner or the fee owner's contractor uses a private provider to provide plans review, the local building official, in his or her discretion and pursuant to duly adopted policies of the local enforcement agency, may require the fee owner or the fee owner's contractor to use a private provider to also provide required building inspections.

(b) ~~If a fee an owner or the fee owner's contractor retains a private provider for purposes of plans review or building inspection services, the local jurisdiction must reduce the permit fee by the amount of cost savings realized by the local enforcement agency for not having to perform such services. Such reduction may be calculated on a flat fee or percentage basis, or any other reasonable means by which a local enforcement agency assesses the cost for its plans review or inspection services. The permit fee must be based on the cost incurred by the local jurisdiction, including the labor cost of the personnel providing such services and the clerical and supervisory assistance required to comply with this section. The local jurisdiction may not charge fees for plans review or building inspections if the fee owner or the fee owner's contractor hires a private provider to perform such services. The local enforcement agency may not charge punitive administrative fees when a fee owner has chosen to work with a private provider; however, the local jurisdiction may charge a reasonable administrative fee, which shall be based on the cost that is actually incurred, including the labor cost of the personnel providing the service, by the local jurisdiction or attributable to the local jurisdiction for the clerical and supervisory assistance required, or both.~~

(c) ~~If a fee an owner or the fee owner's a contractor retains a private provider for purposes of plans review or building inspection services, the local jurisdiction must provide equal access to all permitting and inspection documents and reports to the private provider, owner, and contractor if such access is provided by software that protects exempt records from disclosure. Access to these documents must be promptly provided.~~

(d) If a fee owner or the fee owner's contractor retains a private provider for purposes of plans review or building inspection services for a commercial construction project, the local enforcement agency must reduce the permit fee by at least 25 percent of the portion of the permit fee attributable to plans review or building inspection services, as applicable. If the fee owner or the fee owner's contractor retains a private provider for all required plans review and building inspection services, the local enforcement agency must reduce the total permit fee by at least 50 percent of the amount otherwise charged for such services. If the local enforcement agency does not reduce such fee by at least the percentages provided in this paragraph, the local enforcement

agency forfeits the ability to collect any fees for the commercial construction project. The surcharge required by s. 553.721 must be calculated based on the amount of the reduced permit fee. This paragraph does not prohibit a local enforcement agency from reducing a permit fee in excess of the percentages provided in this paragraph.

(e) A local government or local building official may not require additional forms beyond those required at registration, except for the written notice required under subsection (5), if a fee owner or the fee owner's contractor uses a private provider.

(3) A private provider and any duly authorized representative may only perform building code inspection services that are within the disciplines covered by that person's licensure or certification under chapter 468, chapter 471, or chapter 481, including single-trade inspections. A private provider may not provide building code inspection services pursuant to this section upon any building designed or constructed by the private provider or the private provider's firm.

(4) A local enforcement agency must create a registration system for private providers and private provider firms working in the local enforcement agency's jurisdiction. A local enforcement agency must have a method to register and update registration information electronically. The local enforcement agency may not charge an administrative fee for registration or updates to a registration. The private provider or private provider firm must provide its contact information and verify compliance with the licensure requirements of paragraph (1)(n) or paragraph (1)(o), as applicable, and the insurance requirements of subsection (20). The private provider or private provider firm must register with the local enforcement agency in the jurisdiction in which the provider or firm is working before contracting to provide services in such jurisdiction. The private provider or private provider firm must update its registration within 5 business days after any change to the provider's or firm's contact information, licensure, or insurance coverage.

(5)(4) A fee owner or the fee owner's contractor using a private provider to provide building code inspection services shall notify the local building official in writing at the time of permit application, or by 2 p.m. local time, 2 business days before the first scheduled inspection by the local building official or building code enforcement agency that a private provider has been contracted to perform the required inspections of construction under this section, including single-trade inspections, on a form ~~to be adopted by the commission.~~ The local enforcement agency may not alter the form. This notice must shall include the following information:

(a) The services to be performed by the private provider.

(b) The name, firm, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of each private provider who is performing or will perform such services, his or her professional license or certification number, ~~qualification statements or~~

resumes, and, if required by the local building official, a certificate of insurance demonstrating that professional liability insurance coverage is in place for the private provider's firm, the private provider, and any duly authorized representative in the amounts required by this section.

(c) An acknowledgment from the fee owner or the fee owner's contractor in substantially the following form:

I have elected to use one or more private providers to provide building code plans review and/or inspection services on the building or structure that is the subject of the enclosed permit application, as authorized by s. 553.791, Florida Statutes. I understand that the local building official may not review the plans submitted or perform the required building inspections to determine compliance with the applicable codes, except to the extent specified in said law. Instead, plans review and/or required building inspections will be performed by licensed or certified personnel identified in the application. The law requires minimum insurance requirements for such personnel, but I understand that I may require more insurance to protect my interests. By executing this form, I acknowledge that I have made inquiry regarding the competence of the licensed or certified personnel and the level of their insurance and am satisfied that my interests are adequately protected. I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the local government, the local building official, and their building code enforcement personnel from any and all claims arising from my use of these licensed or certified personnel to perform building code inspection services with respect to the building or structure that is the subject of the enclosed permit application.

If the fee owner or the fee owner's contractor makes any changes to the listed private providers or the services to be provided by those private providers, the fee owner or the fee owner's contractor shall, within 1 business day after any change or within 2 business days before the next scheduled inspection, update the notice to reflect such changes. A change of a duly authorized representative named in the permit application does not require a revision of the permit, and the building code enforcement agency shall not charge a fee for making the change.

~~(6)(5)~~ After construction has commenced ~~and if either the local building official is unable to provide inspection services in a timely manner or the work subject to inspection is related to a single-trade inspection for a single-family or two-family dwelling~~, the fee owner or the fee owner's contractor may elect to use a private provider to provide inspection services for a single-trade inspection for a single-family or two-family dwelling by notifying the local building official of the owner's or contractor's intention to do so ~~by 2 p.m. local time, 2 business days before the next scheduled inspection using the notice provided for in paragraphs (5)(a), (b), and (c) (4)(a)-(e).~~

~~(7)(6)~~ A private provider performing plans review under this section shall review the plans to determine compliance with the applicable codes.

For single-trade plans reviews, a private provider may use an automated or software-based plans review system designed to determine compliance with one or more applicable codes, including, but not limited to, the National Electrical Code and the Florida Building Code. Upon determining that the plans reviewed comply with the applicable codes, the private provider shall prepare an affidavit or affidavits certifying, under oath, that the following is true and correct to the best of the private provider's knowledge and belief:

(a) The plans were reviewed by the affiant, who is duly authorized to perform plans review pursuant to this section and holds the appropriate license or certificate.

(b) The plans comply with the applicable codes.

Such affidavit may bear a written or electronic signature and may be submitted electronically to the local building official. A local enforcement agency must accept electronically submitted affidavits.

(8)(a) The local building official may not review plans, construction drawings, or any other related documents determined by a private provider to be compliant with the applicable codes, except to the extent necessary to determine compliance with local ordinances, floodplain management regulations, site review requirements, and any other administrative or life-safety review unrelated to building code compliance.

(b) The local building official may review other forms and documents required under this section for completeness only. The local building official must provide written notice to a permit applicant of any incomplete forms or documents required under this section no later than 10 business days after receipt of a permit application or, if the permit application is relating to a single-trade plans review for a single-family or two-family dwelling, no later than 5 business days after receipt of a permit application, and an affidavit from the private provider as required in subsection (7). The written notice must state with specificity which forms or documents are incomplete.

~~(7)(a) No more than 20 business days, or if the permit application is related to a single-trade plans review for a single-family or two-family dwelling, no more than 5 business days, after receipt of a permit application and the affidavit from the private provider required pursuant to subsection (6), the local building official shall issue the requested permit or provide a written notice to the permit applicant identifying the specific plan features that do not comply with the applicable codes, as well as the specific code chapters and sections. If the local building official does not provide such a written notice of the plan deficiencies within the prescribed time period, the permit application must be deemed approved as a matter of law, and the permit must be issued by the local building official on the next business day.~~

~~(c)(b) If the local building official provides a written notice of plan deficiencies to the permit applicant of any incomplete forms or documents required under this section at the time of plan submission within the~~

prescribed time period, such the time period is tolled pending resolution of the matter. To resolve the issues raised in the notice plan deficiencies, the permit applicant may elect to dispute the issues deficiencies pursuant to subsection (17) (15) or to submit revisions to correct the issues deficiencies.

(d)(e) If the permit applicant submits revisions, the local building official has the remainder of the tolled 10-day or 5-day time period plus 5 business days after the date of resubmittal to issue the requested permit or to provide a second written notice to the permit applicant stating which of the previously identified forms or documents plan features remain incomplete in noncompliance with the applicable codes, with specific reference to the relevant code chapters and sections. Any subsequent review by the local building official is limited to the issues deficiencies cited in the original written notice. If the local building official does not provide the second written notice within the prescribed time period, the permit must be deemed approved as a matter of law, and the local building official must issue the permit on the next business day.

(e)(d) If the local building official provides a second written notice of plan deficiencies to the permit applicant within the prescribed time period, the permit applicant may elect to dispute the issues raised in the second notice deficiencies pursuant to subsection (17) (15) or to submit additional revisions to correct the issues deficiencies. For all revisions submitted after the first revision, the local building official has an additional 5 business days after the date of resubmittal to issue the requested permit or to provide a written notice to the permit applicant stating which of the previously identified forms or documents plan features remain incomplete. If the local building official does not provide the notice within the prescribed time period, the permit must be deemed approved as a matter of law, and the local building official must issue the permit on the next business day in noncompliance with the applicable codes, with specific reference to the relevant code chapters and sections.

(9)(8) A private provider performing required inspections under this section shall inspect each phase of construction as required by the applicable codes. Such inspection, including a single-trade inspection, may be performed in person or virtually. The private provider may have a duly authorized representative perform the required inspections, provided all required reports are prepared by and bear the written or electronic signature of the private provider or the private provider's duly authorized representative. The duly authorized representative must be an employee of the private provider entitled to receive reemployment assistance benefits under chapter 443. The contractor's contractual or legal obligations are not relieved by any action of the private provider.

(10)(9) ~~A private provider performing required inspections under this section shall provide notice to the local building official of the approximate date and time of any such inspection.~~ The local building official may not prohibit the private provider from performing any inspection outside the local building official's normal operating hours, including after hours,

weekends, or holidays. ~~The local building official may visit the building site as often as necessary to verify that the private provider is performing all required inspections.~~ A deficiency notice must be posted by the private provider, the duly authorized representative of the private provider, or the building department whenever a noncomplying item related to the building code or the permitted documents is found. Such notice may be physically posted at the job site or electronically posted. After corrections are made, the item must be reinspected by the private provider or the representative of the private provider before being concealed. ~~Reinspection or reaudit fees shall not be charged by~~ The local jurisdiction may not charge reinspection or reaudit fees as a result of the local jurisdiction's audit inspection occurring before the performance of the private provider's inspection or for any other administrative matter not involving the detection of a violation of the building code or a permit requirement.

(11) A local enforcement agency is not responsible for the regulatory administration or supervision of building code inspection services performed by a private provider hired by a fee owner or the fee owner's contractor. A local enforcement agency may not require additional verification of licensure or insurance requirements beyond that which is required at registration.

~~(12)(10)~~ If the private provider is a person licensed as an engineer under chapter 471 or an architect under chapter 481 and affixes his or her professional seal to the affidavit required under subsection ~~(7)~~ (6), the local building official must issue the requested permit or provide a written notice to the permit applicant identifying the specific plan features that do not comply with the applicable codes, as well as the specific code chapters and sections, within 10 business days after receipt of the permit application and affidavit. In such written notice, the local building official must provide with specificity the plan's deficiencies, the reasons the permit application failed, and the applicable codes being violated. If the local building official does not provide specific written notice to the permit applicant within the prescribed 10-day period, the permit application is deemed approved as a matter of law, and the local building official must issue the permit on the next business day.

~~(13)(11)~~ If equipment replacements and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, subject to the emergency permitting provisions of the Florida Building Code, a private provider may perform emergency inspection services without first notifying the local building official ~~pursuant to subsection (9)~~. A private provider must conduct the inspection within 3 business days after being contacted to conduct an emergency inspection and must submit the inspection report to the local building official within 1 day after the inspection is completed.

~~(14)(12)~~ Upon completing the required inspections at each applicable phase of construction, the private provider shall record such inspections on a form provided by the commission ~~acceptable to the local building official~~. The form must bear the written or electronic signature of the private provider or the private provider's duly authorized representative. These inspection

records must shall reflect those inspections required by the applicable codes of each phase of construction for which permitting by a local enforcement agency is required. The private provider, upon completion of the required inspection, shall post each completed inspection record, indicating pass or fail, and provide the record to the local building official within ~~4~~ 2 business days. Such inspection record may be electronically posted by the private provider, or the private provider may post such inspection record physically at the project site. The private provider may electronically transmit the record to the local building official. The local building official may waive the requirement to provide a record of each inspection within ~~4~~ 2 business days if the record is electronically posted or transmitted or posted at the project site and all such inspection records are submitted with the certificate of compliance. Unless the records have been electronically posted or transmitted, records of all required and completed inspections shall be maintained at the building site at all times and made available for review by the local building official. A local building official may not fail any inspection performed by a private provider for not having the inspection records at the job site if the inspection records have been electronically transmitted to the local building official within the 4-business-day requirement. The private provider shall report to the local enforcement agency any condition that poses an immediate threat to public safety and welfare.

~~(15)(13)~~ Upon completion of all required inspections, the private provider firm shall prepare a certificate of compliance, on a form provided by the commission ~~acceptable to the local building official~~, summarizing the inspections performed and including a written representation, under oath, that the stated inspections have been performed and that, to the best of the private provider's knowledge and belief, the building construction inspected complies with the approved plans and applicable codes. The certificate of compliance may be signed by any qualified licensed individual employed full time by the private provider firm under whose authority the inspection was completed. The statement required of the private provider shall be substantially in the following form and shall be signed and sealed by a private provider as established in subsection (1) or may be electronically transmitted to the local building official:

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the building components and site improvements outlined herein and inspected under my authority have been completed in conformance with the approved plans and the applicable codes.

~~(16)(a)(14)(a)~~ The local building official may only perform building inspections of construction that a private provider has determined to be compliant with the applicable codes if the local building official has knowledge that the private provider did not perform the required inspections. If the local building official has such knowledge, the local building official must provide to the private provider written notice of the facts and circumstances upon which the local building official relied for such knowledge before performing a required inspection. The local building official may

review forms and documents required under this section for completeness only. No more than 10 business days, or if the permit is related to single-family or two-family dwellings then no more than 2 business days, after receipt of a request for a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion and the applicant's presentation of a certificate of compliance and approval of all other government approvals required by law, including the payment of all outstanding fees, the local building official shall issue the certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion or provide a notice to the applicant of any incomplete forms or documents required under this section identifying the specific deficiencies, as well as the specific code chapters and sections.

(b) If the local building official does not provide notice of any incomplete forms or documents the deficiencies within the applicable time periods under paragraph (a), the request for a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion is automatically granted and deemed issued as of the next business day. The local building official must provide the applicant with the written certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion within 10 days after it is automatically granted and issued. To resolve any identified issues deficiencies, the applicant may elect to dispute the issues deficiencies pursuant to subsection (17) ~~(15)~~ or to submit a corrected request for a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion.

(17)~~(15)~~ If the local building official determines that the building construction or plans do not comply with the applicable codes, the official may deny the permit or request for a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion, as appropriate, or may issue a stop-work order for the project or any portion thereof as provided by law, if the official determines that the noncompliance poses an immediate threat to public safety and welfare, subject to the following:

(a) The local building official shall be available to meet with the private provider within 2 business days to resolve any dispute after issuing a stop-work order or providing notice to the applicant denying a permit or request for a certificate of occupancy or certificate of completion.

(b) If the local building official and private provider are unable to resolve the dispute, the matter shall be referred to the local enforcement agency's board of appeals, if one exists, which shall consider the matter at its next scheduled meeting or sooner. Any decisions by the local enforcement agency's board of appeals, or local building official if there is no board of appeals, may be appealed to the commission as provided by this chapter.

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of this section, any decisions regarding the issuance of a building permit, certificate of occupancy, or certificate of completion may be reviewed by the local enforcement agency's board of appeals, if one exists. Any decision by the local enforcement agency's board of appeals, or local building official if there is no board of appeals, may be appealed to the commission as provided by this chapter, which shall consider the matter at the commission's next scheduled meeting.

~~(18)~~(16) For the purposes of this section, any notice to be provided by the local building official shall be deemed to be provided to the person or entity when successfully transmitted to the e-mail address listed for that person or entity in the permit application or revised permit application, or, if no e-mail address is stated, when actually received by that person or entity.

~~(19)(a)~~(17)(a) A local enforcement agency, local building official, or local government may not adopt or enforce any laws, rules, procedures, policies, qualifications, or standards more stringent than those prescribed by this section.

~~(b)~~ A local enforcement agency, local building official, or local government may establish, for private providers, private provider firms, and duly authorized representatives working within that jurisdiction, a system of registration to verify compliance with the licensure requirements of paragraph (1)(n) and the insurance requirements of subsection (18).

~~(b)~~(e) This section does not limit the authority of the local building official to issue a stop-work order for a building project or any portion of the project, as provided by law, if the official determines that a condition on the building site constitutes an immediate threat to public safety and welfare.

(c) A local enforcement agency may not prohibit or limit private providers from using virtual inspections if a virtual inspection is not prohibited by any applicable code.

~~(20)~~(18) A private provider may perform building code inspection services on a building project under this section only if the private provider maintains insurance for professional liability covering all services performed as a private provider. Such insurance shall have minimum policy limits of \$1 million per occurrence and \$2 million in the aggregate for any project with a construction cost of \$5 million or less and \$2 million per occurrence and \$4 million in the aggregate for any project with a construction cost of over \$5 million. Nothing in this section limits the ability of a fee owner to require additional insurance or higher policy limits. For these purposes, the term “construction cost” means the total cost of building construction as stated in the building permit application. If the private provider chooses to secure claims-made coverage to fulfill this requirement, the private provider must also maintain coverage for a minimum of 5 years after subsequent to the performance of building code inspection services. The insurance required under this subsection shall be written only by insurers authorized to do business in this state with a minimum A.M. Best’s rating of A. Before providing building code inspection services within a local building official’s jurisdiction, a private provider must provide to the local building official a certificate of insurance evidencing that the coverages required under this subsection are in force.

~~(21)~~(19) When performing building code inspection services, a private provider is subject to the disciplinary guidelines of the applicable professional board with jurisdiction over his or her license or certification under

chapter 468, chapter 471, or chapter 481. All private providers shall be subject to the disciplinary guidelines of s. 468.621(1)(c)-(h). Any complaint processing, investigation, and discipline that arise out of a private provider's performance of building code inspection services shall be conducted by the applicable professional board.

~~(22)~~~~(20)~~ A local building code enforcement agency may not audit the performance of building code inspection services by private providers operating within the local jurisdiction until the agency has created standard operating private provider audit procedures for the agency's internal inspection and review staff, which includes, at a minimum, the private provider audit purpose and scope, private provider audit criteria, an explanation of private provider audit processes and objections, and detailed findings of areas of noncompliance. Such private provider audit procedures must be publicly available online, and a printed version must be readily accessible in agency buildings. The private provider audit results of staff for the prior two quarters also must be publicly available. The agency's audit processes must adhere to the agency's posted standard operating audit procedures. The same private provider or private provider firm may not be audited more than four times in a year unless the local building official determines a condition of a building constitutes an immediate threat to public safety and welfare, which must be communicated in writing to the private provider or private provider firm. The private provider or private provider firm must be given notice of each audit to be performed at least 5 business days before the audit. Work on a building or structure may proceed after inspection and approval by a private provider. The work may not be delayed for completion of an inspection audit by the local building code enforcement agency.

~~(23)~~~~(21)~~ The local government, ~~the~~ local building official, and ~~their~~ building code enforcement personnel shall be immune from liability to any person or party for any action or inaction by a fee owner of a building, or by a private provider or its duly authorized representative, in connection with building code inspection services as authorized in this act. The local government, local enforcement agency, local building official, and building code enforcement personnel may not prohibit or discourage the use of a private provider or a private provider firm.

~~(24)~~~~(22)~~ Notwithstanding any other law, a county, a municipality, a school district, or an independent special district may use a private provider or a private provider firm, or may employ a licensed building inspector as described in s. 468.603(5)(a) or a person who holds the same licensure or certification as a private provider, to provide building code inspection services for a public works project, an improvement, a building, or any other structure that is owned by the county, municipality, school district, or independent special district.

Section 10. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 553.792, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

## 553.792 Building permit application to local government.—

(1)(a) A local government must approve, approve with conditions, or deny a building permit application after receipt of a completed and sufficient application within the following timeframes, unless the applicant waives such timeframes in writing:

1. Within 5 business days after receiving a complete and sufficient application, for an applicant using a local government plans reviewer to obtain the following building permits for an existing single-family residential dwelling if the value of the work is less than \$15,000: structural, accessory structure, alarm, electrical, gas, irrigation, landscaping, mechanical, plumbing, or roofing.

2.1. Within 30 business days after receiving a complete and sufficient application, for an applicant using a local government plans reviewer to obtain the following building permits if the structure is less than 7,500 square feet: residential units, including a single-family residential unit or a single-family residential dwelling, accessory structure, alarm, electrical, irrigation, landscaping, mechanical, plumbing, or roofing.

3.2. Within 60 business days after receiving a complete and sufficient application, for an applicant using a local government plans reviewer to obtain the following building permits if the structure is 7,500 square feet or more: residential units, including a single-family residential unit or a single-family residential dwelling, accessory structure, alarm, electrical, irrigation, landscaping, mechanical, plumbing, or roofing.

4.3. Within 60 business days after receiving a complete and sufficient application, for an applicant using a local government plans reviewer to obtain the following building permits: signs or nonresidential buildings that are less than 25,000 square feet.

5.4. Within 60 business days after receiving a complete and sufficient application, for an applicant using a local government plans reviewer to obtain the following building permits: multifamily residential, not exceeding 50 units; site-plan approvals and subdivision plats not requiring public hearing or public notice; and lot grading and site alteration.

6.5. Within 12 business days after receiving a complete and sufficient application, for an applicant using a master building permit consistent with s. 553.794 to obtain a site-specific building permit.

7.6. Within 10 business days after receiving a complete and sufficient application, for an applicant for a single-family residential dwelling applied for by a contractor licensed in this state on behalf of a property owner who participates in a Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery program ~~administered by the Department of Commerce~~, unless the permit application fails to satisfy the Florida Building Code or the enforcing agency's laws or ordinances.

However, the local government may not require the waiver of the time-frames in this section as a condition precedent to reviewing an applicant's building permit application.

Section 11. Paragraph (c) is added to subsection (1) of section 720.3035, Florida Statutes, to read:

720.3035 Architectural control covenants; parcel owner improvements; rights and privileges.—

(1)

(c) An association or any architectural, construction improvement, or other such similar committee of an association may not require a building permit to be issued by a governmental authority to a parcel owner as a prerequisite for review by the association or committee concerning the construction of structures or improvements on the parcel.

Section 12. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor May 6, 2026.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 6, 2026.