



STATE OF WISCONSIN
JOINT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

November 16, 2022

Mr. Dan Hereth, Secretary-Designee
Department of Safety and Professional Services
P.O. Box 8935
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Secretary-Designee Hereth:

We are writing on behalf the Wisconsin Legislative Council's Study Committee on the Commercial Building Permitting Process. Among other duties, the Study Committee is charged with reviewing the commercial building plan review process within the Department of Safety and Professional Services and recommending legislation to improve the commercial building permitting process.

We anticipate that the Study Committee will recommend legislation to the Joint Legislative Council relating to matters such as the scheduling of plan review appointments, encouraging more units of local government to assume responsibility for plan review, and expanding the types of commercial construction that may begin in advance of plan approval.

In addition to proposing legislative changes, the Study Committee also discussed various suggestions for internal reforms that could be undertaken by the department to improve the commercial building plan review process. To that end, the Study Committee recommends that the department consider taking the following steps:

- Provide an option for a **limited scope consultation**, by phone, to provide a more interpretational response than might otherwise be provided through the BuildingTech email options. For this type of informal consultation, it is the committee's desire that the department would not require the level of detailed documentation that is currently required for the more tailored preliminary plan consultation that the department offers now.
- Consider allowing an applicant for commercial building plan review to **request that the same plan reviewer** who provided a consultation also conduct the final plan review.
- Eliminate the **credit card fee** as a separate charge when a commercial plan is submitted for review. The department could include any credit card fee in the base fee for a plan submission. This would eliminate the need for an applicant to remit two separate payments.
- Include a **tracking number** or other identification number in all project-related correspondence between the department and an applicant. This will aid the applicant in managing such correspondence.

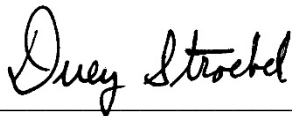
- Post a list of the most common **plan review errors** on the department's website. According to data presented by the department, approximately 30 to 35 percent of plans contain errors or omissions. The Study Committee appreciates that the department currently requires that a checklist be submitted along with the plans. Perhaps drawing even more attention to common errors and omissions would help an applicant avoid them.
- Publish a **periodic newsletter** highlighting recent interpretations of building code topics. As you know, building code provisions can lead to differing opinions among plan preparers, plan reviewers, and building inspectors. When an interpretive decision is reached regarding the meaning of a code provision, both those who submit plans and those who review plans at the local level would benefit from learning of those decisions.

Thank you in advance for your diligent attention to these matters.

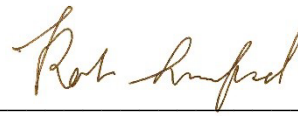
We also wish to extend our thanks for the assistance the department has provided to the Study Committee throughout its deliberations.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our offices or the Legislative Council staff.

Sincerely,



Senator Duey Stroebel
Chair, Study Committee on the Commercial
Building Permitting Process



Representative Rob Summerfield
Vice-Chair, Study Committee on the
Commercial Building Permitting Process