

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1738 (Carrillo) – As Amended March 26, 2026

Policy Committee:	Housing and Community Development	Vote:	12 - 0
	Local Government		10 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires a city or county to offer remote inspections for specified building permits in single- or two-family dwelling units by July 1, 2027.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires, by July 1, 2027, a city, including a charter city, county, or city and county to offer a homeowner or contractor the option of requesting a remote inspection for all or a subset of an inspection required by a building permit for any of the following in a single- or two-family dwelling unit:
 - a) Water heaters, heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems (HVAC), and roofs; minor electrical and plumbing work; energy storage systems; foundation and framing inspections for accessory dwelling units; and home hardening, among others.
 - b) Additionally, and at the discretion of the construction inspector: drywall, exterior siding, insulation, window replacements, patios or decks, demolition, and residential additions and storage sheds under 800 feet, among others.
- 2) Requires the remote inspections to be conducted offsite, with the homeowner or contractor using videoconferencing or recorded photos and videos, at the discretion of the local construction inspector.
- 3) Allows a city or county to keep a digital record of the remote inspection for later review, training, or compliance.
- 4) Allows, if a homeowner or contractor fails a remote inspection required by a building permit, a construction inspector, at their discretion, to conduct future inspections required by that building permit remotely or in person.
- 5) Requires a city or county to offer a remote inspection at no greater cost and with no greater delay than in-person inspection.
- 6) Allows a city or county, at its discretion, to perform onsite audits to confirm a homeowner or contractor accurately represented the work that is subject of a remote inspection.

- 7) Requires a city or county to include information on its remote inspection program in its annual progress reports (APRs) submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), beginning with the report due April 1, 2028. The report must confirm that the city or county has implemented a remote inspection program in compliance with this bill and include specified information.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) HCD estimates ongoing General Fund costs of \$482,000 in fiscal year 2027-28 and annually thereafter to update the APR form and related technical assistance (TA) materials as well as provide TA to local governments and other stakeholders, develop enhancements to the HCD Connect database and existing related reports, and respond to new report requests.
- 2) Local costs to cities and counties resulting from this bill to provide remote inspections are not reimbursable by the state because local agencies have general authority to charge and adjust planning and permitting fees to cover their administrative expenses associated with new planning mandates.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Like many of you, I'm a homeowner, and have also experienced the frustration of waiting weeks for an inspection on a simple home renovation. [This bill] proposes an alternative to this, by giving homeowners the choice to request a remote virtual inspection for simple home renovations. These remote inspections are already happening throughout the state; 19 different jurisdictions already offer some form of remote inspections. This bill will require local jurisdictions to allow remote virtual inspections upon request for simple renovations.

- 2) **Background.** Building inspections occur throughout the construction process, ensuring the construction work complies with approved plans, building codes, and safety regulations. Local agency inspectors review critical aspects of construction and various scopes of work, such as structural components, electrical and plumbing systems, fire safety measures, energy efficiency, and accessibility requirements at multiple stages of the project.

AB 1308 (Hoover), Chapter 509, Statutes of 2025, required local building departments to conduct building inspections for small-scale residential construction projects, defined as buildings with one to 10 units and up to 40 feet tall, within 10 business days of receiving notice that permitted work is completed. This requirement applies to building permits issued for new construction and residential additions and is intended to provide greater certainty and inspection expediency for smaller residential development projects.

Remote virtual inspections (RVIs) allow building inspectors to review permitted construction work without being physically present at the jobsite. Instead, the inspection is conducted using video, photographs, or similar technology while a contractor, property owner, or other

representative is present at the site and follows the inspector's directions, or records media to be sent to the inspector.

At least 19 jurisdictions, including Los Angeles County, Placer County, and the cities of San Diego, Santa Barbara, Berkeley, and Santa Rosa use RVIs for portions of their inspection workload. Statewide and national authorities have issued standards and best practices supporting their use. Other states, including Texas and Florida, have authorized or required remote inspections in statute.

- 3) **Support and Opposition.** This bill is co-sponsored by Permit Power and SPUR and supported by numerous home builders and housing advocates. The co-sponsors assert:

Outdated permitting and inspection processes—particularly long wait times for routine inspections that take 5-15 minutes—are quietly but significantly driving up costs, slowing new housing production, and delaying clean energy upgrades for California families. Remote inspections are a proven, cost-effective solution. These inspections maintain full safety and code compliance while reducing unnecessary travel, scheduling inefficiencies, and backlogs.

This bill is opposed by the California Building Officials (CALBO), who assert:

Some building departments have made routine use of remote and virtual inspections. We commend their approach in finding ways to make innovative practices work for their community. We routinely share their practices with our larger membership and commend their work, but that does not mean that it is a proverbial *fit* for all communities. It simply means that building departments need discretion with how remote and virtual inspections are offered.

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