

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Sunday, November 23, 2025

OPINION

READERS WRITE

Misleading claims about housing shortages must be corrected

Although the construction industry blames housing shortages on over-regulation, that assertion is politically calculated and dangerously misleading. Housing shortages and unaffordable costs of new homes – beyond the reach of many Georgians – are mostly caused by other factors. According to the National League of Cities, only about 5% of housing costs are linked to regulations.

Prompted by deceptive anecdotes about regulatory excesses, the General Assembly will be considering House Bill 812 [HB812]. The proposal imposes foolhardy, rushed scheduling requirements on local development-permit review while also empowering the state to override any local regulations more rigorous than the state's scant minimum standards.

Financial and market conditions have far worse impact on housing availability than regulations. Underbuilding began with the 2008 financial crisis, making homebuilders hesitant to invest in new projects, cumulatively causing a national housing shortfall in the millions. Moreover, inflation has spiked building material costs, recently made worse by tariffs. Likewise, skilled-worker shortages have raised construction expenses. Injustices caused by hedge-fund speculation and the Citizens United decision have further impaired the shortfall between average household income and housing costs.

If HB812 is adopted, communities will unjustifiably lose critically important control over local development, endangering their environment, health, and quality of life.

David Kyler
Center for a Sustainable Coast