

REBNY Testimony | January 28, 2026

## The Real Estate Board of New York to The Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2026 Executive Budget Proposal: SEQRA

The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) is the City's leading real estate trade association representing commercial, residential, and institutional property owners, builders, managers, investors, brokers, salespeople, and others active in New York City real estate. REBNY appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the proposal to reform the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) as part of TED Part R of the FY 27 Executive Budget.

New York City is facing a housing crisis driven by insufficient new production and a persistent shortage of affordable housing. The Governor has set a statewide goal of producing 800,000 new homes by 2032, including 500,000 in New York City, and Mayor Mamdani has committed to delivering 200,000 new affordable units over the next decade. Achieving these necessary targets will require a sustained and significant increase in housing production by both the private and public sectors.

SEQRA reform is a major and long-overdue opportunity to remove a significant structural barrier to housing production. The New York City development process is up to three times longer than anywhere else in the country and costs up to twice as much on a per unit basis, with industry costs estimates upwards of \$800,000 per unit. These delays are driven by a complex multi-agency permitting process and are compounded by a discretionary environmental and land-use review framework that is often duplicative, unpredictable, and disconnected from meaningful environmental outcomes.

To reduce these barriers, REBNY strongly supports the Governor's proposed SEQRA reforms, which will help speed up housing production in New York City and across the State. The proposal builds on recent voter-approved Charter revisions to expedite land use review for modest-sized housing projects and complements the City's Green Fast Track initiative, which is designed to accelerate environmentally sustainable projects through streamlined review. Together, these efforts reflect an important policy shift: projects that advance housing and sustainability goals should move faster, not slower.

Building on the momentum of local efforts, the proposal expands the type of projects that will qualify as Type II and thus will not be subject to a full environmental review. Today, Type II projects are ones that do not create adverse impacts to the environment due to their scale and use and are therefore not required to submit documentation, modeling and other

analyses to satisfy the multitude of categories required for review under the state's environmental act. Expanding the list of eligible projects under Type II will greatly cut down on the development process timeline and associated costs, increasing the delivery of more affordable housing in New York City.

Specifically, REBNY is supportive of including projects up to 500 units in medium and high-density districts and 200 units in lower density districts in the Type II list, matching the reforms included in the Green Fast Track at the City level. Housing projects at the density proposed in the Governor's executive language have also historically not created an environmental impact yet are subject to months and in many cases years of analytical work under the current statute. However, it is large projects that do have the ability to deliver homes for New Yorkers at scale, and projects of this size are much needed to meet the targeted housing goals.

Importantly, the proposal should ensure that modest residential projects are broadly exempt from environmental review where strong local standards already govern environmental performance. Additionally, to ensure that these reforms deliver their intended benefits, clear statewide standards and guidance for implementation should be expediently produced and shared with municipalities. Strong state guidance is necessary to avoid duplicative or conflicting local requirements that could undermine the purpose of the reforms.

REBNY commends the Governor for putting forward policies aimed at unlocking housing production and improving affordability.

## CONTACTS:

### **Basha Gerhards**

*Executive Vice President, Public Policy*  
Real Estate Board of New York  
[Bgheards@rebny.com](mailto:Bgheards@rebny.com)

### **Maddie DeCerbo**

*Director of Urban Planning*  
Real Estate Board of New York  
[mdecerbo@rebny.com](mailto:mdecerbo@rebny.com)