May 6, 2020

Via Email to cbsc@dgs.ca.gov

California Building Standards Commission
Attention: Mia Marvelli, Executive Director
2525 Natomas Park Drive, Suite 130
Sacramento, CA 95833-2936

Re: California Building Standards Commission – Proposed CBC Amendments

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on proposed amendments to the Access Code. I am writing on behalf of the Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund to express strong support for the joint HCD/DSA proposed amendments in HCD Item 1 Sec. 202 – “Public Housing” and DSA Item 2.09 Ch. 2 Sec. 202 – “Public Housing”.

DREDF is a unique alliance of adults with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities. We seek to advance the civil and human rights of people with disabilities through legal advocacy, training, education, and public policy and legislative development in the areas of: employment, housing, access to government services and benefits, transportation, architectural access, public accommodations, and education. Based in Berkeley, California, our vision is a just world where all people, with and without disabilities, live full and independent lives free of discrimination.

People with disabilities and their families have faced a longstanding shortage of accessible and affordable housing in California. We know that people with disabilities often experience poverty, thus increasing the likelihood that we rely on affordable, accessible housing to thrive in our communities. And although people with disabilities rely on affordable housing programs to provide a solution to the cycle of homelessness, we still make up a large percentage of the population living on California streets. The lack of accessible, affordable housing is also a continuing and significant barrier to integrated community living, making it difficult for people with disabilities to move from segregated facilities into the community, putting many people with disabilities at risk of unnecessary institutionalization. We also know that housing is healthcare, which is another critical reason why it remains extremely important to expand housing opportunities for our population.

There are laws that require this type of affordable, accessible housing. The proposal to change the definition of “public housing” will clarify those laws in the Building Code. This will lead to more accessible housing in California. For people with disabilities, this means we will be able to find housing we can afford and that the housing will have the features we need to live a self-sufficient and healthier life in our communities.
DREDF fully supports the comments submitted by Disability Rights California. And we urge the Commission to adopt these changes to make affordable, accessible housing available to the communities we serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Henderson
Executive Director

Cc: Natasha Reyes, Disability Rights California, Natasha.reyes@disabilityrightsca.org