

Jan. 31, 2025, 9:15 a.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 430 and Videoconference

To: House Committee on Housing
Rep. Luke Evslin, Chair
Rep. Tyson Miyake, Vice-Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: HB745 — RELATING TO BUILDING CODES

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice-Chair Miyake and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [HB745](#), which would replace the current building code adoption process with a single state building code.

Grassroot believes this would help fix the state's convoluted building code-adoption process, since it would balance the objectives of safety and cost.

Under the current code process, the state makes changes to and then adopts the latest version of the model building code proposed by the International Building Code. Then each of Hawaii's four counties makes their own changes to the updated state code before adopting the building code as their own.

Under HB745, the State Building Code Council would make changes to and adopt model building codes, and the counties would have the option to remove requirements from the state building code or — after receiving approval from the State Building Code Council — add requirements to the state code.

State law currently requires the State Building Code Council to adopt every iteration of the International Building Code and related codes within two years of their release; the counties have an additional two years to adopt and make their amendments to the state code. HB745 removes this two-step process.

That's important, because the Council and counties often struggle to meet these deadlines. For example, it was only in April 2021 that the State Building Code Council adopted the 2018 Interim Building Code¹ and not until early 2023 that Honolulu fully adopted those amendments.²

Because of this staggered adoption process, county building officials, builders and architects must constantly re-learn the building code's requirements. For builders, this means navigating as many as four different codes, which takes time and training, increasing administrative costs.

The almost-constant nature of the building code updates also stresses already understaffed county planning and permitting departments and can exacerbate permitting delays, which research shows can affect the price of housing.³

As measured by the Honolulu Construction Cost Index, the cost for single-family homes in 2024 was 2.6 times higher than the cost in 2020. For highrises, the cost was 2.5 times higher.⁴

The state's strict land-use, zoning and permitting rules are a key driver of these costs. The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i has estimated that regulations comprise 58% of the cost of new condominium construction.⁵

A unified state building code would maintain the health and safety standards while contributing to the repair of a broken process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

¹ ["State Building Code Adoption,"](#) State Building Code Council, April 20, 2021, p. 1.

² ["Interim Building Code \(2018 IBC\) Takes Effect,"](#) Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting, April 20, 2023.

³ Paul Emrath, ["How Government Regulation Affects the Price of a New Home,"](#) National Association of Homebuilders, Economics and Housing Policy Group, 2011, p. 5; and Adam Millsap, Samuel Staley and Vittorio Nastasi, ["Assessing the Effects of Local Impact Fees and Land-use Regulations on Workforce Housing in Florida,"](#) James Madison Institute, Dec. 11, 2018, p. 19.

⁴ ["Quarterly Statistical and Economic Report, 4th Quarter 2024,"](#) Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, pp. 107-108.

⁵ Justin Tyndall and Emi Kim, ["Why are Condominiums so Expensive in Hawai'i?"](#) Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i, May 2024, p. 11.



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

January 31, 2025

House Committee on Housing
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SUPPORT for HB 745 - RELATING TO BUILDING CODES

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of HB 745** which would simplify how we adopt and incorporate updated international building codes into our local building codes.

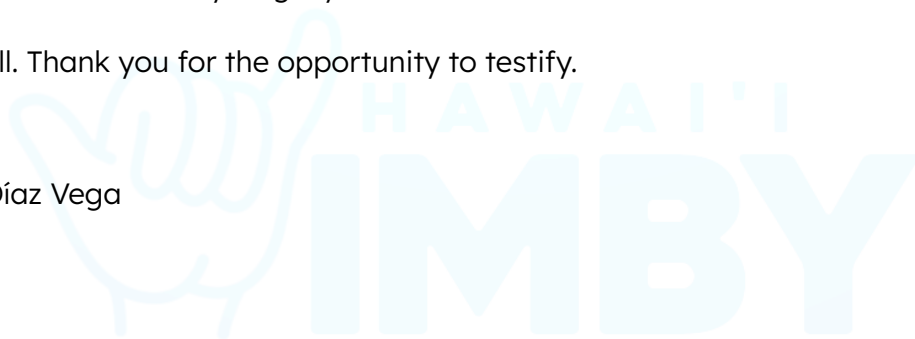
We believe in streamlining permitting. Combining, simplifying or removing layers of regulation that slow the permitting process for housing is important. With regard to the adoption of building codes, delays in adopting new building codes can result in unnecessary requirements that add cost to construction or delays in being able to use more efficient building technologies or materials. We need to be aware of aspects that unnecessarily add costs to our already high housing production costs.

Hawai'i YIMBY (*Yes In My Backyard*) is a volunteer-led grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting bold and effective solutions for Hawai'i's devastating housing crisis. Our members are deeply concerned about Hawai'i's chronic and worsening housing shortage, which has caused home prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushes thousands of kama'āina out to the mainland or into homelessness every single year.

We ask your support for this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Damien Waikoloa & Edgardo Díaz Vega
Chapter Leads, Hawai'i YIMBY





January 30, 2025

TO: Honorable Luke Evslin, Chair
Committee on Housing

Honorable Tyson Miyake Vice Chair
Committee on Housing

FROM: Legislative Advocacy Committee
American Institute of Architects, Hawaii State Council

SUBJECT: **House Bill 745**
Relating to Building Codes

The American Institute of Architects

AIA Hawaii State Council
828 Fort Street Mall, Suite 100
Honolulu, HI 96813

T (808) 628-7243
contact@aiahonolulu.org
aiahonolulu.org/AIAHawaiiStateCouncil

Dear Chair Evslin and Vice Chair Miyake
and Members of the Committee,

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Hawaii State Council and our Legislative Advocacy Committee **SUPPORT** HB 745 based on the overall intent of the bill.

Fulfilling HRS 107-24 intent for most current codes

AIA strongly supported original 2007 legislation intent on ensuring the state's building codes are current. In support of the current State building code adoption as over-arching law of the land, a simple and swift adoption of the State building code (with State amendments) will be consistent Statewide. This greatly reduces the amount of "churning" of building codes by all County staff members (already understaffed). This measure helps the entire building industry to focus on only one code statewide instead of both State building code AND County adopted amended state building code.

Effective date (January 1, 2028) may not coincide with State adoption timeline (ICC)

Our State Building Code Council (SBCC) has diligently been conducting State building code updates based on the publication of the most current codes by International Code Council (ICC). AIA suggests Amending Section 1, page 2, Line 18 to read:

"(b) Beginning w/ effective date that ICC 2024 suite of published codes is adopted as the Hawaii state building code, all existing county building codes shall be superseded by the most recent Hawaii state building codes adopted by the council pursuant to section 107-24. Thereafter, each county may amend the Hawaii state building codes as they apply within its own jurisdiction by:"

Understanding County preference for more State support in timely code adoption

AIA understands all counties indicate a lack of staff to support “churning” of the State Building Code once adopted to then recreate County amendments. Further any additional back and forth between State and county after SBCC adopts Hawaii state building code will increase difficulties and create delay. AIA suggestion is to allow the Council to conduct business of State code adoption with robust / upfront county input during the creation of the State Building Code amendments, especially since a representative from each county has a seat-at-the-table during all SBCC deliberations. Suggest amending Page 3, Line 3 – 7 is suggested to read:

- “(1) Removing requirement set by the Hawaii state building codes; or
- (2) Adding or amending requirements only more stringent than the Hawaii state building code. Amendments that reduce life safety or resiliency requirements set by the Hawaii state build codes will not be allowed; or
- (3) A county with a population in excess of 500,000 may amend its building energy conservation code to require more stringent energy-saving performance than the Hawaii state building codes and standards listed in section 107-25.”

Overall this lessens the need for counties to recreate entirely new amendments each code cycle but still allows counties to make county specific amendments that did not pass in SBCC deliberations by allowing item (1) above. Item (2) restricts counties from allowing a looser code requirements potentially impacting life safety (consumer protection always in the best interest of the State). Item (3) focuses IECC (energy code) requirements on locales that garner the most energy use, allowing larger counties to adjust appropriately. All major county code adjustments will be deliberated by SBCC and incorporated into the Hawaii state code upfront while all minor adjustments will be deliberated in county council after Hawaii state building code is adopted Statewide. AIA suggested strategy supports State leadership in code adoption and lessens the load Counties are burdened with.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our strategic thoughts in **SUPPORT** to House Bill 745.

Sincerely,
AIA Legislative Advocacy Committee
American Institute of Architects, Hawaii State Council

HB-745

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 8:13:09 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle Burchard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Hawaii State Legislature,

I strongly support HB 745/SB 1540, which proposes a unified statewide building code. Currently, inconsistencies between county codes cause delays and added costs in construction. A single statewide code will streamline the permitting process and reduce unnecessary barriers to housing development.

This bill will also ensure that Hawaii keeps up with the latest advancements in building materials, technologies, and methods, helping to modernize our construction practices.

Please support HB 745/SB 1540 to promote efficient, cost-effective, and timely housing development in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Kyle Burchard