



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

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Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
**Director**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Thursday, April 3, 2025  
3:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

In consideration of  
**HCR157**  
**ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE FOR SPEED (SIMPLIFYING PERMITTING FOR  
ENHANCED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) TO IDENTIFY ACTIONS NEEDED TO  
EXPEDITE, FACILITATE, AND COORDINATE STATE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
PERMIT PROCESSES.**

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my support for HCR157 which seeks to establish the Task Force for SPEED, to include a representative from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, among others. This initiative is a significant step toward streamlining the permitting process across various government agencies in Hawaii.

The current permitting system can often be complex and time-consuming, posing challenges for businesses and individuals alike. By creating this task force, HCR157 aims to identify inefficiencies and develop strategies to simplify and expedite the permitting process. This will not only enhance governmental efficiency but also foster a more business-friendly environment, encouraging economic growth and development within our state.

Moreover, a simplified permitting process can lead to increased transparency and accessibility, ensuring that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of requirements and procedures. This is particularly beneficial for small businesses and entrepreneurs who may lack the resources to navigate a convoluted system.

In conclusion, I believe that HCR157 represents a proactive approach to improving our state's permitting system. I urge the committee to pass this measure, as it will contribute to a more efficient, transparent, and supportive environment for businesses and residents in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**  
465 S. KING STREET, #103  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

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## Testimony of the Public Utilities Commission

To the  
Senate Committee on  
Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

April 3, 2025  
3:00 p.m.

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

**Measure:** H.C.R. 157

**Title:** ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE FOR SPEED (SIMPLIFYING PERMITTING FOR ENHANCED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) TO IDENTIFY ACTIONS NEEDED TO EXPEDITE, FACILITATE, AND COORDINATE STATE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL PERMIT PROCESSES.

**Position:**

The Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") supports this measure and offers the following comments for consideration.

**Comments:**

The Commission appreciates the intent of this resolution to streamline state and intergovernmental permit processes by convening a task force for permit simplification.

In our regulatory oversight of public utilities, the Commission has heard firsthand how slow and/or convoluted permitting processes can negatively impact developers. In some cases, permit time alone can obstruct otherwise viable projects. The Commission is willing and able to commit staff time to attending and participating in this task force in the capacity outlined in the bill.

Particularly as it pertains to clean energy, the Commission would also suggest looking into how other states have addressed permit simplifications, such as in Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/commission-on-energy-infrastructure-siting-and-permitting>

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR



**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300  
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Statement of  
**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation  
Before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

April 03, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 016

In consideration of  
**H.C.R 157**

**ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE FOR SPEED (SIMPLIFYING PERMITTING FOR ENHANCED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) TO IDENTIFY ACTIONS NEEDED TO EXPEDITE, FACILITATE, AND COORDINATE STATE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL PERMIT PROCESSES.**

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC supports HCR 157.

The permitting process is often time-consuming due to the understaffing of resource-constrained agencies, the complexity and multiplicity of requirements, the sequential and contingent nature of reviews, and the potential for legal challenges, among other things. The entitlement and permitting process can take over five years, creating significant delays and uncertainty for housing projects, increasing carrying costs and capital market risks, and deterring investment in affordable housing.

HHFDC is named as a member of the task force and supports efforts to streamline the permitting process across various government agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution.



# LAND USE COMMISSION

*Komikina Ho'ohana 'Āina*

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omōhala Pā'oihana, 'Imi Wai wai a Ho'omāka'ika'i*

**JOSH GREEN, MD**  
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Statement of  
**Daniel E. Orodener**  
**Executive Officer**  
State Land Use Commission

Before the  
**Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs**

Thursday April 3, 2025  
3:00 PM  
State Capitol, Room 016 and Video Conference

In consideration of  
**HCR157**

**ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE FOR SPEED TO IDENTIFY ACTIONS NEEDED TO  
EXPEDITE, FACILITATE, AND COORDINATE STATE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
PERMIT PROCESSES**

Chair Wakai; Vice Chair Chang; and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs:

The proposed resolution would establish a task force, under a chair to be appointed by the House Speaker, to simplify permitting for enhanced economic development. A report with findings and recommendations, including proposed legislation, would be required prior to the 2026 Legislature's Regular Session.

The Land Use Commission ("LUC") has been identified to participate and be represented on the task force. Representatives on the task force have been asked to be designated no later than August 1, 2025.

The LUC supports the intent of the resolution and would participate in such a task force.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

April 3, 2025, 3 p.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Conference Room 016 and Videoconference

**To: Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs**  
**Rep. Glenn Wakai, Chair**  
**Rep. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair**

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

RE: HCR157 — ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE FOR SPEED (SIMPLIFYING PERMITTING FOR ENHANCED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) TO IDENTIFY ACTIONS NEEDED TO EXPEDITE, FACILITATE, AND COORDINATE STATE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL PERMIT PROCESSES

Aloha Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute **supports** [HCR157](#), which would establish the Task Force for SPEED (Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development) with the goal of identifying and analyzing ways to streamline and coordinate state and intergovernmental permit processes.

Approving this resolution would be an important step toward helping resolve Hawaii's housing crisis because permitting delays slow housing growth and add significantly to the price of housing.

According to "The Hawai'i Housing Factbook," produced by The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i, the median permit processing time between mid-2018 and mid-2023 across the state was 161 days.<sup>1</sup>

A recent report from the Grassroot Institute, "[Seven low cost ways to speed up permitting in Hawaii](#)," provides a potential road map for commonsense permit reform.<sup>2</sup> Its suggestions include increasing permit exemptions,

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<sup>1</sup> Justin Tyndall, Daniela Bond-Smith and Rachel Inafuku, "[The Hawai'i Housing Factbook](#)," The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i, June 28, 2023, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Helton, "[Seven low cost ways to speed up permitting in Hawaii](#)," Grassroot Institute of Hawaii, October 2024, p. 14.

utilizing third-party approvals, adopting meaningful “shot clocks” and implementing a program that would grandfather existing dwellings that were built without permits.

It might be possible to reduce permitting delays with more staff or better software, but ultimately, only reform of Hawaii’s permitting regulations themselves will make lasting inroads into resolving Hawaii’s housing crisis.

That said, we heartily welcome and support this proposal to establish a task force that would explore these and other ways to speed up and “simplify permitting for enhanced economic development.”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas  
Director of strategic campaigns  
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii