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HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO REDUCE WAIT TIMES FOR HOUSING CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, Hawaii needs 65,000 new housing units in the next ten years to meet growing demand; and

WHEREAS, a chronic housing shortage has caused and continues to cause home prices to surge, which increases housing costs for renters and denies young people and working families the opportunity of owning a home; and

WHEREAS, despite Hawaii's desperate need for more housing, Honolulu takes more than seventeen months on average to approve a building permit, the longest wait time in the entire nation; and

WHEREAS, such delay greatly discourages new housing construction by raising the cost and risk involved; and

WHEREAS, a 2016 study by Trulia's chief economist, Dr. Ralph McLaughlin, concluded that bureaucratic delay in the permitting process was the greatest single factor contributing to low housing elasticity, which in turn contributes to a lack of affordable housing as demand rises; and

WHEREAS, Honolulu's lengthy permitting delays also make it harder for residents to start businesses, raising the cost and risk for potential entrepreneurs; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu's permitting process is so slow and overburdened that people are often forced to work around the system, by hiring private third-party companies to check plans for code compliance; and

WHEREAS, the long wait is due in part to a growing number of environmental rules, land-use regulations, and building codes, which require developers to navigate a bureaucratic system of costly studies and legal requirements, resulting in fewer, more expensive houses; and

WHEREAS, accessory dwelling units and ohana units are important ways to utilize vacant space and contribute to the housing supply, but permits for such units remain difficult to get and are subject to restrictive regulations; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu has taken little action to streamline its permitting processes to make it easier for landowners and developers to build desperately-needed housing and accessory dwelling units; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2018, that the City and County of Honolulu is urged to review its permit requirements, processes, and zoning laws and reduce the time it takes to receive a building permit to less than six months; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City and County of Honolulu is urged to reevaluate and shorten the time it takes to receive permits for accessory dwelling units and ohana units that will be rented for a period greater than 180 days; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu and the Director of the Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting.

OFFERED BY:

RIMETH

Gather Thicker

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