

LATE

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING
KA 'OIHANA HO'OLĀLĀ A ME NĀ PALAPALA 'AE
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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February 4, 2025

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
and Members of the Committee on Energy
and Intergovernmental Affairs.
Hawaii State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Wakai and Committee Members:

Subject: Senate Bill No. 73
Relating to County Permits

The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) **offers comments** on Senate Bill No. 73, which would require county permitting agencies to establish and fill positions exclusively to process permit applications submitted for State projects. The Bill also makes an appropriation.

We **oppose** the requirement that the counties establish new positions specifically to review State projects. This Bill, as written, would require this new group to process ALL "development-related permits," not just building permits. This could include special management area permits, grading and trenching permits, variances, special district permits, etc., and involve staff in several divisions within the department.

Rather than appropriating funds to pay for these new positions, we support funding for additional positions and salary increases for engineers, building plans examiners, planners and inspectors, to recruit and retain these important positions that play major roles in permitting processes, exempt from HRS Chapter 76, but in negotiation with the unions. While we understand the intent to speed review of state projects, by providing sufficient financial resources for positions and raises, everyone benefits.

Perhaps the Legislature should consider creating a State Building Permit Office, which has been proposed in the past. This office would review State permit

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applications, perform inspections, and issue certificates of occupancy. This way, the State could process its permits on its own time and bypass county review altogether.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line.

Dawn Takeuchi Apuna
Director Designate