

STATE OF HAWAII OFFICE OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
**JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY
AND TOURISM**

Wednesday, February 4, 2026, 10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423
in consideration of

HB 1968 RELATING TO PERMITTING.

Chairs Ilagan and Tam, Vice Chairs Hussey and Templo, and Members of the Joint House Committees on Economic Development & Technology and Tourism, the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **offers the following comments with concerns** on HB 1968, which implements certain recommendations of the Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED) Task Force - requiring the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to develop a statewide permitting intake platform, and appropriating funds for the development of the platform, subject to a matching funds requirement from the counties.

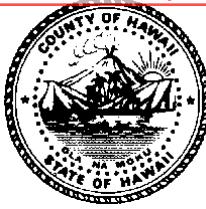
HB 1968 is a direct result of the recommendations put forth by the Building Permit Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) of the SPEED Task Force. OPSD recognizes the diligent work of the Task Force in identifying systemic bottlenecks that hinder timely development across the State. OPSD supports the intent of creating a statewide permitting intake platform to streamline the permitting process. We agree that a centralized, modernized system would provide much needed clarity for applicants and help drive the economic development goals of the State.

However, **OPSD has concerns**. We do not believe that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) is the right entity to effectuate this measure. While the economic goals are clear, permitting remains primarily the kuleana of the counties. Each jurisdiction possesses its own specific codes and regulatory requirements, and placing a state agency like DBEDT in a management role over these functions may create significant administrative and jurisdictional friction. For a platform of this scale to be effective, it must respect the authority of the counties and be housed within an entity better equipped to manage inter-jurisdictional regulatory frameworks.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on this measure.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



William V. Brilhante, Jr.
Managing Director

Merrick Nishimoto
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i ~ Office of the Mayor

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Testimony of
C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

Before the House Committee on
Economic Development & Technology
Rep. Greggory Ilagan, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 10:00 A.M.
State Capitol Conference Room 423 & Videoconference

In consideration of
House Bill 1968
Relating to Permitting

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development & Technology,

On behalf of the County of Hawai'i, I support House Bill 1968, which implements key recommendations of the Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED) Task Force. Unnecessary permitting delays can hinder the timely delivery of much-needed housing and economic opportunities for our Hawai'i Island residents.

The County is committed to leading the State in SPEED in issuing construction permits that meet our standards. We are continually exploring ways to modernize and expedite the permitting process, including the use of AI. We look forward to any opportunity to partner with the State to address our shared housing and permitting challenges.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



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Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, Odom, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Advisor*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Economic Development and Technology, and Committee on Tourism
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 4, 2026

TIME: 10am

RE: HB1968 Relating to Permitting

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure to implement certain recommendations of the Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED) Task Force. Unnecessary permitting delays can have a detrimental impact on individuals, businesses, our economy, and our as a whole. For instance in a survey several years ago, HFIA members identified permitting, and specifically permitting delays, as the number one impediment to solar installation for their businesses.

We believe that the provisions outlined in this measure are an important step in the right direction to improve the permitting process for Hawaii residents and businesses. For our food systems improving permitting can mean removing barriers to business growth, increased local manufacturing, and new entrepreneurs entering the industry.

We urge the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Testimony to the House Committee on Economic Development & Technology (ECD)

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 10:00AM
Conference Room 423 & Videoconference

RE: HB1968 Relating to Permitting

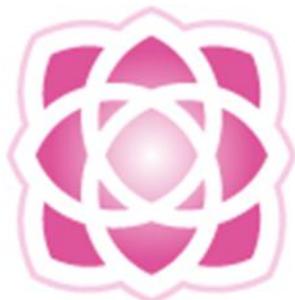
Aloha e Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 1968 (HB1968), which implements certain recommendations of the SPEED Task Force to develop a statewide permitting intake platform, requiring DBEDT to develop this platform.

HB 1968 aligns directly with the Economic Action pillar of the Chamber's 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii, as it invests in a modernized regulatory system that strengthens the state's business environment by reducing friction and improving application completeness in the permitting process. The Economic Action pillar emphasizes the need to reduce administrative burden, support firms in navigating regulatory requirements, and enabling businesses to focus time and resources on growth, innovation, and hiring rather than contending with costs associated with permitting delays. In 2024 alone, the private sector suffered \$124.6 million in costs resulting from permitting delays. By modernizing our state's permitting system, this bill will help reduce unnecessary delays and permitting backlog that impedes project development and business expansion.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill HB1968. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY AND COMMITTEE ON TOURISM
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 423
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026 AT 10:00 A.M.**

To The Honorable Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
The Honorable Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Economic Development & Technology

To The Honorable Representative Adrian K. Tam, Chair
The Honorable Representative Shirley Ann Templo, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Tourism

SUPPORT FOR HB1968 RELATING TO PERMITTING

The Maui Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to advancing economic growth and diversification in Hawai'i, and as such, we recognize the critical importance of modernizing and streamlining the permitting process for businesses and development projects. HB1968, by requiring the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to develop a statewide permitting intake platform, directly addresses longstanding challenges that hinder timely investment and economic recovery.

A unified permitting intake system has the potential to reduce bureaucratic delays, improve transparency, and provide greater predictability for businesses seeking to invest or expand in Hawai'i. These improvements align with our mission to foster a resilient and diversified economy, as more efficient permitting can accelerate the launch of new industries, support construction and innovation, and help local businesses recover and grow. Streamlining the permitting process is widely recognized as a best practice for encouraging investment and lowering barriers to entry, which is especially important as Maui businesses contend with ongoing economic challenges.

We note that the bill's requirement for county matching funds is a reasonable approach to ensuring county buy-in and shared responsibility. Ensuring that the platform is user-friendly, accessible, and adaptable to future needs will be key to maximizing its positive impact on economic development.

We greatly appreciate the work done by the SPEED Task Force and support their recommendations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



holomua

COLLABORATIVE

OUR MISSION

To support and advance public policies that make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

OUR VISION

Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai'i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai'i can thrive.

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Committee: House Committee on Economic Development and Technology
Bill Number: HB 1968, Relating to Permitting
Hearing Date and Time: February 4, 2026 at 10:00am (Room 423)
Re: Testimony of Holomua Collaborative- Support

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Committee Members:

We write in support of House Bill 1968, Relating to Permitting. The purpose of HB 1968 is to develop a statewide permitting intake platform to prevent the submission of incomplete applications and standardize data across jurisdictions

Holomua supports initiatives that help keep all local working families in Hawai'i by addressing the root causes of our affordability crisis. The high cost of housing and the slow pace of infrastructure development are often rooted in a permitting system that is fractured and technologically outdated. HB 1968 represents a major step forward by modernizing the "front door" of the permitting process through a statewide intake platform.

One of the most persistent hurdles to economic development in Hawai'i is the high rate of incomplete or incorrect applications that enter the system, which causes months of unnecessary back-and-forth before a substantive review even begins. By implementing a statewide permitting intake platform that utilizes artificial intelligence and automated screening, we can ensure that applications are correct and complete the moment they are submitted. This technology acts as a force multiplier for our hardworking state and county staff, allowing them to focus their professional judgment on technical reviews rather than chasing down missing documents or correcting basic data entry errors.

Furthermore, the lack of interoperability between our various state and county agencies can create a confusing maze for local contractors and builders who work across multiple islands. A unified, digital platform that standardizes data and routes applications concurrently to all relevant agencies will bring a level of predictability and transparency that our economy desperately needs. It removes the "invisible tax" of administrative delay that currently drives up the cost of every home built in Hawai'i. By passing HB 1968, we choose to invest in a 21st-century infrastructure that will lower costs for residents and accelerate the projects that keep our local workforce employed. We respectfully urge you to pass this measure and mahalo for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Matthew Prellberg
Policy and Communications Director

HB-1968

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 1:59:29 PM
Testimony for ECD on 2/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committeemembers,

We need to remove permitting blockages that worsen the regulatory burden crushing our state.
Let's get this bill passed!

HB-1968

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:38:15 AM
Testimony for ECD on 2/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Needed. Support.

HB-1968

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:37:59 PM
Testimony for ECD on 2/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Reid Mizue	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you members of the Committee,

As a licensed architect in the State of Hawaii who creates code compliant plans for submission to County departments of permitting throughout the State, I prefer the counties to administer permit issuance as opposed to the State DEBT which will inevitably be inundated with a task as large as permitting review and issuance. I recommend the State continue to push forward with measures such as HB 1964 and HB 2215 which provides funding to the State Building Code Council (SBCC) to provide training to all Counties as the code cycle gets renewed and updated. The State should lead in this area of responsibility however the actual administering and logistics of permit reviews and issuance should be left to each individual County which serves their own communities specific to the location that the permit is being applied for. I support home-rule idea that the Counties serve their communities best in this regard.

Mahalo for the opportunity,

Reid Mizue, AIA

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

HB-1968

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:28:30 PM
Testimony for ECD on 2/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Jennifer Salisbury	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a member of the SPEED Task Force, I am PROUD to support this. We need more housing! A simple or sophisticated developer only needs a permit to build.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

HB-1968

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:31:37 PM
Testimony for ECD on 2/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Young	CARES Community Advocacy Research Education Services	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support