

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 649-26

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 2140
H.D. 2

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Labor, to which was referred H.B. No. 2140,
H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO ESSENTIAL PERMITTING
POSITIONS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to authorize counties to implement a pilot program to improve the speed, accountability, and quality of the permit process through targeted staffing, performance incentives, and interdepartmental competition.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development; Department of Planning and Permitting of the City and County of Honolulu; Maui Chamber of Commerce; Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO; and Chamber of Commerce Hawaii. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Budget and Fiscal Services of the City and County of Honolulu and Department of Human Resources of the City and County of Honolulu.

Your Committee finds that the State's permitting process continues to experience significant delays due to understaffing, outdated systems, and workflow bottlenecks, which hinder housing and infrastructure development across the State. Your Committee

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further finds that counties face persistent recruitment and retention challenges for permitting-related positions, and that differential pay models are an effective tool for attracting and retaining qualified personnel. Your Committee believes that establishing a county-level pilot program that incorporates targeted staffing, incentives, and streamlined coordination will significantly strengthen permitting efficiency and reduce processing times statewide.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring that any person hired into essential permitting positions at salaries above the minimum salary must meet minimum qualifications for that position;
- (2) Clarifying that the hiring department, rather than the personnel department, is responsible for prioritizing hiring of individuals for essential permitting positions over other positions;
- (3) Changing the end date of the pilot program to June 30, 2030; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Labor that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2140, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2140, H.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Labor,



JACKSON D. SAYAMA, Chair



Record of Votes of the Committee on Labor

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 2140 HD1	Committee Referral: ECD, LAB, FIN	Date: 2/19/26
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The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.

The recommendation is to: Pass, unamended (as is) Pass, with amendments (HD) Hold
 Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)

LAB Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. SAYAMA, Jackson D. (C)	X			
2. LEE, Mike (VC)	X			
3. GARRETT, Andrew Takuya	X			
4. KAPELA, Jeanne	X			
5. KONG, Sam Satoru				X
6. REYES ODA, Julie	X			
TOTAL (6)	5			1

The recommendation is: Adopted Not Adopted
 If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation.
committee acronym(s)

Vice Chair's or designee's signature: