



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA

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February 26, 2026

The Honorable Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chairs Tarnas, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB1700 HD1- Relating to Housing

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities is in **SUPPORT of HB1700 HD1**, which includes housing projects for individuals with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs as eligible projects to apply for expedited permits.

Housing shortages disproportionately affect people with developmental disabilities, many of whom rely on stable, accessible housing to live safely in the community and receive necessary support. While funding is often the primary focus of housing policy, delays in permitting are a significant and frequently overlooked barrier that can prevent otherwise viable projects from moving forward. By allowing housing projects serving individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs to qualify for expedited permitting, this measure helps reduce unnecessary delays for urgently needed housing.

This bill represents an important step in recognizing disability-inclusive housing as essential community infrastructure, helping communities better meet the housing needs of people with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs.

As this measure is implemented, the Council looks forward to continued collaboration with disability stakeholders, housing agencies, developers, and permitting authorities to help ensure that projects benefiting from expedited permitting incorporate meaningful accessibility, usability, and inclusive design.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit **supporting HB1700 HD1**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus, Executive Administrator



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

Ka 'Oihana Ho'oka'a'ike no ka Po'e Kīnānā

1010 Richards Street, Rm. 118 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
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February 26, 2026

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

House Bill 1700 House Draft 1 – Relating to Housing

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1700 House Draft 1 – Relating to Housing. This bill includes housing projects for individuals with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs as eligible projects to apply for expedited permits. It repeals 6/30/2031 and is effective 7/1/3000.

Allowing expedited permits for projects designed for individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs allows individuals to age in place instead of placement in community care foster family homes and expanded adult residential care homes. Due to the shortage of care facilities, it is important that projects such as these are not unnecessarily delayed. These projects ensure that individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs are able to live independently.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

KRISTINE PAGANO
Acting Executive Director

HB-1700-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 5:59:32 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support this excellent idea.



February 26, 2026

House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Rep. David Tarnas, Chair
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

RE: HB1700 HD1, Relating to Housing

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee –

Navian Hawaii is a nonprofit organization supporting the needs of Hawai'i's aging population, including through hospice, palliative care, and integrated support services. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of** HB1700 HD1, Relating to Housing. This bill would include housing projects for individuals with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs as eligible projects to apply for expedited permits.

Hawai'i is undergoing a major demographic shift, with a rapidly aging population that will have profound implications for our healthcare infrastructure. In 2023, over 21% of Hawai'i's residents were aged 65 and older – a proportion that has been increasing and is projected to reach one in four by 2035. The fastest-growing segment includes those over 80 years old, a group that will require intensive levels of care, including skilled nursing, palliative, and hospice services.

As this trend continues, Hawai'i will face a dramatic rise in demand for inpatient and residential care facilities. Yet at present, constructing such facilities is exceptionally difficult due in large part to delays in the permitting process. One of our projects, on Gulick Ave, is expected to be stuck for two years in the Department of Planning and Permitting, critically delaying up to 20 beds from servicing our kūpuna. As our industry works to significantly increase the availability of beds, the problem will only worsen.

Expedited permitting for housing projects targeting individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs is a critical first step in addressing systemic inefficiencies. This will in turn support better health outcomes, offering more beds for the most vulnerable members of our population.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

February 26, 2026

TO: Chair Todd and Members of the House on Finance
RE: HB 1700 HD1, Relating to Housing

Dear Chair Todd and Committee Members,

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a nonprofit dedicated to creating opportunities for Hawai'i's next generation by ending the workforce housing shortage.

We strongly support House Bill 1700 HD1. This measure allows projects serving individuals with disabilities and those with access and functional needs to qualify for expedited permitting processes.

Expedited permitting is a proven strategy to reduce development delays and costs, which can be particularly burdensome for projects serving vulnerable populations. By explicitly including these housing projects, this measure addresses longstanding barriers that have limited the availability of accessible units and slowed progress toward a more inclusive housing landscape. This approach aligns with best practices in other jurisdictions that have sought to streamline development for underserved communities.

Let's expand housing opportunities for everyone. **Please advance House Bill 1700 HD1.**

Thank you,



Lee Wang
Executive Director
Housing Hawai'i's Future
lee@hawaiisfuture.org



Perry Arrasmith
Director of Policy
Housing Hawai'i's Future
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www.AlohaILHawaii.org

Feb 24, 2026

MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

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The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: HB1700 HD1, Related to Housing

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) respectfully submits testimony in **support of HB1700 HD1 with recommendations.**

HB1700 HD1 amends section 46-90, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to include housing projects for individuals with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs as eligible for expedited permit review in each county. This clarification recognizes that permitting delays can disproportionately affect projects serving populations with heightened vulnerability.

For individuals with disabilities, stable and accessible housing is foundational to health, independence, employment, and community integration. Delays in permitting may prolong housing insecurity, delay the development of accessible units, and limit opportunities for individuals to live in the least restrictive and most appropriate settings.

The bill's inclusion of "individuals with access and functional needs" reflects an understanding that vulnerability may arise from disability, age, transportation limitations, language barriers, or financial constraints. Housing inequities often intersect across multiple social and economic factors, and expedited review for projects serving these communities can help reduce systemic barriers.

Housing access challenges are particularly acute in rural communities such as the Ka'ū district on Hawaii Island, where long travel distances, limited public transportation infrastructure, and geographic isolation compound barriers for individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs. Data gathered



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during AILH's accessible transportation planning efforts in Ka'ū highlighted significant service gaps, including limited transit availability and extended travel times for medical appointments, employment, and essential services. When housing development serving individuals with disabilities is delayed in rural districts, residents may be forced to relocate far from community supports or remain in inaccessible units. Expedited permitting for housing projects serving these populations may help mitigate geographic inequities and support community-based living in underserved regions.

AILH respectfully offers the following recommendations:

First, expedited permitting should not compromise compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Housing Act, state accessibility standards, or county building codes. Speed must not come at the expense of accessibility, safety, or civil rights protections.

In addition, while HB1700 HD1 focuses on expediting new housing projects, it is important to recognize that much of Hawaii's existing housing stock remains inaccessible to individuals with mobility, sensory, or other disabilities. Expedited pathways for projects serving individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs present an opportunity to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable units statewide. As the Legislature considers housing equity more broadly, continued attention to accessibility standards in both new construction and rehabilitation efforts will be critical to ensuring meaningful housing choice.

Second, the Legislature may wish to consider establishing reporting requirements during the bill's effective period prior to repeal in 2031. Data collection regarding the number, type, and geographic distribution of projects receiving expedited status would support informed evaluation and ensure the provision is meeting its intended equity goals.

Third, clear guidance should be provided to counties regarding eligibility criteria to promote consistent application statewide and prevent uneven implementation.

Finally, housing equity has particular significance within Native Hawaiian communities, where multigenerational living arrangements, rural geographic barriers, and affordability constraints intersect. Expediting housing projects that serve individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs



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may contribute to reducing longstanding disparities in housing access and stability.

HB1700 HD1 advances equitable access to housing development processes. With careful implementation, transparency measures, and continued attention to accessibility standards, it can strengthen Hawaii's commitment to inclusive and accessible housing opportunities.

AILH respectfully urges passage with the above recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

Roxanne Bolden
Executive Director



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

ALS Network

Formerly ALS Golden West

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Hawaii State House of Representatives

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Thursday, February 26, 2026

2:00 PM

Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee:

The ALS Network respectfully submits testimony in strong support of HB 1700 HD1, Relating to Housing. This bill would allow individuals with disabilities to apply for expedited building permits for eligible projects intended to improve accessibility and safety.

ALS Network is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization serving individuals and families living with ALS in Hawaii. Through Care, Research, and Advocacy, we work to ensure people affected by ALS have access to comprehensive support, advance scientific progress toward treatments and cures, and promote policies that strengthen access to care. In Hawaii, our focus includes providing direct care services and support to families navigating this devastating disease. On behalf of the communities we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a progressive, fatal neuromuscular disease that gradually robs individuals of their ability to walk, speak, swallow, and eventually breathe. As mobility declines, home environments that were once safe and functional quickly become inaccessible and hazardous. Doorways become too narrow for wheelchairs, bathrooms lack roll-in access, and entryways without ramps can confine individuals to their homes.

HB 1700 HD1 would help individuals with ALS and other debilitating conditions make timely home modifications that improve accessibility and safety. For many families facing ALS, the costs associated with modifying a home—such as installing ramps, widening doorways, retrofitting bathrooms with roll-in showers, lowering countertops, or adding stair lifts—can be significant and often arise unexpectedly after diagnosis.

Because ALS progresses rapidly, timing is critical. Delays in the ability to modify a home can result in preventable falls, hospitalizations, or premature institutionalization. Enabling individuals to make accessibility improvements in a timely manner helps preserve independence, dignity, and quality of life, while supporting aging and care in the community and reducing strain on caregivers and the broader health care system.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Sheri Strahl



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HB-1700-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 3:39:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lila Mower	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support.

HB-1700-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:46:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Mahalo.

HB-1700-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:24:34 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jackie Keefe and I am in **strong support of HB1700 HD1**, which includes housing projects for individuals with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs as eligible projects to apply for expedited permits.

I worked for the past 14 months as an Inclusive Recovery Advocacy Specialist for Lahaina wildfire survivors. In this work, I have had the opportunity to learn about our disability community from some of the folks who have experience navigating their most stubborn barriers.

One thing I've learned is that we do not set up our disability community for success because we do not invest in them. Whether we're talking about our built environment, support services, healthcare, or otherwise, we have a long way to go towards creating an inclusive community in Hawai'i.

Our disability community severely lacks inclusive housing, and this bill would create an important pathway towards expediting this sort of project.
Please pass HB1700 HD1!

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

HB-1700-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:44:21 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

1700 HB RELATING TO HOUSING.