

**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846
Fax: (808) 587-2824
Web: <https://planning.hawaii.gov/>

Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Monday, February 23, 2026, 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

in consideration of
HB 1964, HD 1
RELATING TO THE STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports and offers comments on HB 1964, HD 1**, which implements certain recommendations of the SPEED Task Force. Requires the State Building Code Council (SBCC) to provide annual training to state and county permitting agency employees, and appropriates funds for training, subject to a matching funds requirement from the counties.

OPSD recognizes that professional development and specialized training for permitting staff are essential tools for accelerating the permitting process statewide. By ensuring that plan reviewers, inspectors, and other permitting staff are aligned on the latest building codes, digital tools, and best practices, we can significantly reduce interpretation errors and administrative bottlenecks that currently delay vital projects.

Accelerating the permitting process is a foundational component of Governor Green's housing initiatives, including the Ke Ala Hou strategy. Housing production cannot meet the urgent needs of our community if the regulatory path remains opaque or inconsistent. This measure directly supports the State's goal of streamlining development to lower costs and increase the supply of affordable units. OPSD believes the State Building Code Council is best equipped to provide this training, as they serve as the central body responsible for adopting and amending the uniform standards that govern all construction in Hawai'i. Their technical expertise ensures that training is accurate, up-to-date, and consistent across all jurisdictions.

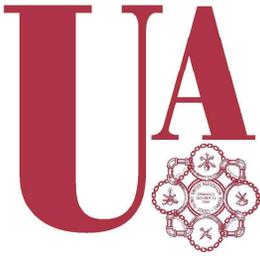
However, **OPSD offers the comment** that in order to effectively implement the training mandates proposed in HB 1964, HD 1, the State Building Code Council must be fully active and operational. We note that the SBCC has faced significant challenges in recent years, including periods where it has not met regularly or promulgated code updates due to a lack of dedicated staff and the impact of various emergency proclamations. Official records indicate that the

HB 1964 HD1 RELATING TO THE STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL - SUPPORT
State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
February 23, 2026

SBCC's regular cycle of meeting and administrative rulemaking was largely suspended or deferred as recently as 2024 and 2025.

To address these operational hurdles, **OPSD would like to highlight** a critical budget request under AGS-892 from the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS). This seeks \$326,882 in general funds to support two full-time equivalent (FTE) positions and other current expenses for the State Building Code Council. Restoring the SBCC's functional capacity is a prerequisite for the success of HB 1964, HD 1. Without the staff and resources to facilitate regular rulemaking and oversight, any mandated training program will lack the necessary foundation to be effective.

OPSD respectfully asks the committee to pass HB 1964, HD 1 to improve the efficiency of Hawai'i's permitting systems. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



Founded 1889

PLUMBERS AND FITTERS LOCAL 675 UNITED ASSOCIATION



February 16, 2026

Hawaii State House of Representatives

Committee on Finance

Representative Chris Todd, Chair; Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Reference: **House Bill 1964 H.D. 1, Relating to the State Building Code Council**

Hearing: Monday, February 23, 2026, Room 308 at 2:00 pm

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Committee Members;

The Plumbers and Fitters UA Local 675 ("Local 675") are one of three licensed crafts in Hawai'i's construction industry. Its member apprentices and journeymen are guided by and licensed in accordance with the Uniform Plumbing Code whose primary purpose is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

Local 675 supports House Bill 1964 H.D. 1 which implements recommendations from the Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED) task force established pursuant to Act 133, SLH 2025, to require the State Building Code Council to provide annual training to state and county permitting agency employees.

Local 675 understands the complexities of our various building codes and the value of ongoing training to ensure building codes and standards are properly and consistently applied to not only serve its primary intent and purpose to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, but to do so in a manner that minimizes costs and improves efficiencies that support efforts to maximize much needed housing for Hawai'i residents.

Should HB 1964 H.D. 1 be adopted, Local 675 stands ready and commits to working with its industry partners to assist and support the State Building Code Council in any way possible.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 308
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2026 AT 2:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Finance

SUPPORT HB1964 HD1 RELATING TO THE STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports HB1964 HD1 because it advances efforts to address longstanding barriers in Hawai'i's housing development process, particularly those related to permitting delays. As attainable housing and rentals have been one of our top priorities for years, we recognize that efficient and consistent permitting is essential to accelerating housing delivery and addressing the state's critical housing shortage.

Requiring the State Building Code Council to provide annual training for permitting agency employees is a positive step toward ensuring that staff are well-versed in current building codes and best practices. Improved training can help minimize errors, reduce inconsistencies, and foster a more predictable permitting environment for developers and homebuilders. These improvements align with our goal of streamlining permitting processes, which is crucial for controlling costs and expediting the construction of affordable and workforce housing.

The bill's provision for state funding, matched by county contributions, demonstrates a collaborative approach to capacity building. By investing in the professional development of permitting staff across jurisdictions, the state and counties can collectively address bottlenecks that have historically slowed housing projects. This approach supports the broader objective of making housing more accessible and affordable for local families, while also supporting economic recovery and resilience.

We appreciate the work of the SPEED Task Force and the Legislature's attention to these critical process improvements and urge continued focus on measures that facilitate timely housing delivery. Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support of HB1964 HD1.

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.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1964, HD1
Relating to the State Building Code Council**

**Before the House Committee on Finance
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair**

February 22, 2026

Submitted by:
Legislative Advocacy Group
American Institute of Architects, Hawai'i State Council

Position: Support

The American Institute of Architects

AIA Hawaii State Council
828 Fort Street Mall, Suite 100
Honolulu, HI 96813

T (808) 628-7243
contact@aiahonolulu.org
aiahonolulu.org/AIAHawaiiStateCouncil

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The American Institute of Architects Hawai'i State Council (AIA Hawai'i) supports HB 1964, HD1, which requires the State Building Code Council (SBCC) to provide annual training to state and county permitting agency employees.

AIA Hawai'i represents over 900 architects across the State. Our members work daily with county permitting departments and are directly affected by building code interpretation, enforcement, and implementation.

We agree with the findings of the SPEED Task Force that consistent training on new building codes and permitting procedures is necessary. In Hawai'i, building codes are adopted at the state level but administered at the county level. Without centralized technical guidance and regular training, code provisions can be interpreted differently across jurisdictions. This creates uncertainty for both reviewers and applicants, often resulting in additional clarification, redesign, and longer permit timelines. Statewide training and shared technical resources can help establish more uniform expectations and improve the predictability of the permitting process.

However, AIA Hawai'i respectfully notes that this bill is **only one piece of a larger solution necessary to restore an effective statewide building code system.**

Training alone will not resolve permitting delays or inconsistent enforcement if the State Building Code Council is not fully operational and coordinated with the broader building code framework. Hawai'i currently faces a structural problem: the SBCC has struggled to meet regularly, update codes in a timely manner, and provide uniform statewide guidance. Without an active and functioning council, there is no consistent authority to create the training materials, interpret new codes, or maintain updated technical guidance.

For that reason, AIA Hawai'i urges the Legislature to view HB 1964 in coordination with other measures this session addressing the building code system, including HB 1725 and HB 2215. Those measures address code applicability and council functionality, which are necessary for this training requirement to be effective.

In short, training is valuable, but it must be paired with:

- a functioning SBCC
- timely code adoption
- clear point-in-time code applicability
- consistent statewide interpretation

If enacted together, these efforts can significantly improve permitting predictability, reduce redesign and construction cost escalation, and support housing and infrastructure development across Hawai'i.

AIA Hawai'i appreciates the Legislature's continued attention to improving the State's building code system and respectfully requests your support for HB 1964, HD1 as part of a comprehensive package of SBCC reforms.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lorena S. Yamamoto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lorena S. Yamamoto, AIA
AIA Hawai'i State Council, Vice President



February 23, 2026

Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Support for 1964, HD1, RELATING TO STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL

**Monday, February 23, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308, and VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawai'i (LURF) is a private research and trade organization founded in 1979, whose members include major Hawai'i landowners, developers, utility companies, and land use professionals. LURF's mission is to research, educate, and advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, laws, and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth, agriculture, housing, renewable energy, commercial and industrial uses, health care, and tourism, while safeguarding Hawai'i's significant natural, historic, and cultural resources, public health, and safety.

LURF members have collectively helped to build the most market and affordable housing in Hawai'i utilizing building codes and working collaboratively with state and county administrations and agencies. LURF and its members have served on many working groups relating to the State Building Code and State Building Code Council.

LURF is in **strong support of HB 1964, HD1**, which Implements certain recommendations of the State's task force for Simplifying Permitting For Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED); requires the State Building Code Council to provide annual training to state and county permitting agency employees; and appropriates funds for the training, subject to a matching requirement from the counties.

According to SPEED, building permit errors and delays in issuance of building permits were persistent challenges that prevented the timely construction of housing, infrastructure, and other projects important to Hawaii's economy. In its 2025 Final Report, SPEED recommended additional training and professional development for state and county permitting agency employees to improve the permitting process. LURF believes that this bill will provide opportunities for such training, which will reduce permitting errors and assist with improvement of the overall permit issuance backlog.

Based on the reasons stated above, LURF is in **strong support of HB 1964, HD1**, and respectfully requests your favorable consideration of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in **support** of this proposed measure.

HB-1964-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 4:35:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Comment

DPP TO CREATE A CO-HORT TO ADDRESS SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED WORKERS

1964 HB RELATING TO THE STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL.

HB-1964-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2026 8:21:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT!!!

HB-1964-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 10:16:56 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the FIN Committee,

I am submitting comments as an individual.

I currently serve as:

President, Kokua Council, Vice President, Hawaii Alliance for Retired Americans (HARA), Director, Keoni Ana AOA, Member, Good Government Caucus, Member, Kupuna Caucus

I previously served on the Waikiki Neighborhood Board from Jan. 2023 to June 2025.

The Director of the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) should be required to know and understand building codes, and the importance of all inspections needed during the permitting process. The Director should have to pass a comprehensive exam before they are appointed.

My personal experience with the Director and her staff is that she and others within DPP do not have the fundamental knowledge or expertise necessary to do their jobs. And most concerning is that projects are being allowed to move forward without permits and without proper inspections.

Respectfully,

Gregory Misakian