

HB-2151-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2026 1:30:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/4/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Climate Protectors Hawaii **SUPPORT** this bill facilitating the use of hempcrete.

Hempcrete is a significantly more sustainable, often carbon-negative building material compared to traditional cement, as it sequesters 8–15 metric tons of CO2 per hectare during growth and continues to absorb CO2 while curing. It provides superior insulation and requires 3x less energy to produce.

Please pass this bill!

Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)



To: The House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 2pm

In support of HB2151 HD1

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and JHA Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawai'i chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **supports HB2151 HD1** that specifies that no state or county building code shall prohibit the use of hempcrete. This measure also authorizes building officials to approve hempcrete construction that meets applicable safety and performance standards.

This measure will help reduce greenhouse gases, which is critically needed in our fight against the climate crisis. Moreover, with the escalating construction costs Hawai'i is experiencing, hempcrete construction offers a means of promoting sustainable housing.

Plant-based products such as industrial hempcrete are excellent alternatives to replace carbon-intensive materials used today such as concrete and steel. We need to target all emission sources, especially cost-effective low hanging fruit like this.

Please pass HB2151 HD1 that would support the development of sustainable, affordable, and resilient housing in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity testify.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



**KOHALA COAST
COMMUNITY FUND**
FORMERLY KOI POND BRIDGES

Harvey Stone

Executive Director

Kohala Coast Community Fund

[harvey@kohalacoastfund.org / 360 961 0177]

March 3, 2026

Chair and Members

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Hawai'i State Capitol

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: STRONG SUPPORT for HB2151 – Relating to Building Materials (Hempcrete)

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Kohala Coast Community Fund, I write in strong support of HB2151.

This bill represents an important step toward aligning Hawai'i's building policies with our values of sustainability, economic resilience, and local self-reliance.

HB2151 is Important Because It:

- **Removes unnecessary barriers** that currently limit the use of hempcrete — while maintaining full safety and building code oversight.
- **Expands options for builders and homeowners** without mandating use.
- **Encourages innovation** in locally appropriate construction materials.

Workforce & Economic Development

HB2151 supports:

- **New agricultural jobs** through the cultivation of industrial hemp.
- **Processing and manufacturing jobs** in hemp decortication and material production.
- **Construction trade jobs** through training in hemp-based building systems.
- **A circular local economy** — growing, processing, and building here in Hawai'i rather than importing materials from thousands of miles away.

Workforce development without economic opportunity does not create lasting impact. This bill helps align both.

Regenerative Agriculture

Industrial hemp:

- Improves soil health and can assist with bioremediation.
- Grows quickly and efficiently.
- Creates a scalable pathway for regenerative agriculture integrated with construction.

This is an opportunity to connect agriculture, industry, and housing in a mutually reinforcing system.

Housing Resilience & Affordability

Hempcrete structures are:

- Fire-resistant
- Mold-resistant
- Insect-resistant
- Breathable and well-insulated
- Durable in tropical climates

When sourced and produced locally, hemp-based materials can reduce shipping costs, increase supply stability, and contribute to more affordable homes over time.

A Practical Step Forward

HB2151 does not weaken safety standards. It simply ensures that hempcrete cannot be categorically excluded and allows building officials to approve projects that meet applicable codes.

This is a prudent, forward-thinking measure that advances Hawai'i's goals in sustainability, workforce development, economic resilience, and housing.

I respectfully urge your support for HB2151.

Mahalo for your leadership and consideration.

Respectfully,

Harvey Stone
Executive Director
Kohala Coast Community Fund



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March 4, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2151, HD1
RELATING TO BUILDING MATERIALS

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 2151, HD1, which recognizes hempcrete as an allowable non-structural building material under state law and clarifies that no state or county building code shall prohibit the use of hempcrete. Provides the authority for building officials to approve hempcrete construction that meets applicable safety and performance standards.

Hempcrete represents a value-added opportunity for local farmers. Industrial hemp can be grown as a rotational or diversified crop and processed locally to support construction, housing, and infrastructure needs. Developing markets for hemp-based materials strengthens farm viability, supports agricultural diversification, and keeps more of the economic value generated from agriculture within the state.

Hempcrete and other plant-based building materials also offer potential benefits for Hawai'i, including reduced reliance on imported construction materials and increased resilience in the building supply chain. Allowing these materials to be used, subject to applicable safety and performance standards, supports innovation without mandating their use or displacing existing construction options.

We appreciate that HB 2151, HD1 removes barriers to adopting an emerging, agriculture-based material that can support both the agriculture and the construction sectors.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2151-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:47:47 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/4/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!! MAHALO!

HB-2151-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 6:35:39 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/4/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Drew Erickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I submit testimony in strong support of this bill clarifying hempcrete as an approved non structural building material under Hawaii law.

Hawaii faces a documented housing shortage of more than 50,000 units. Construction costs rank among the highest in the nation. A large share of those costs comes from imported materials. Every shipment increases price volatility and supply risk.

Hempcrete addresses several of these pressures at once.

Hempcrete is a non load bearing insulation and wall infill material used across Europe and North America. It offers strong fire resistance. Lime based hempcrete assemblies have achieved one and two hour fire ratings in standardized testing. It resists mold and pests. It regulates moisture through vapor permeability, which suits Hawaii’s humid climate.

Most important, hempcrete stores carbon. Studies show hemp based building materials can sequester more CO2 during growth and curing than is emitted during production. The building sector accounts for roughly 39 percent of global carbon emissions. Materials matter.

This bill does not weaken safety standards. It does not authorize structural use. It does not bypass building review. It clarifies that hempcrete cannot be categorically prohibited and allows approval when it meets fire, energy, durability, and health requirements already enforced in code.

Builders today face uncertainty. Many avoid hempcrete because of inconsistent interpretation across counties. That uncertainty slows innovation and increases cost. Clear statutory language reduces friction without reducing oversight.

Hawaii also imports the vast majority of its construction inputs. Shipping disruptions during the pandemic increased material prices by double digit percentages nationwide. Local agricultural inputs reduce exposure to those shocks. Industrial hemp offers potential for in state cultivation and processing, supporting farmers and rural economies while supplying the construction sector.

Other jurisdictions have already acted. States such as Colorado and California have adopted hemp building provisions aligned with the International Residential Code appendix on hemp lime construction. Hawaii should not fall behind.

This measure supports affordable housing, climate resilience, and economic diversification in one policy step. It maintains structural safeguards. It respects existing code authority. It removes unnecessary barriers.

I urge this committee to pass this bill and provide Hawaii's builders, farmers, and homeowners with clear authority to use safe, sustainable materials.

Thank you for your consideration.

Chair and Members
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: STRONG SUPPORT for HB2151 – Relating to Building Materials (Hempcrete)

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of HB2151, which would remove building code barriers to the use of hempcrete as a construction material in Hawaii. This bill represents a smart, forward-looking step that aligns with Hawaii's sustainability goals, supports local agriculture, and expands the toolkit available to builders and homeowners across our state. I'm a local architect and have designed a number of hempcrete projects in Washington State & British Columbia as well as what would be the first hempcrete home on Hawaii island (currently working with the building department. I see this building material as a natural fit for Hawaii for the reasons listed below.

Removing Unnecessary Barriers to Innovation

HB2151 specifies that no state or county building code shall prohibit the use of hempcrete, a composite material made from the inner fibers of the hemp plant mixed with lime and water. By ensuring that hempcrete is not categorically excluded from use, this bill opens the door to a proven, sustainable material that has been used successfully in construction projects worldwide. The bill does not mandate its use — it simply ensures that builders and homeowners have the option to choose it.

Safety and Performance Standards Remain in Place

Importantly, HB2151 does not bypass safety oversight. The bill authorizes building officials to approve hempcrete construction that meets applicable safety and performance standards. This ensures that any hempcrete project will still be subject to the same rigorous review as any other building material — protecting the public while eliminating blanket, outdated prohibitions.

Environmental and Economic Benefits for Hawaii

Hempcrete offers significant environmental advantages that are especially relevant to Hawaii's sustainability commitments. It is carbon-sequestering, meaning it actually captures and stores CO2 over its lifetime. It also provides excellent insulation, is resistant to mold and pests, and is highly durable in humid climates — making it particularly well-suited to Hawaii's tropical environment. Allowing hempcrete in construction also creates a potential market for locally grown hemp, supporting Hawaii's agricultural sector and reducing our dependence on imported building materials.

A Step Toward a More Resilient Hawaii

As Hawaii faces rising construction costs, a housing shortage, and the urgent need to reduce our carbon footprint, it is critical that we embrace sustainable building alternatives. HB2151 is a practical, low-risk measure that empowers local builders with more choices while maintaining safety oversight. I urge the Committee to support and advance this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully,
Deborah Todd
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