

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT
KA 'OIHANA HO'OLĀLĀ KŪKULU HALE A ME KA HO'OKELE 'ĀINA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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April 6, 2026

The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair
and Members of the Committee on Water and Land
Hawaii'i House of Representatives
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**SUBJECT: Comments on House Concurrent Resolution 98, H.D. 1 /
House Resolution 90, H.D. 1**

Dear Chair Hashem and Committee Members:

The Department of Housing and Land Management (DHLM) appreciates the intent of HCR 98, H.D. 1 / HR 90, H.D. 1, which requests development of a housing pattern book to help streamline permit approvals and reduce regulatory barriers for safe, affordable, and well-designed homes. The resolution contemplates pre-reviewed residential designs and streamlined permitting for projects that use approved plans. DHLM also appreciates the resolution's emphasis on collaboration and on incorporating culturally appropriate and climate-responsive design elements.

As noted by the resolution, other jurisdictions have adopted housing pattern books in an attempt to improve predictability, reduce some design costs, and support faster housing production.

DHLM appreciates the amendments made to HCR 98, H.D. 1 / HR 90, H.D. 1, which help ensure that any pattern book developed as a result of the resolution is closely connected to the permitting and approval process.

DHLM believes this concept is worth exploring and is generally supportive of that effort. At the same time, DHLM believes further assessment is needed before it can be viewed as a near-term City priority. Successful implementation would require specialized design, technical, and administrative capacity that may not currently exist in-house and may require consultant support or other resources. It would also depend on coordination with and prioritization by other departments. DHLM therefore believes this concept should be considered alongside other potential housing initiatives based on feasibility, coordination, resource needs, and likely impact.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Gavin Thornton, Director of Housing Policy, at (808) 768-4277.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin D. Auger', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin D. Auger
Director

April 7, 2026, 10 a.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 411 and Videoconference

To: House Committee on Water & Land
Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR98 HD1/HR90 HD1 — REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO DEVELOP A COUNTYWIDE HOUSING PATTERN BOOK TO STREAMLINE PERMIT APPROVALS AND REDUCE REGULATORY BARRIERS FOR SAFE, AFFORDABLE, AND WELL-DESIGNED HOMES ACROSS OAHU

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and other Committee Members,

The Grassroot Institute **supports** [HCR98 HD1/HR90 HD1](#), which urges the City and County of Honolulu to produce a book of preapproved designs in order to speed up approval and construction of new housing.

Approving this resolution could help address some of the regulatory delays that slow housing growth and add to the price of housing.

According to “The Hawai’i Housing Factbook,” produced by The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai’i, the median permit processing time across the state between mid-2018 and mid-2023 was 161 days.¹

A recent report from the Grassroot Institute, “[Seven low cost ways to speed up permitting in Hawaii](#),” provides a potential road map for permit reform. The first recommendation in the report is to provide preapproved

¹ Justin Tyndall, Daniela Bond-Smith and Rachel Inafuku, “[The Hawai’i Housing Factbook](#),” The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai’i, June 28, 2023, p. 19.

design plans for homes, as they allow builders to avoid permit approval delays and eliminate the need to pay architects to produce new plans.²

Hawai'i County already offers preapproved plans. Builders who use them and already have any needed approvals from other county agencies can hear back from the county Department of Public Works within six working days of submission.³

Builders in Hawaii County have attested to the effectiveness of preapproved plans, noting that approvals are faster and that the certainty they provide makes it easier to obtain nonprofit or government funding for new projects.⁴

By issuing a book of preapproved plans, Honolulu would help reduce the burden on permitting department staff while also reducing permit delays and encouraging housing growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of strategic campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

² Jonathan Helton, "[Seven low cost ways to speed up permitting in Hawaii](#)," Grassroot Institute of Hawaii, October 2024, p. 5.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.