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Mar 27, 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.

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The Honorable Luke A. Evslin, Chair
House Committee on Housing
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: HCR82 – Requesting the State Building Code Council to Develop and Adopt Basic Shelter Standards to Enable Low-Cost, Rapid-Development Housing Solutions.

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) is a cross-disability Center for Independent Living that supports people of all ages and all disability types to live in the community with dignity, autonomy, and self-determination. AILH **supports the intent of HCR82** and offers comments to ensure that any “basic shelter standards” fully include disabled residents and align with Independent Living principles.

Support for low-cost, rapid community housing

HCR82 accurately recognizes that Hawaii faces urgent housing shortages compounded by high construction costs, labor constraints, and limited buildable land, and that current code requirements can effectively block low-cost, rapid-deployment options such as kauhale, Quonset huts, and prefabricated accessory dwelling units. For many disabled residents and kupuna, these lower-cost, quickly deployable forms of housing can be the only realistic pathway to staying in their communities rather than falling into homelessness or institutional settings.

The resolution’s proposal for a new category of basic shelter standards, restricted to projects built or conveyed by government agencies or nonprofit organizations, has potential to create dignified, low-cost housing



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while minimizing speculative misuse. From an Independent Living perspective, this is promising so long as the standards do not treat disabled residents as an “afterthought” and instead embed accessibility and usability from the start.

Accessibility must be explicit in basic shelter standards

Because basic shelter standards are intended to be “minimum” rather than full code, it is essential that disability access is not inadvertently reduced below what is needed for safe, usable, community-based housing. People with mobility, sensory, cognitive, psychiatric, and chronic health disabilities are disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness and housing instability, and rapid-deployment projects will directly serve this cross-disability population.

AILH respectfully urges that, as the State Building Code Council develops the Basic Shelter Appendix using references such as HUD Housing Quality Standards, FEMA and humanitarian shelter standards, and ICC off-site construction standards, it explicitly incorporate:

- Accessible routes from entries to sleeping, bathroom, and communal areas, including ramps or graded paths where needed.
- Basic features that prevent falls and support aging in place, such as appropriate grab bar backing, safe bathroom layouts, and lighting.
- Flexible design to allow reasonable modifications or additional accessibility features later, without requiring complete reconstruction.

Embedding these elements at the “basic” level respects disabled people’s right to live in non-institutional, community settings and helps avoid creating a two-tier system where low-income and disabled residents are offered only substandard, unsafe shelter.

Consultation with disability and IL stakeholders



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HCR82 already asks the State Building Code Council to consult county building officials, housing advocates, nonprofit organizations, and industry stakeholders to ensure that basic shelter standards reflect Hawaii's climate, cultural context, and resilience needs. AILH strongly recommends that this consultation explicitly include cross-disability organizations, Centers for Independent Living, and people with disabilities who have lived experience in kauhale, ADUs, and other rapid-deployment housing.

Including these voices will help the Council:

- Identify practical, low-cost design choices that make units safely usable for people with diverse disabilities from day one.
- Avoid unintentionally creating new physical or programmatic barriers in the name of speed or cost savings.

Closing

HCR82 is a timely opportunity to create durable tools for low-cost, rapid-deployment housing that can operate beyond temporary emergency proclamations. By making disability access and Independent Living principles explicit within the Basic Shelter Appendix, Hawaii can ensure that these solutions are not only fast and affordable, but also safe, dignified, and truly inclusive for all residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Roxanne Bolden
Executive Director



The Plumbers and Fitters UA Local 675

1109 Bethel Street, Lower Level, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
'A'ohē hana nui ke alu 'ia

March 27, 2026

House Committee on Housing

Representative Luke A. Evslin, Chair and Representative Miyake, Vice Chair

Reference: **House Concurrent Resolution 82/ House Resolution 74**

Hearing: Friday, March 27, 2026, Room 430 at 9:30 am

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 ("UPC"), published by the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials ("IAPMO") who's stated purpose is providing minimum requirements and standards for the protection of public health, safety, and welfare.

Local 675 OPPOSES HCR82/ HR74 as written, which requests the state building code council to develop and adopt basic shelter standards to enable low-cost, rapid - deployment housing solutions, **but offer amendments that we believe achieves the underlying objectives without jeopardizing the health, safety, and welfare of the public.**

Although we support the general intent of these resolutions, we believe they undermine and circumvent well-established and widely accepted "**minimum**" standards that ensure the protection of public health, safety, and welfare, and further believe that cost and expedience cannot and should not outweigh life, health, and safety concerns of the public.

On the heels of the several recent disasters that have crippled numerous areas of our state, the cry for improved resiliency often echoed post disaster should be met with swift action to "harden" and improve our standards, not diminish and "weaken" them.

HCR82/HR74 as written, pre-empts and ignores efforts of the recently concluded SPEED Task Force and it's recommendation for a working group to fully and collaboratively discuss issues raised in these resolutions. **Rapid deployment of emergency shelter that do not meet minimum building codes and standards should NOT be made permanent, as this objective can be achieved through executive**

powers without requiring legislation or permanent policy changes that lower living standards and resiliency.

Efforts are already underway at the county level to provide “lower-cost”, locally sourced, locally constructed by locally licensed tradesmen, locally inspected modular homes that meet local building codes and standards that can be efficiently constructed off-site and quickly deployed.

As written, HCR82/HR74 will incentivize the import of foreign products while exporting associated economic benefits, further causing the outflow of local workforce opportunities and living wages, and completely disregard our locally adopted state building codes and standards, which will increase public health, safety, and welfare risks.

For these reasons, we strongly urge this committee to DEFER these resolutions, however should this committee decide to move these resolutions forward, we respectfully request that you incorporate the following amendments in a subsequent draft, which allow the recommendations of the SPEED Task Force to occur and for the ideas and concepts presented in these resolutions to be duly considered.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026

H.C.R. NO.

82

REQUESTING THE STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL TO DEVELOP AND ADOPT BASIC SHELTER STANDARDS TO ENABLE LOW-COST, RAPID-DEPLOYMENT HOUSING SOLUTIONS.

WHEREAS, Hawaii continues to face urgent housing shortages, compounded by high construction costs, labor constraints, and limited buildable land; and

WHEREAS, the current State Building Code requires all new housing to comply with comprehensive standards, including energy-efficient windows, permanent insulation, and individual kitchens and bathrooms, which are appropriate for conventional housing but effectively prohibit low-cost, rapid-deployment housing solutions, such as single-wall plantation homes, Quonset huts, kauhale, and prefabricated accessory dwelling units (ADUs); and

WHEREAS, under gubernatorial emergency proclamations, temporary exemptions from full building code requirements have enabled innovative supportive housing models, including kauhale villages and the rapid deployment of prefabricated ADUs following the August 2023 Maui wildfires; and

WHEREAS, however, these solutions disappear when the emergency proclamations expire, leaving the State without durable tools to provide affordable and emergency housing; and

WHEREAS, section 107-25(6), Hawaii Revised Statutes, expressly authorizes the State

Building Code Council to adopt provisions based on nationally published codes or standards, including mechanical standards, hurricane-resistant standards, flood and tsunami standards, and other loss mitigation standards; and

WHEREAS, establishing a new category of basic shelter standards will enable the adoption of minimum standards that ensure housing is safe, sanitary, and structurally sound, while also allowing greater flexibility than full building code requirements; and

WHEREAS, adopting basic shelter standards would also provide a lawful framework for dignified, low-cost housing solutions, and restricting the use of basic shelter standards to projects built or conveyed by government agencies or nonprofit organizations would prevent speculative or profit-driven misuse; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026, the Senate concurring, that the State Building Code Council is requested to consider the development and adoption of basic shelter standards to enable low-cost, rapid-deployment housing solutions in accordance with the recommendations of the off-site working group; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Building Code Council is requested to consider the adoption, amendment, or update of the State Building Code pursuant to its authority under section 107-25(6), Hawaii Revised Statutes, to establish a Basic Shelter Appendix in accordance with the recommendations of the off-site working group; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Building Code Council, in accordance with the recommendations of the off-site working group, [is requested to] may consider the following [suitable] reference standards for the new Basic Shelter Appendix:

- (1) United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Housing Quality Standards (24 C.F.R. 982.401) and HUD Minimum Property Standards;
- (2) International Code Council Off-Site Construction Standards (ICC/MBI 1200, 1205, and 1210), including provisions for mechanical, electrical, plumbing, energy efficiency, and water conservation; and
- (3) Federal Emergency Management Agency and international humanitarian shelter standards, which are recognized benchmarks for emergency and supportive housing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Building Code Council is requested to consult with county building officials, housing advocates, nonprofit organizations, and industry stakeholders to ensure that the new basic shelter standards protect public health, safety, and welfare, and reflect Hawaii's climate, cultural context, and resilience needs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Comptroller, Chair of the State Building Code Council, Director of the Hawaii County Department of Public Works, Director of the Department of Planning and Permitting of the City and County of Honolulu, County Engineer of the Kauai County Department of Public Works, and Director of the Maui County Department of Public Works.

OFFERED BY: _____