



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

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 8:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

in consideration of
SB 2908, SD1
RELATING TO PERMITTING.

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development & Technology.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **offers the following comments with concerns on SB 2908, SD 1**, which requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to develop a statewide permitting intake platform implementing certain recommendations of the Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED) Task Force, and appropriates funds for the development of the platform, subject to a matching funds requirement from the counties.

SB 2908, SD 1 is a direct result of the recommendations put forth by the Building Permit Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) of the SPEED Task Force. OPSD recognizes the diligent work of the Task Force in identifying systemic bottlenecks that hinder timely development across the State. OPSD supports the intent of creating a statewide permitting intake platform to streamline the permitting process. We agree that a centralized, modernized system would provide much needed clarity for applicants and help drive the economic development goals of the State.

However, **OPSD has concerns**. We do not believe that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) is the right entity to effectuate this measure. While the economic goals are clear, permitting remains primarily the kuleana of the counties. Each jurisdiction possesses its own specific codes and regulatory requirements, and placing a state agency like DBEDT in a management role over these functions may create significant administrative and jurisdictional friction. For a platform of this scale to be effective, it must respect the authority of the counties and be housed within an entity better equipped to manage inter-jurisdictional regulatory frameworks.

Given the immense technical and regulatory complexity of consolidating disparate permitting workflows, **OPSD recommends that SB 2908, SD1 be amended** to instead establish

a temporary interagency task force, which could be administratively housed within OPSD. Developing a functional statewide permit intake platform is not merely a technical exercise; it requires the deep permitting expertise of state and county agencies—such as the Department of Health, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and county planning departments—whose specialized knowledge falls outside the current scope of DBEDT. A task force model would ensure that the resulting implementation plan is co-created by the entities responsible for permit review, thereby avoiding a one-size-fits-all digital solution that fails to account for the unique regulatory nuances of each jurisdiction.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on this measure.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2908 SD1
RELATING TO PERMITTING

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Ho‘omohala Waiwai a me ka ‘Enehana
(House Committee on Economic Development & Technology)

Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Malaki 13, 2026

10:00 am

Lumi 423

Aloha e Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS SB2908 SD1**, which implements recommendations of the SPEED Task Force to implement a statewide permitting intake platform.

OHA is the constitutionally established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians.¹ As part of our constitutional and statutory mandate, OHA regularly assesses the policies and practices of other agencies impacting on Native Hawaiians and conducts advocacy efforts on their behalf.² In this capacity, OHA regularly reviews statewide permit applications submitted to agencies and county planning departments for compliance.

A consistent challenge we encounter is that applications are often incomplete or lack key information necessary to assess potential impacts. If we cannot assess impacts, neither can agencies during important decision-making processes. A substantial portion of our communications with project proponents and agencies involves requesting additional materials or clarification before meaningful review can even begin. We understand that this issue is not unique but has been identified statewide among agencies

¹ Haw. Const. Art. XII § 5.

² See HRS § 10-3(4).

such as the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) and county planning departments, where incomplete submissions contribute to delay and inefficiency.

A centralized permitting intake platform that initially vets applications for completeness before statutory review timelines are triggered, and then distributes them to the appropriate approving agencies, would significantly improve coordination and efficiency. Ensuring that required information is provided at the outset would reduce avoidable back-and-forth, allow agencies to focus on substantive review, and create greater predictability for applicants and reviewing bodies alike. While the initial investment in a statewide platform may be substantial, it represents a forward-looking commitment to modernizing and streamlining Hawai‘i’s permitting process in a manner that benefits agencies, applicants, and the public.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully urges this committee to **PASS SB2908 SD1**.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue.



March 12, 2026

TO: Honorable Greggor Illagan, Chair
Honorable Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair
House Committee on Economic Development & Technology

FROM: Legislative Advocacy Committee
American Institute of Architects, Hawai'i State Council

Hawaii State Council
A Chapter of the
American Institute of Architects

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1.1.19 ver.

The American Institute of Architects Hawai'i State Council (AIA Hawai'i) appreciates the Legislature's continued efforts to improve Hawai'i's building permit process and address delays that impact housing delivery and economic development. While we understand the intent behind SB 2908 (companion HB 1968) to explore a statewide building permit intake system, AIA Hawai'i has significant concerns that the measure is premature and under-resourced as currently drafted. **AIA Hawai'i would like to provide testimony in Opposition and respectfully urges the Legislature to amend SB 2908 / HB 1968.** We can consider removing our opposition to this measure should the legislature consider the following which would amend the bill:

- The bill appropriates only \$50,000 to the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism and \$12,500 per county in matching funds. This level of funding is unlikely to support the development of a meaningful statewide system. Even preliminary work—such as permit intake design, pilot testing, user training, and ongoing system management—would require substantially greater resources.
- More importantly, integration with each county's existing permitting platform will be the most complex and costly component of any statewide intake system. Without adequate funding and clear coordination with county agencies, this proposal risks creating an additional layer in the permitting process rather than streamlining it.
- AIA Hawai'i also notes that no testimony from the counties has been submitted on this measure, despite the fact that counties retain primary responsibility for building permit review and issuance. Their input is critical before the Legislature considers implementing a statewide intake framework that would directly affect county permitting operations.
- Unless a system is fully integrated with county platforms, architects, engineers, contractors, and building owners may be required to navigate yet another digital system, adding complexity rather than efficiency to the permitting process.

For these reasons, AIA Hawai'i believes the Legislature should prioritize more developed recommendations from the State's SPEED Task Force that more directly support county permitting capacity and the building industry.

In particular, we support:

- **SB 2910 / HB 1964 HD1**, which appropriates funding to the State Building Code Council to provide building code training for permit reviewers across all counties; and
- **SB 3187**, which funds development of an off-site construction program recommended by the SPEED Task Force.

These measures address workforce capacity, code consistency, and construction innovation—areas where the State can make meaningful progress in reducing permitting delays and accelerating housing delivery. For these reasons, AIA Hawai'i respectfully urges the Legislature to amend the measure SB 2908 / HB 1968 or DEFER until there is clear county support, a well-defined implementation plan, and sufficient resources to develop a system that truly streamlines permitting statewide.

Respectfully submitted,
Melanie Islam, AIA, President, AIA Hawai'i



TESTIMONY OF DAVE ERDMAN
INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII

IN SUPPORT OF SB 2908 SD1 – RELATING TO PERMITTING

March 13, 2026 Conference Room 423

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee:

My name is Dave Erdman, Interim President and CEO of the Retail Merchants of Hawai‘i (RMH). RMH is a statewide nonprofit trade association representing retailers, shopping centers, restaurants operating within retail environments, and allied service providers across Hawai‘i.

RMH supports SB 2908 SD1, which requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to develop a statewide permitting intake platform based on recommendations of the SPEED Task Force.

Retailers frequently require permits for tenant improvements, store construction, renovations, signage, and other operational upgrades. Delays in the permitting process can significantly increase project costs, postpone store openings, and slow investments that support local jobs and economic activity.

A centralized digital permitting intake platform that screens applications for completeness and routes them to the appropriate agencies would help reduce unnecessary delays and improve coordination between state and county departments. Ensuring that applications are complete at the time of submission can help reduce repeated back-and-forth requests for additional information and allow agencies to focus more quickly on substantive review.

A more consistent and modern permitting intake system would benefit businesses of all sizes, including small retailers and local entrepreneurs who often face the greatest challenges navigating complex permitting processes. Improving efficiency and transparency in the permitting system will help support economic activity, job creation, and timely investment in Hawai‘i’s communities.

For these reasons, the Retail Merchants of Hawai‘i respectfully urges the Committee to pass SB 2908 SD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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TO: Committee on Economic Development and Technology

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 18, 2026

TIME: 8:30am

RE: SB2908 SD1 Relating to Permitting

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure to implement certain recommendations of the Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED) Task Force. Unnecessary permitting delays can have a detrimental impact on individuals, businesses, our economy, and our as a whole. For instance in a survey several years ago, HFIA members identified permitting, and specifically permitting delays, as the number one impediment to solar installation for their businesses.

We believe that the provisions outlined in this measure are an important step in the right direction to improve the permitting process for Hawaii residents and businesses. For our food systems improving permitting can mean removing barriers to business growth, increased local manufacturing, and new entrepreneurs entering the industry.

We urge the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



holomua

COLLABORATIVE

OUR MISSION

To support and advance public policies that make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

OUR VISION

Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai'i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai'i can thrive.

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Committee: House Committee on Economic Development and Technology
Bill Number: SB2908 SD1, Relating to Permitting
Hearing Date and Time: March 18, 2026 at 8:30am (Room 423)
Re: Testimony of Holomua Collaborative- Support

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Committee Members:

We write in support of Senate Bill 2908 SD1, Relating to Permitting. The purpose of SB2908 SD1 is to develop a statewide permitting intake platform to prevent the submission of incomplete applications and standardize data across jurisdictions

Holomua supports initiatives that help keep all local working families in Hawai'i by addressing the root causes of our affordability crisis. The high cost of housing and the slow pace of infrastructure development are often rooted in a permitting system that is fractured and technologically outdated. SB2908 SD1 represents a major step forward by modernizing the "front door" of the permitting process through a statewide intake platform.

One of the most persistent hurdles to economic development in Hawai'i is the high rate of incomplete or incorrect applications that enter the system, which causes months of unnecessary back-and-forth before a substantive review even begins. By implementing a statewide permitting intake platform that utilizes artificial intelligence and automated screening, we can ensure that applications are correct and complete the moment they are submitted. This technology acts as a force multiplier for our hardworking state and county staff, allowing them to focus their professional judgment on technical reviews rather than chasing down missing documents or correcting basic data entry errors.

Furthermore, the lack of interoperability between our various state and county agencies can create a confusing maze for local contractors and builders who work across multiple islands. A unified, digital platform that standardizes data and routes applications concurrently to all relevant agencies will bring a level of predictability and transparency that our economy desperately needs. It removes the "invisible tax" of administrative delay that currently drives up the cost of every home built in Hawai'i. By passing SB2908 SD1, we choose to invest in a 21st-century infrastructure that will lower costs for residents and accelerate the projects that keep our local workforce employed. We respectfully urge you to pass this measure and mahalo for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Matthew Prellberg
Policy and Communications Director

Testimony to the House Committee on Economic Development & Technology (ECD)

**Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 8:30AM
Conference Room 423 & Videoconference**

RE: SB2908 SD1 Relating to Permitting

Aloha e Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports Senate Bill 2908 Senate Draft 1 (SB2908 SD1), which requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to develop a statewide permitting intake platform implementing certain recommendations of the Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development Task Force. Appropriates funds for the development of the platform, subject to a matching funds requirement from the counties.

SB2908 SD1 aligns directly with the Economic Action pillar of the Chamber's 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii, as it emphasizes the importance a modernized regulatory system that works to amend systemic bottlenecks that inflate delay times and delay costs. This bill strengthens the state's business environment by reducing friction by mitigating the submission of incomplete forms and exploring artificial intelligence implementation to best optimize labor hours and state resources.

By simplifying the permitting process and reducing the frequency of application rejections due to incompleteness, permitting becomes more streamlined for those applying for permits and those administering them. In 2024 alone, the private sector suffered \$124.6 million in costs resulting from permitting delays. The simplification SB2908 SD1 offers would reduce backlog, increase application throughput, and deliver companies considerable savings in the way of time and money. By modernizing Hawaii's permitting system, the state can enable local companies to develop with greater ease, grow local economies, scale production, and contribute to economic opportunity in construction and their respective industries.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask to pass House Bill SB2908 Senate Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030

Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 423
FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026 AT 10:00 A.M.**

To The Honorable Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
The Honorable Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Economic Development & Technology

SUPPORT SB2908 SD1 RELATING TO PERMITTING

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports SB2908, as it is a timely measure that addresses longstanding bottlenecks by requiring the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to develop a statewide permitting intake platform, with matching funds from the counties. This initiative is particularly relevant as Maui businesses continue to face significant challenges in the wake of recent economic disruptions.

Streamlining permitting is a proven strategy to foster economic activity, reduce unnecessary delays, and lower barriers for both new and existing businesses. A centralized intake platform can improve transparency, reduce administrative burdens, and enhance coordination between state and county agencies. These improvements are aligned with best practices in economic development, which emphasize regulatory efficiency as a key driver of investment and job creation. For Maui and other counties, such reforms can support recovery, encourage diversification beyond tourism, and create a more resilient economic foundation.

We greatly appreciate the work of the SPEED Task Force and support SB2908. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela Tumpap". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

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.

SB-2908-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 7:50:45 PM

Testimony for ECD on 3/18/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committeemembers,

We have got to make our byzantine permitting process easier and simpler to manage. This bill advances that priority positively. Let's get SB2908 across the finish line!