



**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, Hawaii'i 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii'i 96804

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

Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM &  
ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Thursday, February 12, 2026, 1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

in consideration of  
**SB 2908  
RELATING TO PERMITTING.**

Chairs DeCoite and Wakai, Vice Chairs Wakai and Chang, and Members of the Committees.

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

SB 2908 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.

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



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2908**  
RELATING TO PERMITTING

Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 12, 2026

1:00 PM

Room 229

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Aloha e Chairs DeCoite and Wakai, Vice Chairs Wakai and Chang, and Members of the Committees:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB2908, 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 such as the State

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<sup>1</sup> Haw. Const. Art. XII § 5.

<sup>2</sup> See HRS § 10-3(4).

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**.

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



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
P: 808-533-1292 | e:  
[info@hawaiiifood.com](mailto:info@hawaiiifood.com)

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**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway, *Advisor*  
**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

**LATE**

TO: Committee on Economic Development and Tourism, and Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 12, 2026

TIME: 1pm

RE: SB2908 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.



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**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway, *Advisor*

**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism**  
**Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair**  
**Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair**

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs**  
**Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair**  
**Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair**

**LATE**

**Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 1:00PM**  
**Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**RE: SB2908 Relating to Permitting**

Aloha e Chair DeCoite, Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, 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 (SB2908), which implements a recommendation by the SPEED Task Force to develop a statewide permitting intake form, requiring DBEDT to develop this platform.

SB2908 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 staff.

By simplifying the permitting process and reducing the frequency of application rejections due to incompleteness, permitting becomes easier for those applying for them and administering them. In 2024 alone, the private sector suffered \$124.6 million in costs resulting from permitting delays. The simplification SB2908 offers would reduce backlog, increase application throughput, and deliver companies considerable savings in the way of time and money. Allowing companies to develop with greater ease, and contribute to the economy with greater ease.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask to pass House Bill SB2908. 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.



**LATE**

**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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Josh Wisch  
*President & Executive Director*

827 Fort Street Mall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

+1 (808) 542-4089  
info@holomuacollaborative.org

HolomuaCollaborative.org

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs  
**Bill Number:** SB 2908, Relating to Permitting  
**Hearing Date and Time:** February 12, 2026 at 1:00pm (Room 229)  
**Re:** Testimony of Holomua Collaborative- Support

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, and Committee Members:

We write in support of Senate Bill 2908, Relating to Permitting. The purpose of SB 2908 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. SB 2908 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 SB 2908, 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



**MAUI**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**LATE**

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM AND  
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 229  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026 AT 1:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Economic Development & Technology

To The Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Energy & Intergovernmental Affairs

**SUPPORT SB2908 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,

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.

**LATE**

**SB-2908**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 3:39:03 AM

Testimony for EDT on 2/12/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angela Young	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support.