

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

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Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND**

Thursday, April 23, 2026, 10:00 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 430

in consideration of  
**SCR 177**

**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES  
TO CONVENE A COOPERATIVE WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS STATE  
PROJECTS THAT REQUIRE COUNTY PERMITTING.**

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and Members of the House Committee on Water & Land.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports SCR 177**, which requests the Department of Accounting and General Services to convene a cooperative working group to address state projects that require county permitting.

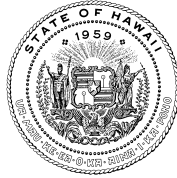
Hawai'i's state-led infrastructure and development projects often face considerable delays during the permit approval process at the county level. These bottlenecks create significant obstacles to the timely completion of public works and hinder the State's ability to respond to urgent community needs and ultimately increase project costs.

Streamlining these processes is particularly important for the delivery of affordable housing. In order to deliver housing faster through projects such as those financed by the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC), we should actively reduce these administrative delays. The work of the Simplifying Permitting for Enhanced Economic Development (SPEED) Task Force has already highlighted the need for better coordination between the State and the counties. Establishing a clear, unified framework to streamline permit processes for State projects is essential to ensure that public funds are used efficiently and that housing can be delivered to residents on shorter timelines.

OPSD believes that a working group is the optimal forum for identifying these systemic friction points and developing collaborative solutions that respect both state objectives and county regulatory oversight. **OPSD stands ready to participate in this working group**, and we look forward to working with the other group members to address this issue and develop actionable recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



KEITH A. REGAN  
COMPTROLLER  
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ  
  
MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN  
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWE LAULĀ**  
P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
OF  
KEITH A. REGAN, COMPTROLLER  
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES  
TO THE  
**COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND**

APRIL 23, 2026, 10:00 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 430 AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, STATE CAPITOL

S.C.R. 177

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES TO CONVENE A COOPERATIVE WORKING GROUP TO ADDRESS STATE PROJECTS THAT REQUIRE COUNTY PERMITTING.

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Morikawa, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on S.C.R. 177.

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) **supports** this resolution convening a cooperative working group to address state projects that require county permitting.

There has been significant interest in this subject area for several years, and convening a working group to proactively address the issues surrounding county permitting of state projects will be useful. However, the department is concerned that this measure does not identify funding to support convening of the working group and to report on the group's deliberations. Without such funding, the department's efforts to

support and participate in the working group will necessarily divert limited resources from accomplishing the department's statutory responsibilities. Therefore, the department requests that the measure recommend an independent source of funding to provide that support.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



[www.AlohaILHawaii.org](http://www.AlohaILHawaii.org)

Apr 23, 2026

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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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Roxanne U. Bolden

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The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Chair  
House Committee on Water & Land  
The Thirty-Third Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**SUBJECT:** SCR177 – Requesting the Department of Accounting and General Services to Convene a Cooperative Working Group to Address State Projects that Require County Permitting.

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) is a cross-disability, statewide, non-profit Center for Independent Living that supports people with disabilities of all ages to live independently in their own homes and communities.

AILH **appreciates the intent of SCR177 and offers comments** to ensure that any streamlining of state-county permitting fully incorporates disability access and independent living perspectives.

SCR177 would convene a cooperative working group, led by the Department of Accounting and General Services, to explore and recommend ways to streamline permitting processes for state projects that require county permits. The resolution correctly notes that state projects have faced very long permitting delays, including an average of approximately six hundred days for state building permits in Honolulu during 2022-2023, with cost increases of over \$30 million due to inflation. Reducing unnecessary delays can benefit the public, including disabled residents, when projects are well-designed and accessible.

However, any effort to accelerate permitting for state projects also carries risks if accessibility and community input are not central to the process.



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Many state projects significantly shape the built environment that disabled people and kupuna must navigate every day: schools, housing developments, transportation infrastructure, state office buildings, and health facilities. These projects affect whether people with disabilities can safely access services, get to work, and remain in their home communities rather than being pushed toward institutional settings.

We note that the proposed working group membership include key state agencies (such as Land and Natural Resources, Transportation, Education, Health, and the University of Hawaii System), planning and development entities, and county planning and permitting departments, but it does not include any representation from the disability community, independent living, or civil rights/accessibility expertise. From an independent living perspective, this is a critical gap.

To strengthen SCR177 and align it with Hawaii's commitments to disability rights and community-based living, we respectfully request the Committee consider the following amendments and implementation guidance:

### 1. Add disability/IL representation to the working group.

Please add at least one member representing a cross-disability, community-based organization (such as Centers for Independent Living) with expertise in accessibility, ADA, and community integration, and consider adding a member with design or code expertise specific to accessibility requirements. This will help ensure that "streamlining" does not inadvertently shortcut needed review of accessibility features or public participation that protects disabled residents.

### 2. Explicitly include accessibility and equity in the group's charge.

In addition to "streamlining permitting processes exclusively for state projects with county permitting needs," we recommend clarifying that the working group should ensure that any streamlining:



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- Maintains or improves compliance with federal and state accessibility laws and building codes.
- Promotes equitable outcomes for disabled people, kupuna, and other marginalized communities who rely heavily on state facilities and infrastructure.

### 3. Recognize the link between permitting, design quality, and long-term costs.

While the resolution highlights cost increases due to delay, poorly designed or inaccessible state projects also create long-term costs, including later retrofit expenses, program barriers, and potential legal exposure. A process that is faster and grounded in accessibility and universal design can reduce long-term fiscal and social costs while supporting independent living.

From the Water and Land perspective, permitting is not only about speed; it is about how our public lands, facilities, and infrastructure support safe, inclusive, and sustainable use by all community members. Bringing disability and independent living voices into this working group will help align streamlining efforts with the needs of residents who are most affected by inaccessible environments.

AILH respectfully urges the Committee to move SCR177 forward with amendments to incorporate disability and independent living representation and to explicitly address accessibility and equity in the working group's mandate.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

*Roxanne U. Bolden*



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