

March 31, 2026, 1 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

To: Senate Committee on Housing

Sen. Stanley Chang, Chair
Sen. Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Sen. Glenn Wakai, Chair
Sen. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR107/SR101 — REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT 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

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and other Committee Members,

The Grassroot Institute **supports** [SCR107/SR101](#), which urges the City and County of Honolulu to produce a book of pre-approved designs in order to speed up approval and construction of new housing.

Approving this resolution would 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

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.

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 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

Hawaii County already offers pre-approved 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.