

BILL021(23)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 118

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Mar 15, 2023 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 6

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Sterling Higa	Email: sterling@hawaiiifuture.org	Zip: 96779
Representing: Housing Hawai'i's Future	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 11, 2023 @ 02:29 PM
Name: Evan Oue	Email: eoue@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: NAIOP Hawaii Chapter	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 13, 2023 @ 08:01 AM
Name: Hawaii LECET	Email: info@hawaiiilecet.org	Zip: 96817
Representing: Hawaii Laborers & Employers Cooperation and Education Trust	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 13, 2023 @ 12:51 PM
Name: Matt Popovich	Email: admin@hawaiiyimby.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Hawai'i YIMBY	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 14, 2023 @ 09:50 AM
Name: Stefanie Sakamoto	Email: ssakamoto@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: BIA Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 14, 2023 @ 11:08 AM
Name: Christine Camp	Email: cc@avalonhi.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Avalon Development Company	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 15, 2023 @ 12:01 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Avalon Group is in strong support of this bill as it will allow Honolulu to match its building codes in line with the International Building Code. The timing is especially critical as many building owners contemplate conversions of existing commercial buildings into housing. We respectfully request that the bill be allowed to be heard at the zoning committee meeting.</p> <p>Christine Camp President & CEO Avalon Group</p>		



Housing Hawaii's Future
PO Box 3043
Honolulu, HI 96802-3043

March 15, 2023

Dear Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia'aina, and members of the Honolulu City Council,

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a movement led by young locals who will create opportunities for Hawai'i's next generation by ending the workforce housing shortage.

On behalf of Housing Hawai'i's Future, **I write in SUPPORT of Bill 21**, amending the Housing Code, Chapter 16A to conform to the IBC.

At Housing Hawaii's Future, we seek to minimize greenfield development, especially on Oahu.

Rather, we prefer smart growth principles (rezoning, upzoning, infill development, and adaptive reuse) to fully utilize existing building stock and infrastructure.

Adaptive reuse allows the speedy repurposing of existing commercial and light industrial properties into residences.

Bill 21 will support adaptive reuse projects by amending our Housing Code's natural lights and ventilation requirements.

Please support Bill 21.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sterling Higa".

Sterling Higa
Executive Director
Housing Hawai'i's Future

sterling@hawaiisfuture.org

+1 (808) 782-7868

March 14, 2023

Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair
Councilmember Ester Kia'aina ,Vice Chair
Honolulu City Council

RE: **Bill 21 – RELATING TO THE HOUSING CODE**
Hearing date – March 15, 2023 at 10:00 A.M.

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia'aina and members of the Council,

Thank you for allowing NAIOP Hawaii to submit testimony providing **in STRONG SUPPORT of Bill 21 – RELATING TO THE HOUSING CODE**. NAIOP Hawaii is the Hawaii chapter of the nation's leading organization for office, industrial, retail, residential and mixed-use real estate. NAIOP Hawaii has over 200 members in the State including local developers, owners, investors, asset managers, lenders and other professionals.

Bill 21 seeks to amend the Housing Code to align the building requirements of the City with the International Building Code ("IBC") relating to light and ventilation. The measure is intended to address the requirements imposed on building construction which differ from the IBC. Specifically, the measure amends Chapter 16A, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021 ("ROH") to provide an exemption for property, buildings and structures that are subject to the requirements of ROH section 16-1.1.

As background, Honolulu is the only county in the state that has a Housing Code that is imbedded into the building code. The Housing Code specifically requires operable windows to allow for natural lighting and direct ventilation for living rooms and bedrooms. Honolulu's building code dictates that IBC governs except as maybe contrarily specified in the Housing Code. This bill seeks to allow for more consistency between the Housing Code and the IBC.

NAIOP Hawaii supports this measure which will encourage adaptive reuse projects which require flexible design options. Most office buildings do not have sufficient windows to provide direct window access. The measure allows for the conversion of office buildings resulting in gaining additional housing units for Honolulu residents. The splitting of existing "larger" units into more units and or bedrooms will increase available inventory in the market.

The IBC approved the change in 2012 and Hawai'i adopted the changes in 2018. The new code allows for indirect or artificial light and mechanical ventilation options to consider rooms to become "bedrooms" and living rooms. Most, significantly, the changes do not pose compromise life and safety for potential residents.

Furthermore, prior to the Housing Code that was created for Honolulu (circa 1990's) there were residential buildings built without operable windows including Central Center, Executive Center and many of the older hotels. Additionally, 1132 Bishop had recently gone through 201H to convert to residential. There are several decaying buildings that could be converted with by-right permitting, without the expense and time delays of processing 201H applications. Many small infill lots within the urban core could be developed with higher densities such as the 67-unit Fort St mall senior affordable project being built on a 6,900 sf lot. Many of the downtown conversion projects could become more financially viable for residential conversions.

Lastly, the IBC code is an international code. Advances in technology for artificial lighting and ventilation methodologies with proven application in living spaces have been validated by the IBC. Further, the IRC is still in effect to address smaller projects such as single family, duplex and or projects smaller than 3 stories.

Ultimately, Hawaii is currently in a housing crisis which is continuing to worsen due to the ongoing economic changes. NAIOP Hawaii supports this measure which seeks to encourage the conversion of commercial units into residential units. NAIOP Hawaii is dedicated to the creation of affordable housing for our communities. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure and we look forward to working with all interest stakeholders to address this issue.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Camp', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jennifer Camp, President
NAIOP Hawaii



HAWAII LABORERS-EMPLOYERS COOPERATION AND EDUCATION TRUST

650 Iwilei Road, Suite 285 • Honolulu, HI 96817 • Phone: 808-845-3238 • Fax: 808-845-8300

March 13, 2023

To: **The Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair**
Honolulu City Council
City & County of Honolulu
530 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL 21 (2023), RELATING TO THE HOUSING CODE**

FOR HEARING ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023 at 10:00 AM, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Aloha Honorable Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia`aina, and Council Members,

The **Hawaii Laborers & Employers Cooperation and Education Trust Fund** (Hawaii LECET) is a labor + management partnership established in 1992 between the 5,000 statewide members of the Hawaii Laborers Union and over 250 construction contractor members from the *General Contractors Association* and the *Building Industry Association*. The *Laborers International* is the largest construction trade union in North America, and Hawaii LECET is part of a network of 38 labor-management LECET Funds across the country.

Hawaii LECET strongly supports Bill 21 (2023). This Bill will facilitate more efficient adaptive reuse, and the conversion of empty and underused existing offices and commercial buildings into residential homes. Bill 21 will speed up the creation of more affordable housing for our local residents, with much of it in our urban core where it is most needed.

Bill 21 will provide flexibility in creating new housing options and help address our growing homeless crisis, by aligning the City's building requirements with the International Building Code. This Bill will allow more of our citizens to be able to acquire shelter and security, while protecting health and safety in our building codes. Thank you for this opportunity to offer our strong support for Bill 21 (2023).

Mahalo,

**Hawaii Laborers & Employers Cooperation
and Education Trust Fund**



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814

hawaiiyimby.com
admin@hawaiiyimby.com

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Honolulu City Council
Honolulu Hale
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SUPPORT for BILL 21 (2023) - RELATING TO THE HOUSING CODE

Aloha Chair Waters and Councilmembers,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, I'm writing to support Bill 21 (2023), which proposes to amend the Housing Code and align the building requirements of the City and County of Honolulu with the International Building Code (IBC) in specific areas, particularly those related to light and ventilation.

This bill will promote residential housing development, particularly for “adaptive reuse” building conversions that face difficulties in meeting light and space standards due to the non-residential shape of the original building. The current provisions of the Housing Code impose requirements that are different from the IBC, leading to unnecessary complications in the building process, barriers that hinder conversion to housing. The stricter the light and ventilation standards, the more a developer must alter the original building to meet them. This can lead to measures like irregular unit shapes and even sometimes cutting central courtyards into buildings with large floor areas. Too often, it means conversions are simply not feasible at all.

By adopting the IBC's requirements in these areas, we can eliminate these disparities and create a more streamlined and consistent process for builders and developers, which in



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814

hawaiiyimby.com
admin@hawaiiyimby.com

turn will lead to increased efficiency in residential construction. This will not only save time and resources but will also encourage more developers to undertake projects, leading to an increase in housing supply.

By making it easier to convert non-residential buildings into residential ones, we will also be able to utilize existing structures more effectively and optimize the use of land in our city - building up, rather than building out into green space. This is particularly important in a densely populated area like Honolulu, where land is limited and housing demand is high. The ability to convert commercial or industrial buildings into residential spaces will also help to revitalize underutilized areas of the city, creating more vibrant and diverse neighborhoods that cater to a wider range of residents.

This will lead to a positive impact on housing affordability. By streamlining construction requirements and making it easier to convert existing buildings into residential spaces, we can increase the supply of housing, which will help curb our out-of-control cost of housing. Hawai'i's housing crisis is the most severe in the nation, with the average renter spending over 42% of their income on rent every month. Any measure that can help to make housing more affordable for residents is a step in the right direction.

Hawai'i YIMBY (*Yes In My Backyard*) is a new and rapidly growing grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to working to advance bold and effective solutions for Hawai'i's devastating housing crisis. Our members are deeply concerned about Hawai'i's chronic and worsening housing shortage, which has caused home prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushes thousands of kama'āina out to the mainland or into homelessness every single year.



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814

hawaiiyimby.com
admin@hawaiiyimby.com

We urge your support for this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Matt Popovich

Co-Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY





HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
Honolulu Hale
10:00 AM

March 15, 2023

RE: Bill 21 - RELATING TO THE HOUSING CODE

Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kiaaina, and members of the Council:

My name is Max Lindsey, Government Relations Committee Chair of the Building Industry Association of Hawaii (BIA-Hawaii). Chartered in 1955, the Building Industry Association of Hawaii is a professional trade organization affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders, representing the building industry and its associates. BIA-Hawaii takes a leadership role in unifying and promoting the interests of the industry to enhance the quality of life for the people of Hawaii. Our members build the communities we all call home.

BIA Hawaii is in support of Bill 21, Relating to the Housing Code. This bill amends the housing code relating to the provision of light and ventilation.

This is a much-needed bill that would exempt housing from certain requirements of the International Building Code, allowing for greater flexibility especially in adaptive reuse projects. This would allow for artificial light and/or mechanical ventilation to be used in housing.

The state of Hawaii is in a dire housing crisis. As the Council is aware, the cost of housing in Hawaii is extremely high, with Oahu's median price of homes being currently over \$1 million. Approximately 153,967 U.S. households are priced out of buying a home for every \$1000 increase in price, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). We are in support of legislation that would allow for the building of much-needed housing at every price point in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.