

BILL031(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 281

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: May 14, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

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Representing: BIA Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: May 13, 2025 @ 08:35 PM



**HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
May 14, 2025
10:00 AM**

RE: Bill 31 - Relating to Pre-Construction Financing for Affordable Rental Housing

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

My name is Roseann Freitas, CEO 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.

The Building Industry Association of Hawaii (BIA-Hawaii) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Bill 31 (2024), which seeks to amend Chapter 32 of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu to establish pre-construction subsidies for affordable rental housing development.

One of the most significant and under-addressed barriers to affordable housing production is the lack of early-stage or pre-construction financing. Costs related to planning, design, engineering, permitting, and environmental review must often be incurred before a project can even qualify for construction loans or other forms of public assistance. By establishing a local subsidy mechanism for pre-construction costs, Bill 31 addresses this critical funding gap and helps accelerate affordable rental housing development.

As the Council is aware, we are in a dire housing crisis. The cost of housing in Hawaii is extremely high, with Oahu's median price of homes being currently over \$1 million. Approximately 140,436 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 such as Bill 31, that would help facilitate the building of much-needed housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this matter.