

BILL006(26)

Testimony

MISC. COMM. 89

*ZONING & PLANNING (ZON)

***ZONING & PLANNING (ZON) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Mar 5, 2026 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 5

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 1

Name: Chris Abe	Email: chrisabe543@gmail.com	Zip: 96826
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Mar 2, 2026 @ 10:58 AM
Testimony: Aloha Chair Kia'āina and committee members, The housing affordability crisis in Hawaii is a difficult issue to navigate. However, I urge elected policymakers to not mistake quantity for quality. There is a manic effort by the state and county to build more "housing" immediately. But the "just build it" attitude seems to forget the bigger picture of preserving the Hawaiian sense of place, and forgets other policy angles to address cost of living. We live on a small island with finite land and water and infrastructure resources, we cannot build and increase the population endlessly. Our blue skies and ocean fronts are turning into walls of concrete, steel and glass. Our roads are turning into gridlock. There are many forces at work now: draft legislation moving through the capitol right now would ban affordable housing mandates as an illegal exaction, sea level rise is eroding our shorelines, tidal groundwater inundation, permanent condominium AOA regimes (compared to single owner affordable rentals), "affordable" units no one wants to buy because they're inferior units and saddled by poor policy including high AMI thresholds, questionable new construction build-quality, taxpayer funded developments funded by the increasingly powerful HHFDC that gives out money and exemptions like candy, approved parking stall counts that simultaneously contradict TOD goals while recognizing the pragmatic realism of our car-centric way of life, rail ridership count and long term success of the rail is still in question, inflation, unemployment, etc. Bill 6 is not the area of zoning policy we need to focus on right now. The pace of state and county zoning policy changes in recent years has been out of control. There isn't enough time for any single policy to mature and show its effect before another paradigm shifting policy change is introduced. Bill 6 removes maximum building area on a parcel and allows a much smaller minimum lot area in long established neighborhoods. I cannot imagine this leading to anything except ugly, dense buildings built to the edge of property setback lines (assuming Council doesn't waive yard and height setbacks rules as Council often tends to do). However, I do offer suggestions for amendments. I urge you to amend Bill 6 to bring back a "maximum building area" limit and reduce changes to the "minimum lot area". I urge you to increase and enforce the yard and height setbacks to allow some small degree of open air and space between neighbors. Thank you.		

Name: Leelynn Brady	Email: leelynnb@alohailhawaii.org	Zip: 96782
Representing: Aloha Independent Living Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Mar 3, 2026 @ 09:34 AM
Name: Ted Kefalas	Email: tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 4, 2026 @ 08:12 AM
Name: Perry Arrasmith	Email: perry@hawaiisfuture.org	Zip: 96797
Representing: Housing Hawai'i's Future	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 4, 2026 @ 03:34 PM
Name: Matt Prellberg	Email: matt@holomuacollaborative.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Holomua Collaborative	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 4, 2026 @ 03:45 PM
Name: Martin Nguyen	Email: martin@centre-urban.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Centre Urban Real Estate	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 4, 2026 @ 05:56 PM
Name: Stefanie Sakamoto	Email: ssakamoto@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: BIA Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 4, 2026 @ 10:38 PM



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

Mar 3, 2026

MISSION

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 Esther Kiaʻāina, Chair
Committee on Zoning & Planning
Honolulu City Council
City Council Chamber
City and County of Honolulu
Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813

SUBJECT: Bill 6 (2026), CD1 – Relating to Development Standards in the Apartment and Apartment Mixed-Use Districts

Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Roxanne Bolden, and I submit this testimony on behalf of Aloha Independent Living Hawaiʻi (AILH). AILH works to advance independent living and community inclusion for people with disabilities through systems change, advocacy, and cross-sector collaboration.

AILH recognizes the City's urgent need to expand housing opportunities. Bill 6 proposes adjustments to development standards in apartment and apartment mixed-use districts, including reductions in minimum lot area requirements and updates to floor area ratio standards. These reforms may support additional housing production in areas already zoned for multifamily development.

As housing standards are modernized to improve feasibility and encourage redevelopment, AILH respectfully urges the Committee to ensure that accessibility remains a central consideration in implementation.

Increasing density and redevelopment potential should not inadvertently increase the production of housing that is difficult or impossible for people with disabilities, kūpuna, or residents aging in place to use safely. As development standards are adjusted, the City has an opportunity to reinforce expectations around accessible routes, usable entries, and equitable design in multifamily housing.

AILH also notes that mixed-use environments, which combine residential and commercial uses, must ensure that access to dwelling units is not only



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independent but reliably accessible. Clear, step-free routes and practical design considerations are essential for residents with mobility impairments and others who rely on accessible building features for daily independence.

AILH supports efforts to increase housing supply and respectfully encourages the Committee to pair zoning modernization with a clear commitment to accessibility outcomes in implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments..

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Bolden
Executive Director

March 5, 2026, 9 a.m.

Honolulu Hale

To: Honolulu City Council Committee on Zoning and Planning

Esther Kiaʻāina, Chair

Tommy Waters, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: Bill 6 (2026), CD1 — RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS IN THE APARTMENT AND APARTMENT MIXED-USE DISTRICTS

Aloha Chair Kiaʻāina, Vice Chair Waters and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** — and **offers amendments** to — [Bill 6 \(2026\), CD1](#), which would amend development standards for the apartment and apartment mixed-use zoning districts.

Grassroot believes this bill could unlock a range of new housing opportunities for Honolulu residents and would result in more plentiful, affordable housing.

In particular, Bill 6 (2026) would reduce the minimum lot sizes for these districts and increase floor area ratios. The floor area ratio for a property is currently calculated using a complicated formula tied to the size of the lot and the zoning district. Table 1 below shows the current maximum FARs by zoning district compared to the new ratios proposed in the bill.

Table 1: Current and proposed maximum floor-area ratios

Zone	Maximum current FAR	Proposed residential FAR
A-1, AMX-1	0.9	2.0
A-2, AMX-2	1.9	3.0
A-3, AMX-3	2.8	4.0

A greater floor area ratio means more building square footage can be built on a parcel. Increasing these ratios is critical because Honolulu needs more housing units. According to the 2019 Hawaii Housing Planning study, Honolulu needed 22,168 new units between 2020 and 2025.¹ A 2024 update to the Hawaii housing planning study estimated that Honolulu needs 27,710 new units built between 2023 and 2027 to meet demand.²

For homebuilders to justify buying a property and replacing aging buildings, they must be sure the project can be profitable.

Grassroot analyzed the potential impact of this bill by identifying apartment and apartment mixed-use parcels that have buildings 50 years old or older, none of which is designated as a condominium unit.³ We identified 1,230 such parcels in the A-1, A-2, A-3 and AMX-2 zones, and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Current actual and legal average floor-area ratios

Zone	Count of parcels	Average actual FAR	Average max. FAR	Proposed FAR
A-1	185	0.28	0.46	2.0
A-2	994	0.26	1.31	3.0
A-3	27	0.23	1.31	4.0
AMX-2	24	0.28	0.92	3.0

Increasing the allowable floor area ratios could move some projects from questionably to realistically profitable. Consider a 10,000-square-foot A-2 lot where a 1,500-square-foot, 70-year-old single-family home now sits. The land value of that property could easily be \$1 million.

If a homebuilder acquired that property, current FAR limits would allow up to 13,000 square feet of building area,⁴ with a land cost per square foot of \$79.

On the other hand, increasing the allowable FAR for that parcel to 3.0 would increase the amount of building area to 30,000, which would lower the land cost per square foot to \$33 — a more than 50% reduction that could help the project pencil out.

¹ [“Hawai'i Housing Planning Study, 2019,”](#) prepared for the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation by SMS Research and Marketing Services, Inc., December 2019, p. 56.

² [“Hawaii Housing Planning Study 2024,”](#) prepared by SMS Research and Marketing Services, Inc., FSR Consulting LLC and Ward Research, Inc. for the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Table 39A, p. 124.

³ Data from Hawaii Information Service's Multiple Listing Service, which requires a subscription to access. Reviewed tax year 2024 parcels with condominiums and properties without year built information excluded.

⁴ Calculated by multiplying the lot size (10,000 square feet) by the current A-2 FAR calculation (FAR = 0.00002 x lot area + 1.1).

Although Bill 6 (2026) would improve the financial feasibility of infill projects, Grassroot urges the Council to adopt two amendments.

First, Grassroot requests that the FAR for A-2 and AMX-2 parcels be increased to 4.0.

A-2 parcels with older, non-condominium dwellings make up 80% of the properties Grassroot reviewed. Allowing more density in those areas would help ensure that new housing comes online at a quicker rate.

Second, Grassroot requests that the minimum lot width and depth be set to no more than 50 feet.

Martin Nguyen has explained in testimony on this bill that many existing apartment and apartment mixed-use lots are 45 or 50 feet wide,⁵ which would mean any homebuilder trying to meet the 60-foot width and depth proposed in this legislation would need to obtain some sort of time-consuming discretionary approval, such as a variance or a consolidation and resubdivision.

If these two amendments are added, the resulting legislation would give homebuilders greater flexibility in constructing apartment units in zones that are already selected for higher-density development.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

⁵ Martin Nguyen, "[Testimony In Support Of Bills 5 And 6 \(2026\) – Relating To The Development Standards For The Apartment And Apartment Mixed-Use Districts](#)," Feb. 3, 2026, p. 7.

March 6, 2026

TO: Chair Kia'aina and Members of the Committee on Zoning & Planning

RE: Bill 6, CD1, Relating to Development Standards in the Apartment and Apartment Mixed-Use Districts

Aloha Chair Kia'aina and Members of the Committee,

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a movement led by young residents fighting to create opportunities for Hawai'i's next generations by ending the workforce housing shortage.

We strongly support Bill 6, Committee Draft (CD) 1, with comments. Our organization has closely followed the debate over Resolution 25-105, which proceeded to the Planning Commission last year for review before transmittal back to the Council as Bill 5 and Bill 6. To that end, we support Bill 6's movement as the reform vehicle for Resolution 25-106.

We urge the Council to entertain the elements of both measures that maximize options for prospective homebuilders. When taken together, these reforms could generate more than 5,000 new subdivided lots for residents, per the Department of Planning and Permitting's own estimates.¹ **As Bill 6 advances, we humbly ask the City Council to adopt the reductions in minimum lot area and width and depth proposed in Bill 5.** These reductions are reasonable and will result in even more housing options for homebuilders, communities, and residents down the road.

Let's advance the conversation and advance a flexible, cohesive measure that marries the best of both Bill 5 and Bill 6. **Let's advance Bill 6, CD1.**

Aloha,



Lee Wang
Executive Director
Housing Hawai'i's Future
lee@hawaiisfuture.org



Perry Arrasmith
Director of Policy
Housing Hawai'i's Future
perry@hawaiisfuture.org

¹ See P. 4 of the memorandum here: <https://hnlidoc.ehawaii.gov/hnlidoc/document-download?id=26870>



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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827 Fort Street Mall, 2nd Floor
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

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

[HolomuaCollaborative.org](https://holomuacollaborative.org)

Committee: Honolulu City Council, Zoning and Planning Committee
Bill Number: Bill 6 (2026), CD1, Relating to Development Standards in the Apartment and Apartment Mixed-Use Districts
Hearing Date and Time: March 5, 2026 9:00am
Re: Testimony of Holomua Collaborative – Support

Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of Bill 6 (2026), CD1, Relating to Development Standards in the Apartment and Apartment Mixed-Use Districts.

Holomua Collaborative works to advance policies that allow local working families to live, work, and thrive in Hawai'i. Our organization brings leaders across sectors together to address the structural challenges shaping Hawai'i's long-term economic future. Among those challenges, housing affordability remains one of the most significant barriers to retaining local talent, supporting working families, and sustaining a healthy economy.

The City and County of Honolulu remains in a housing crisis. Skyrocketing home prices leave many local families struggling to secure safe and attainable places to live. The median single-family home price on O'ahu now exceeds \$1,100,000, while the median condominium price exceeds \$500,000 — an unaffordable barrier for many residents.

As a result, local families continue to leave the state in search of more affordable opportunities. Between July 2024 and July 2025, an average of 11 people left Hawai'i each day.¹ More Native Hawaiians now live outside Hawai'i than within it, representing a profound loss to our culture, traditions, and community.

Recent data underscores the severity of this challenge. In a 2025 survey² of nearly 3,200 local workers, only 25 percent said they were certain they would not need to move to a less expensive state—down from 31 percent the year before. Meanwhile, 75 percent said they might need to leave or were unsure. More than half identified housing costs as the primary driver of Hawai'i's high cost of living.

This reality is affecting our workforce across every sector of the economy. Teachers, healthcare workers, firefighters, and other essential professionals increasingly report that housing costs are pushing them to consider leaving Hawai'i. When working families cannot find homes they can afford, the consequences ripple through our economy, our communities, and our future.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Estimates, released January 2026; and calculations by the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, Hawai'i State Data Center.
https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/census/popestimate/2025/state-pop/2025_daily_est_state.pdf

² 2025 Hawai'i Affordability Survey - <https://holomuacollective.org/survey-25/#3>

Bill 6 represents a practical step toward addressing this challenge by modernizing development standards in areas already designated for apartment and mixed-use housing. By reducing minimum lot sizes and simplifying floor-area ratio standards, the bill helps make moderate infill housing projects more feasible within Honolulu's urban core.

Under current regulations, many parcels zoned for apartment housing remain difficult to redevelop without pursuing lengthy and expensive discretionary approvals. As a result, projects that could provide housing for local residents often do not move forward.

According to analysis from the Department of Planning and Permitting, out of more than 7,700 properties on O'ahu zoned for apartment or apartment mixed-use development, only 308 are considered developable under current standards. Updating these development standards can significantly expand the number of parcels that can be redeveloped and contribute to much-needed housing supply.

Equally important, reforms like Bill 6 help ensure that housing projects can pencil out financially. If the City and County of Honolulu wants to see more homes built for local working families, our regulatory framework must allow projects to be economically viable while still aligning with community planning goals.

Housing is not only a social issue—it is also core economic infrastructure. Expanding the supply of housing in urban areas is essential to maintaining a stable workforce and supporting the long-term vitality of Honolulu's economy.

While no single measure will solve Honolulu's housing shortage, practical reforms like Bill 6 are an important step toward removing regulatory barriers and enabling the housing our communities need.

For these reasons, Holomua Collaborative supports Bill 6 (2026), CD1.

Sincerely,

Matt Prellberg
Policy and Communications Director



Martin M. Q. Nguyen, MRED
Managing Principal
CA DRE #02074177
HI RB-24080

March 4, 2026

The Honorable Esther Kiaʻāina
Committee on Zoning & Planning
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL 6 (2026) – RELATING TO THE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR THE APARTMENT AND APARTMENT MIXED-USE DISTRICTS

Aloha Chair Kiaʻāina, Vice Chair Waters, and Committee Members,

I am submitting testimony in my capacity as principal of Centre Urban Real Estate in **SUPPORT** of Bill 6 (2026) relating to the development standards for the Apartment and Apartment Mixed-use districts. Centre Urban is a commercial real estate investment, development, and advisory firm active in Honolulu and Southern California, with a specific focus on impactful multifamily and mixed-use projects.

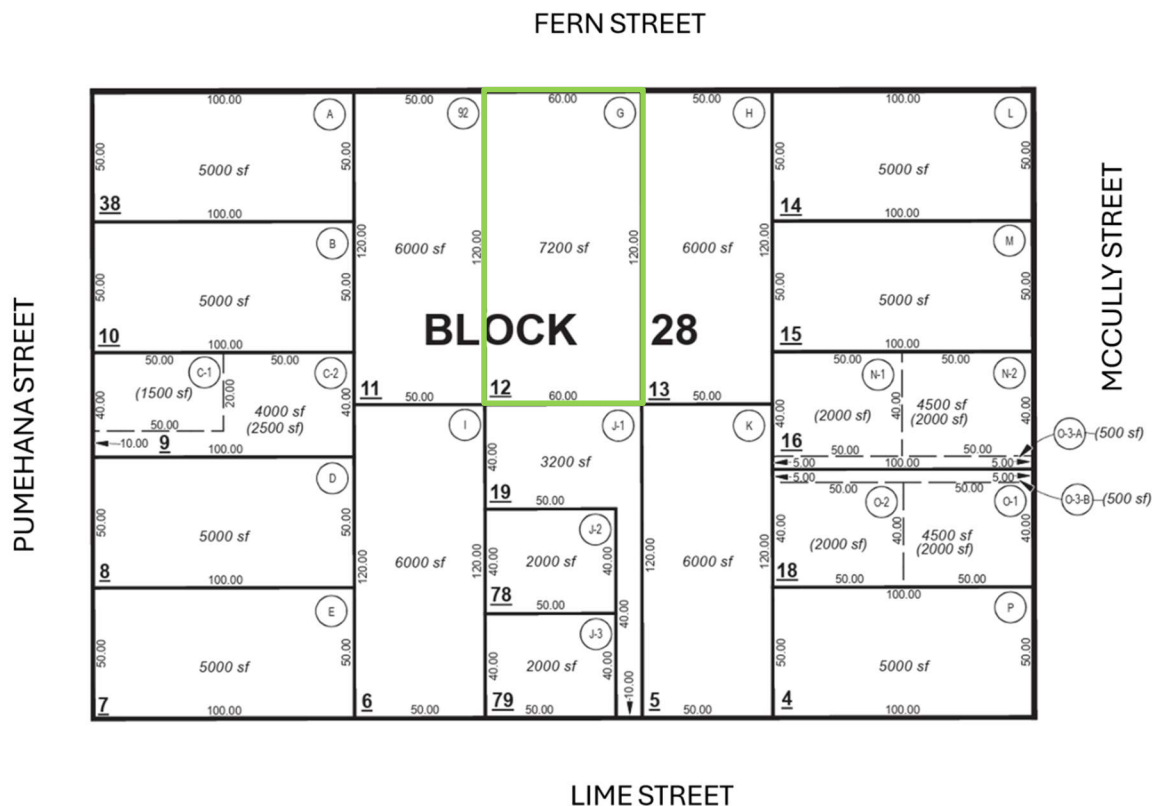
We are currently working on creating housing under ROH Chapter 32, otherwise known as “Bill 7”, which is a preeminent example of common-sense collaboration between the public and private sectors to solve one of the most pressing issues of our generation: creating more housing. Our current pipeline include two projects in Waikīkī, totaling 72 kamaʻāina housing units. However, it is important to note that the primary reason why development programs like 201H and ROH Chapter 32 exist is because the LUO does not allow for the by-right construction of moderate-sized housing that would be most impactful in keeping kamaʻāina home. **Programs like those exist as a band-aid for a broken land-use system.** Every day that potential housing is delayed is another day where more and more of our neighbors are moving away, some who will never return to Hawaiʻi.

Bill 6 would revise development standards so that one can meet in the middle with **moderate** FAR between 2.0 and 4.0 to encourage **modest** development of 50-75’/ 4 to 7 stories in areas where it fits the existing built environment. This would likely make the biggest dent in the natural development of more housing. The key objective is to allow the **by-right** development of housing in the areas of Honolulu that have existing structures with similar densities, such as the Apartment and Apartment Mixed-Use districts. This will naturally allow the development of more moderate, human-scaled housing projects and limit the instances of “monster homes” in residential zoned areas.

I want to commend the City Council and the DPP for tackling this issue head-on. Bill 6 proposes elements that individually improves the LUO but certain positive elements together could make a meaningful dent in the housing crisis. The proposed revisions keep growth within the framework of the General Plan, Development Plans, and TOD plans, and focuses capacity where infrastructure and services already exist.

My one requested refinement concerns the **minimum lot width / dimension** standard. As proposed, Bill 6 would set a uniform 60-foot minimum lot dimension in the Apartment and Apartment Mixed-Use districts. While I appreciate the intent - to ensure enough frontage for driveways, utilities, landscaping, and multimodal improvements - this threshold is slightly out of alignment with the historic urban fabric of Honolulu, where the predominant lot pattern in many A and AMX areas is **50 feet wide**.

I've included a sample plat map of an A-2 zoned block located in McCully below for visual reference:



In this one sample block of A-2 zoned parcels in the heart of town, made up of approximately twenty lots, **only one parcel** (highlighted in green) would satisfy a 60-foot minimum lot width requirement. As such, in practice, retaining a 60-foot minimum lot width will mean that housing development on many existing 50-foot lots in urban Honolulu will not be considered “by right” and would discourage owners of those lots from reinvesting in housing in a way that is needed to address the housing crisis. Reducing the minimum lot dimension in Bill 6 from 60 feet to 45 or 50 feet would:

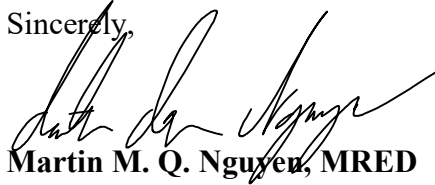
- Align the LUO’s dimensional standards with the reality of existing parcelization in older urban neighborhoods;
- Put the new FAR entitlements within reach of the many small and mid-sized local property owners who hold 50-foot lots, rather than limiting opportunities to larger land assemblages; and,
- Maintain the ability for the City and County to achieve its “complete streets” and green infrastructure goals, while still allowing reasonable driveway and frontage design on typical urban lots - through driveway width controls, shared access, or alley/frontage road solutions where available.

In other words, a 45 or 50-foot minimum width standard would preserve nearly all of the policy benefits of Bill 6, while materially expanding the number of realistic, by-right housing opportunities in the very neighborhoods the City is seeking to strengthen.

I personally believe updating the LUO will be most consequential pieces of local legislation in our lifetimes. Bill 6 is a critical step in that direction, and a 50-foot minimum width would ensure that the benefits of this reform are accessible to the many small and mid-sized property owners whose 50-foot lots define much of urban Honolulu. Holistically, this would impactfully address the current LUO lopsidedness by implementing simple FAR standards and doing away with a complicated calculation system that rewarded only those well off enough to accumulate and assemble large amounts of land.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your ongoing work to modernize our land use framework. If there are any questions or concerns, please reach me at martin@centre-urban.com to discuss.

Sincerely,



Martin M. Q. Nguyen, MRED
Managing Principal
Centre Urban Real Estate Hawaii, LLC





**HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
Committee on Zoning & Planning
HONOLULU HALE
9:00 AM**

March 5, 2026

Subject: Bill 6 - Relating to Development Standards in Apartment and Apartment Mixed Use Districts

Chair Kiaaina, Vice Chair Waters, 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.

BIA-Hawaii is in support of Bill 5, Relating to Development Standards in Apartment and Apartment Mixed Use Districts, which addresses development standards within the Apartment and Apartment Mixed-Use zoning districts.

Regulatory improvements like these put forth in Bill 6 help support housing production through better land use policy rather than relying solely on public funding. Creating a regulatory environment that enables housing in appropriate urban areas is one of the tools the City has to address supply constraints over the long term.

For these reasons, BIA Hawaii supports the general intent of Bill 6 (2026) as a measure that can help facilitate additional housing opportunities in Honolulu's urban core.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our comments on this matter.