

BILL019(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 115

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Mar 25, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 2

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Ted Kefalas	Email: tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 24, 2026 @ 08:10 AM
Name: Stefanie Sakamoto	Email: ssakamoto@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: BIA Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 25, 2026 @ 07:17 AM

March 25, 2026, 10 a.m.
Honolulu Hale

To: Honolulu City Council
Tommy Waters, Chair
Andria Tupola, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: Bill 19 (2026) — RELATING TO THE BUILDING CODE

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola and other members of the Council,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [Bill 19 \(2026\)](#), which would allow the Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting to issue temporary certificates of occupancy in certain circumstances.

This system would address situations in which a building is ready for habitation but not complete, the homebuilder has yet to make improvements to the property unrelated to the building itself or the city is simply slow in inspecting the building or issuing a final certificate of occupancy.

Honolulu needs bills such as this to help get new housing approved and built. A 2024 Hawaii Housing Planning study estimated that Honolulu needs 27,710 new units built between 2023 and 2027 to meet demand,¹ and permitting delays are a major reason Hawaii remains in a housing crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

¹ "[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.



**HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
HONOLULU HALE
10:00 AM**

March 25, 2026

Subject: Bill 19 - Relating to the Building Code

Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, 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 supports the intent of Bill 19, which amends the city's building code to address Temporary Certificates of Occupancy (TCOs). Ensuring a clear, predictable, and efficient path from construction completion to final occupancy is critical to delivering housing in a timely and cost-effective manner.

BIA-Hawaii appreciates the city's efforts to improve clarity and consistency in the TCO process. However, to fully realize these goals, we respectfully recommend that the bill include clearer direction regarding the responsibilities of the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) and the scope of required plan resubmissions.

As currently contemplated in Section 111.3.5(b), requiring the building official to provide an itemized list of deficiencies already resolves much of the ambiguity surrounding whether changes are "substantial" or "non-substantial." If DPP clearly identifies what is non-compliant, the permit holder can respond directly and efficiently, eliminating unnecessary interpretation, delay, and back-and-forth. In plain terms: if DPP determines a building is non-compliant, it should clearly state why. If resubmission is required, it should be limited only to correcting those specific deficiencies—not a wholesale re-review of previously approved plans.

In line with this approach, BIA Hawaii recommends the following amendments:

Section 111.3.2

Delete this section.

Section 111.3.5(b)

"The building official shall provide the permit holder with an itemized list of all code deficiencies before issuance of a final certificate of occupancy."

Section 111.3.6(b)

"If the building official deems resubmission of the plans necessary to demonstrate compliance, resubmission shall only consist of sheets relevant to document changes addressing itemized deficiencies that have been noted per Section 111.3.5(b). Plan resubmission and review shall not invalidate the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy."

Section 111.3.8

“The building official shall establish a process to amend approved permits when document resubmission is deemed necessary for itemized deficiencies outlined in Section 111.3.5(b).”

Sections R110.4.2, R110.4.5(b), R110.4.6(b), and R110.4.8

Adopt conforming amendments consistent with the provisions above.

These clarifications will improve transparency, reduce unnecessary delays, and ensure that projects can proceed efficiently while still maintaining full compliance with applicable codes. Importantly, they will also provide certainty to both applicants and reviewers, helping to avoid redundant plan reviews and administrative bottlenecks.

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