



Inspiring Hope, Changing Lives

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April 19, 2021

Howard Wiig, Chair
Hawaii State Building Code Council

Dear Chair Wiig and members of the State Building Code Council,

I am writing this letter in my capacity as the Chief Executive Officer of HOPE Services Hawaii Inc, Hawaii Island's largest homeless service provider, to share with you my perspective of factory-built homes, and **urge the SBCC to support a pathway forward that will effectively ensure modular, factory-built homes are an option in our statewide community.**

In 2018, during the lower Puna lava eruptions, our agency was sought out to facilitate emergency shelter for kūpuna who were displaced from their homes – elders who were living humbly yet uncomfortably in FEMA/Red Cross tents, and whose access to their homes had either been completely lost, or to which they would not have access for many more months. As you likely know, Pāhoa town is in a lava zone, and a critical factor in building for longevity and sustainability was ensuring the portability of the structures. In my estimation, our planning with community and business partners then is what precipitated many more advances in diversifying the options available so that everyone can have a home. Certainly, it precipitated our plans to increase the affordable housing inventory in our community by 12 units, to offer home and hope to kūpuna overcoming homelessness – their own place to age-in-place in safety and dignity.

Just this past Friday, I was joined by my board of directors, staff, dignitaries, funders and supporters to bless the grounds of our affordable housing project. Twelve units may not seem much, but it represents twelve lives changed for the better by a critical housing intervention – one that could not have been realized without the utility of modular, factory-built homes.

Simply, Chair Wigg and SBCC members, we want for our community to have a suite of options. As housing costs continue to rise, and with real estate being quickly usurped, and more people become increasingly vulnerable, there is tremendous urgency for our organization and others like us to ensure that we advocate for what is right. We respectfully and strongly urge the SBCC to explore or enact mechanisms to ensure that our communities have as many options as possible.

Mahalo for your leadership and consideration. Please feel welcome to contact me should you have any questions or concerns, by phone at (808) 938-3050 or by email at bmenino@hopeserviceshawaii.org.

Sincerely,

Brandee Menino, MA
Chief Executive Officer



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