



Building strength and stability through shelter

May 14, 2021
Howard Wiig, Chair
Hawaii State Building Code Council

Aloha Chair Wiig and members of the State Building Code Council;

I am writing this letter in my capacity as Executive Director of Hawaii Habitat for Humanity Association (HHFHA), a nonprofit community development financial institution and State Support Organization for the direct service Habitat for Humanity organizations across the state to **STRONGLY ENCOURAGE SBCC TO ADOPT THE 2018 INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE (IBC) AS AMMENDED.**

I also encourage the SBCC to form the proposed Investigative Committee on Modular Construction and Factory Built Housing, in which the Chair and members of the council have previously expressed committed support in.

Furthermore, I encourage the SBCC to refrain from further amendment of the 2018 IBC as it pertains to any perceived or inferred reference to modular building construction or factory-built housing until such time the proposed SBCC Investigative Committee completes its review and due diligence investigation of those concepts.

The state of Hawaii is facing an unprecedented housing crisis. According to the 2015 Hawaii Housing Demand Study, from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, the projected long-run estimate of demand for total new housing in Hawaii is between 64,700 to 66,000 for the 2015 to 2025 period. Approximately 74% of these units need to be affordable for households earning \$75,000 annually or less.

Habitat for Humanity provides homeownership opportunities in partnership with low income families earning between \$35,000 and \$75,000 per year. Current market rate housing is not a viable option for the families with whom we partner – along with the majority of the housing supply required of the state in the coming years. A key part of success for our organization to provide affordable housing has been our self-help housing model, where we are able to reduce the constructions costs for our homes and therefore reduce the overall mortgages for our families.

Our encouragement of the adoption of the 2018 IBC without further amendments to modular building constructions is because we understand the opportunities of what modular housing can potentially solve in regard to the affordable housing needs of our community. The adoption of the 2018 IBC, as amended, will allow counties to conduct their review and amendment, engage their respective communities, and further refine the code to be applicable and appropriate to support safe constructions in the local jurisdiction.

With the high costs of construction across the country, our own self-help housing model is always in pursuit of safe and code compliant housing solutions that have the ability to bring down costs for our communities. They include modular construction methods and factory-built housing, which should be evaluated and considered to alleviate the current housing crisis that impacts every county in the state. With the number of housing units in demand across the state, all home builders should have the opportunity to build as efficiently as possible with solid solutions that will increase the production of homes, especially for those in most need. It is unfortunate that it is easier to order one of these homes from an out-of-state source and build it in Hawaii, but local builders are unable to get support for providing a decent local building solution. Please support our local businesses and adopt this measure. As national trends have shown, construction cost per square foot for a new manufactured home averages 10 to 20 percent less than costs for a comparable site-built home – with no compromises to safety and code compliance.

Mahalo for your time, leadership and consideration for our proposed encouragements. Please contact me directly at 808.847.7676 or jean@hawaiihabitat.org should you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Jean Lilley
Executive Director