

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT ON
THE STATE BUILDING CODE
COUNCIL DECEMBER 2024

SUBMITTED TO
THE THIRTY-THIRD STATE LEGISLATURE
IN RESPONSE TO SECTION 107-30, HRS

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES (DAGS)
ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL
DECEMBER 2024

Summary

Pursuant to Section 107-30, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the State Building Code Council (the Council) is required to submit an annual report to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular legislative session on the Council's activities and accomplishments. Sections 107-21 – 107-31, HRS, delineate the duties, responsibilities, and scope of the Council. It is responsible for reviewing and approving nationally recognized minimum requirements for design and construction to safeguard life, property, and the general welfare. These requirements are formulated in national codes and standards relating to buildings, residences, electrical, plumbing, fire, energy, etc. The Council is required to adopt State building codes from the national codes and standards within two years of their publication date, or the national code or standard shall automatically become the State code, until superseded by the adoption of the amended version of the national code. Realizing the value and importance of the Council's mission, its "voluntary" membership continued to meet to work on national model building code updates and amendments until suspended by the Governor's Proclamations on Affordable Housing. The meetings are held in virtual and open forum pursuant to HRS Chapter 92. More information regarding Hawai'i State Building Codes, investigative committees, code adoption timelines, meeting agendas and minutes, can be found at: <http://ags.hawaii.gov/bcc/>.

Historically, investigative committees, comprised of subject matter experts, produce and complete statewide specific technical draft amendments to the national model codes and standards, are reviewed and approved by the Subcommittee of Building Officials (SBO). The Council then reviews the approved draft amendments while allowing an open comment period before approving the final amendments. The national codes and standards with approved statewide technical amendments apply to all State design and construction within one year of its effective date and are the basis for the respective county building codes. Administration and enforcement of these codes are primarily done by the counties. The governing body of each county amends, adopts, and updates the Hawai'i State Building Codes as they apply within their jurisdiction without approval of the Council within two years after the adoption of each State Building Code. If the county does not amend the State Building Codes within the two years, the Hawai'i State Building Codes become applicable as an interim county building code. The two-year mandate helps the counties initiate timely action in their county ordinance adoption process for each state building code.

The application and enforcement of these codes result in: (1) substantial savings in long-term operating, energy, and construction costs for publicly and privately owned and operated facilities; (2) construction of homes which are better protected from the effects of natural and man-made disasters; (3) businesses and an economy in Hawai'i which are more resilient in the aftermath of disasters. Indeed, updating building codes

generally reduced long-term costs—one dollar of prevention saves three dollars in recovery.

Membership

The State Building Code Council members and their affiliations are:

1. Howard Wiig, Chair, State Energy Office
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT)
2. Lyle Carden, Vice Chair, Structural Engineers Association of Hawai'i
3. Leolynne Escalona, County of Kauai
4. Clement Ching, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
5. Donald Aweau, Director, Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency
6. Daniel Moats, American Institute of Architects, Hawai'i State Council
7. Dawn Amano, City and County of Honolulu
8. Gary Lum, State Fire Council
9. Kevin Hirayama, Subcontractors Association of Hawai'i
10. Zendo Kern, County of Hawai'i
11. Lance Nakamura, County of Maui
11. Keith Sawamura, Building Industry Association of Hawai'i
12. Keith Regan, Comptroller, Department of Accounting and General Services (non-voting)

Achievements During the Year

The following code was adopted

The SBCC did not adopt any codes during the year in accord with to the Governor's Proclamation on Affordable Housing.

Scope of Work Conducted or Initiated During the Year

Investigative committees, which are comprised of experts in industry and government, served on a voluntary basis, reviewed, and proposed amendments to the national model codes and standards listed above.

There was no work conducted in accord with the Governor's Proclamation on Affordable Housing.

Annual Operating Cost of the Council is Estimated to be \$150,000

Since its inception in 2007, the SBCC has not received funding for staff personnel or operating costs. Besides reviewing national codes and standards and formulating a

State amendment package, volunteer members are tasked with responding to code inquiries, submitting legislative testimony, and preparing and finalizing meeting agendas, minutes, and annual reports in accordance with State Sunshine law requirements. Due to a lack of funding, the SBCC was not able to meet the statutory deadlines for providing State appropriate amendments to the Building Codes. For example, we are currently in a situation where the 2021 model Codes for the International Building Code, International Residential Code and International Energy Conservation Code were adopted by default in the State without state amendments, which has a major cost impact to any construction that would be built under these codes. It also does not give the counties much time to develop their own building code provisions, particularly the administrative provisions, which are not part of the State Codes.

While it may provide some assistance, even one-time funding appropriations do not significantly address this issue. State Building Code Council members support having a permanently funded position that can be used to administer the codes, set timelines, initiate cost-benefit studies of key future code changes, assist in the formatting of technical provisions, improve communication with the public and other roles cannot be thoroughly performed with the volunteer members.