



February 7, 2018

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
The Honorable Russell E. Ruderman, Vice Chair
and members
Senate Committee on Government Operations
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
and members
Senate Committee on Public Safety,
Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

RE: Support for SB3006, Relating to Building Codes

Dear Chairs Kim and Nishihara, Vice Chairs Ruderman and Wakai, and Members:

The Hawai'i Construction Alliance is comprised of the Hawai'i Regional Council of Carpenters; the Laborers' International Union of North America, Local 368; the Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' Union, Local 630; International Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers, Local 1; and the Operating Engineers, Local Union No. 3. Together, the member unions of the Hawai'i Construction Alliance represent 15,000 working men and women in the basic crafts of Hawai'i's construction industry.

We support SB3006, Relating to Building Codes. The bill would:

- Allow for state projects to be designed and constructed using the building code that is **most cost effective**, including the use of an alternative code if the alternative code is more cost effective than the code usually prescribed in HRS 107-25;
- Only allow an alternative code if there is **no negative effect on the performance of the project or public health and safety**; and
- Only allow the use of an alternative code **with the approval of the State Building Code Council**.

As you know, the Hawai'i Construction Alliance has been extremely concerned with the high cost of construction in the state, particularly for public works projects and affordable housing projects. In previous legislative sessions, we have promoted innovative solutions such as tax incentives, streamlining of procurement, and better training of workers to help ensure that projects move forward in a timely and expeditious way. **SB3006 builds upon these efforts by allowing alternative, more cost-effective building codes to be used for state projects.**

Currently, there are nationally- and internationally-recognized codes which govern fire safety, plumbing, building construction, residential construction, energy conservation, electrical installations, among other aspects of building design. Each code requires certain standards at minimum, and also allows or disallows certain other standards. These requirements all factor into the eventual cost of a building project.

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Cost Savings By Utilizing One Code Over Another

The use of one code instead of another, or the flexibility to choose which code to adhere to, can reap savings.

For example, within the plumbing code, there are two codes which are used nationwide: the Uniform Plumbing Code, which is the code prescribed for use in Hawai‘i under HRS 107-25 and a handful of other states, and the International Plumbing Code, whose use is allowed in the vast majority of mainland states. States which strictly adhere to one code versus another, like Hawai‘i, prevent themselves from realizing potential cost savings from alternative codes.

To illustrate this, consider the example of an air-admittance valve, which is a method for venting a drainage system. Such valves are allowed by the International Plumbing Code, but not the Uniform Plumbing Code. States which have allowed air-admittance valves in public works projects or housing projects under the International Plumbing Code have reaped significant savings.

A study done for the construction of Ford Field, home of the Detroit Lions, showed that the choice to utilize methods from the more cost-effective International Plumbing Code resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings for just the drainage, waste, and vent piping systems alone. Another study done on a high rise in Tennessee demonstrated that use of vent systems allowed under the more cost-effective International Plumbing Code resulted in savings of over 70%, the savings from which could be passed on to future residents.

No Negative Impact on Public Health and Safety From Use of an Alternative Code

No alternative codes that might be considered under this bill would have a negative impact on public health or safety, as HRS 107-21 already requires any “codes and standards” utilized in the state of Hawaii to be “nationally recognized minimum requirements that shall be met for design and construction to safeguard life, property, and the general welfare.”

Furthermore, federal projects, which are governed by rules promulgated by the General Services Administration (GSA), are in certain instances required to utilize codes which differ from those typically prescribed for use in Hawai‘i under HRS 107-25. Federal projects in Hawai‘i which utilize alternative codes have not experienced or caused negative impacts to public health and safety for building users – whether federal employees, military members, or others.

Approval Required by State Building Code Council

The bill would require for approval from the State Building Code Council before any alternative code is utilized, thus allowing for thoughtful deliberation from all industry stakeholders.

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In summary, we believe that the use of alternative codes should be encouraged and allowed to the extent that they provide options for cost-effectiveness; do not compromise public health and safety; and retain input from the State Building Code Council.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tyler Dos Santos-Tam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Tyler Dos Santos-Tam
Executive Director
Hawai'i Construction Alliance
execdir@hawaiiconstructionalliance.org

A red rectangular stamp with a double-line border. Inside the rectangle, the word "LATE" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and vertically.

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SB-3006

Submitted on: 2/7/2018 3:39:44 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/8/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brooke Wilson	Hawaii Regional Council of Carpenters	Support	No

Comments: