

JAN 17 2024

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HOUSING.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that challenges, such as  
2 the high cost of housing and limited available, affordable  
3 housing options contribute to lower college graduation rates,  
4 especially for low-income and first-generation college students.  
5 Limited affordable housing options also contribute to the  
6 shortage of teachers and staff at public schools and colleges,  
7 as wages are often insufficient to meet the State's high cost of  
8 living. According to a 2015 report on housing insecurity for  
9 United States college students, the United States Department of  
10 Housing and Urban Development found that the average cost of  
11 room and board for an in-state college student at a public,  
12 four-year college accounted for more than half of the student's  
13 living expenses and that the average cost of room and board for  
14 an in-state college student at a public, two-year college  
15 accounted for over two-thirds of the student's living expenses.  
16 The report further found that the cost of housing, which has  
17 steadily increased during the past twenty-five years, is a major



1 part of a college student's living expenses, and that many  
2 students struggle to find adequate, affordable housing options  
3 near their campus.

4 The legislature further finds that there is a need for  
5 affordable housing for teachers and staff of public educational  
6 institutions. Currently, the teachers' housing program  
7 administered by the department of education is only intended to  
8 provide temporary housing for teachers in rural areas that have  
9 limited affordable housing opportunities. According to a 2023  
10 Civil Beat article, there are currently fifty-one rentable  
11 teacher housing units available for rent statewide, none of  
12 which are located on Oahu or Kauai. The legislature notes that  
13 Act 172, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, appropriated \$170,000,000  
14 for both fiscal year 2023-2024 and fiscal year 2024-2025 to the  
15 school facilities authority, in part, for the construction of  
16 housing prioritized for teachers, educators, and staff, in an  
17 effort to recruit and retain qualified teachers in the State.

18 The legislature believes that the State should urgently  
19 increase the inventory of affordable housing for college  
20 students and teachers and staff of public educational  
21 institutions in the State. One obstacle to achieving this



1 urgent need can be environmental assessments that can take a  
2 substantial amount of time to complete. Exempting housing  
3 developments that are reserved for college students and teachers  
4 and staff of public educational institutions from undergoing an  
5 environmental assessment can help address the urgent need for  
6 the construction of affordable housing targeted for these  
7 individuals. Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to exempt  
8 certain housing projects from environmental assessment  
9 requirements.

10 SECTION 2. Section 343-5.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
11 amended to read as follows:

12 "[+]§343-5.5[+] Exception to applicability of chapter.

13 (a) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, for any  
14 primary action that requires a permit or approval that is not  
15 subject to a discretionary consent and that involves a secondary  
16 action that is ancillary and limited to the installation,  
17 improvement, renovation, construction, or development of  
18 infrastructure within an existing public right-of-way or  
19 highway, that secondary action shall be exempt from this  
20 chapter; provided that the applicant for the primary action



1 shall submit documentation from the appropriate agency  
2 confirming that no further discretionary approvals are required.

3 (b) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the  
4 development, improvement, construction, or renovation of a  
5 housing project shall be exempt from this chapter; provided that  
6 the housing project is:

7 (1) Directly controlled and managed by the university of  
8 Hawaii system for the exclusive purpose of housing its  
9 students, faculty, or staff;

10 (2) Located on land owned by, or leased to, the university  
11 of Hawaii system, and developed by the university for  
12 the exclusive purpose of housing its students,  
13 faculty, or staff;

14 (3) Located on land to which the school facilities  
15 authority holds title for the exclusive purpose of  
16 housing department of education teachers, educators,  
17 and staff; or

18 (4) Directly controlled and managed by the department of  
19 education pursuant to section 302A-832.

20 [~~b~~] (c) As used in this section:

21 "Discretionary consent" means:



- 1 (1) An action as defined in section 343-2; or
- 2 (2) An approval from a decision-making authority in an
- 3 agency, which approval is subject to a public hearing.

4 "Infrastructure" includes waterlines and water facilities,  
5 wastewater lines and wastewater facilities, gas lines and gas  
6 facilities, drainage facilities, electrical, communications,  
7 telephone, and cable television utilities, and highway, roadway,  
8 and driveway improvements.

9 "Primary action" means an action outside of the highway or  
10 public right-of-way that is on private property.

11 "Secondary action" means an action involving infrastructure  
12 within the highway or public right-of-way."

13 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
14 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

15 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ATG', is written over a horizontal line.



# S.B. NO. 2002

**Report Title:**

Affordable Housing; College Student Housing; Teacher Housing;  
Educational Staff Housing; Environmental Assessments; Exemption

**Description:**

Exempts certain housing projects reserved for certain students,  
faculty, and staff of public educational institutions from  
environmental assessment requirements.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

