

**Testimony of the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and  
Landscape Architects**

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection  
Thursday, March 28, 2024  
9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 229 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:  
H.B. 1758, H.D. 1, RELATING TO PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS**

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tony Lau, and I am a civil engineering member on the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects (Board). The Board **STRONGLY OPPOSES** this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to clarify that code compliance review of plans for construction applicable to the specific engineering field is considered lawful experience in engineering work.

The Board strongly opposes this bill because accepting 100% plan review only as qualifying experience would allow someone with insufficient experience to qualify for a professional engineer license, thereby jeopardizing the health, safety, and welfare of consumers. A person who reviews plans and calculations may be aware of building codes, but they are not performing integrated design or other standard engineering practices. The Board notes that it already accepts some plan review as qualifying lawful experience, but not 100% plan review as this bill proposes.

It is imperative that applicants have the full depth and breadth of experience required as, once licensed, section 464-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes allows professional engineers to provide the full range of engineering services including: “consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, design, or observation of construction or operation, in connection with any public or private utilities, structures, buildings, machines, equipment, processes, works or projects, wherein the safeguarding of life, health or property is concerned or involved.”

While the Board understands concerns about a shortage of engineers, the Board suggests other solutions to this issue be pursued which do not result in adjusting

licensure standards in a manner which jeopardizes public safety. The Board currently has a permitted interaction group in the process of researching the appropriateness and ramifications of the actions proposed by this measure. The group will report its findings to the Board once complete, at which time the findings can also be provided to this Committee. For now, the Board would like to note that most states do **not** allow 100% “plan review” for code compliance to qualify as meeting the total experience requirement for an engineering license.

The Board respectfully requests that this measure be held in Committee to allow it the opportunity to discuss this matter with the counties, professional organizations, and other stakeholders, and complete the research begun by its permitted interaction group.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA LIMAHANA  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 10TH FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
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RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEJA



NOLA N. MIYASAKI  
DIRECTOR  
PO'O  
FLORENCIO C. BAGUIO, JR.  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
KOKUA PO'O

March 25, 2024

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection  
The Senate, Room 229  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: House Bill No. 1758, H.D. 1, Relating to Professional Engineers

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) supports House Bill No. 1758, H.D. 1, which clarifies that code compliance review of plans for construction applicable to the specific engineering field is considered "lawful experience in engineering work."

By expanding the definition of "lawful experience in engineering work" to include code compliance review as creditable experience, this bill will increase the pool of candidates eligible to take the required written exam to obtain licensure as a professional engineer in the State of Hawaii. In addition, this bill enables current plans examining engineers in the City who gain relevant and valuable experience from reviewing electrical, plumbing, and building plans, to count their City work hours towards the prerequisites for the written licensing examination; without this legislation, there would be no opportunity for these engineers to become licensed nor to have the opportunity to advance in their careers. This bill provides a clear path to promotion through licensure for this class of engineer employees, the lack of which penalizes them unfairly.

An important aspect of this bill is that it will assist the City to train its engineers to become licensed, addressing the shortage of licensed plans examining engineers who serve a critical role in the City's plans review process. It is anticipated that this will ultimately facilitate more timely issuance of permits, to the benefit of our community.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nola N. Miyasaki".

Nola N. Miyasaki  
Director

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING**  
**KA 'OIHANA HO'OLĀLĀ A ME NĀ PALAPALA 'AE**  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 7TH FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
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RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



DAWN TAKEUCHI APUNA  
DIRECTOR  
PO'O

JIRO A. SUMADA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O

March 28, 2024

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Commerce  
and Consumer Protection  
Hawai'i State Senate  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Keohokalole and Committee Members:

**Subject: House Bill No. 1758, HD 1**  
**Relating to Professional Engineers**

The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) **strongly supports** House Bill No. 1758, which clarifies that code compliance review of plans for construction applicable to the specific engineering field is considered lawful experience in engineering work, for purposes of qualification for engineering licensure.

DPP believes that professional level government plan review experience should qualify engineers for sitting for the engineer licensing exam because it entails a suitable and comprehensive standard of competency in engineering through the required review and approval of engineering projects under pertinent codes, ordinances and laws. Again, this Bill will only allow a government engineer to sit for a licensure exam. This person must still pass the exam to be licensed.

DPP plans examining engineers play a critical role in safeguarding the health and safety of our community. As local government agencies struggle to compete for engineers with the private sector and federal agencies, it is imperative that we provide a clear career path for advancement of our engineers. For example, DPP requires professional engineer licensure in order to be promoted to a supervisory engineer. A newly graduated engineering student would more likely choose working for the DPP knowing that they could qualify for licensure as they progressed in their experience with the department, rather than be uncertain if they'd qualify or have to leave the public sector for additional or different experience. This Bill would thereby provide greater equity to local government agencies and incentivize engineers to choose a career in public service.

The Honorable Jarrett Keahokalole, Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Commerce  
and Consumer Protection  
Hawai'i State Senate  
House Bill No. 1758, HD 1  
March 28, 2024  
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Opponents of this Bill argue that the measure will allow someone with “insufficient experience” to qualify for a professional engineer license, thereby, “jeopardizing the health, safety and welfare of the consumer.” The irony is our plan reviewers are tasked with reviewing plans submitted by licensed engineers to ensure the health and safety of the general public, and often find errors in these draft plans. We need to recognize the value of government plan reviewers and provide them validation, parity, and incentive to envision and continue their careers with the City.

Finally, this Bill has a defective effective date. Time is of the essence as we continue to lose engineers or are lesser considered as a career option. We are making concurrent efforts to raise salaries, provide training and other incentives, but know that this Bill is key.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Apuna', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dawn Takeuchi Apuna  
Director

**OFFICE OF HOUSING**  
**KE KE'ENA HO'OLĀLĀ KŪKULA HALE**  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 306 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-4675 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • WEBSITE: [www.honolulu.gov/housing](http://www.honolulu.gov/housing)

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



**LATE**

DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
PO'O HO'OKO

KEVIN AUGER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O

March 25, 2024

2024-HOU-020

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Committee Members:

**SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of HB1758, HD1 – Relating to Professional Engineers**

Hearing: Thurs., March 28, 2024, 9:30 a.m. at the State Capitol, Rm. 229

The Office of Housing **strongly supports HB1758, HD1**, which recognizes professional-level government employment as a qualifying experience for licensure as a professional engineer.

The City and County of Honolulu's Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) plays a critical role that affects the construction industry and the production of housing on O'ahu. Prolonged review times due to capacity constraints is often cited as a top issue facing the department. One of the biggest challenges for DPP, and for government in general, is recruitment and retention, especially given the pay differential between the government and private sector.

This bill can serve to help address this issue by supporting DPP in its efforts to attract and promote qualified staff while also providing our homegrown university graduates with access to a pathway to a professional career in the City and County of Honolulu.

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection  
March 25, 2024  
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denise Iseri-Matsubara", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Denise Iseri-Matsubara  
Executive Director  
Office of Housing

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Formby", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael D. Formby  
Managing Director

Testimony of  
Pacific Resource Partnership

Senate Committee On Commerce And Consumer Protection  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

HB 1758 HD1—Relating To Professional Engineers  
Thursday, March 28, 2024  
9:30 A.M.

Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee:

Pacific Resource Partnership (PRP) is a nonprofit organization that represents the Hawai'i Regional Council of Carpenters, the largest construction union in the state with approximately 6,000 members, in addition to more than 250 diverse contractors ranging from mom-and-pop owned businesses to national companies.

PRP writes in **support** of HB 1758 HD1, which clarifies that plan review of electrical, plumbing, and building plans, is considered lawful experience in engineering work.

We support the clarifying language of HB 1758 HD1 to allow professional level plan review experience to qualify engineers to take the engineer licensing exam, which they must pass to obtain a license. The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) requires professional engineer licensure to be promoted to a supervisory engineer. A newly graduated engineering student would more likely choose to work for the DPP knowing that they could qualify for licensure as they progress in their experience with the department. This bill helps DPP to hire and retain engineers with valuable institutional knowledge within the department, which is essential in improving the efficiency of the department and safeguarding the health and safety of our community.

As such, we respectfully request your favorable decision on this measure. Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony.





*Expanding the range of opportunities for all by  
developing, managing and promoting quality  
affordable housing and diverse communities.*



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+ Testimony of EAH Housing | Hawai'i Region  
RELATING TO HB1758 HD1

March 28, 2024 at 9:30 AM  
Written Testimony Only

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**Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection**

Chair Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair Carol Fukunaga,  
Members Angus McKelvey, Herbert "Tim" Richards III, and Brenton Awa

**STRONG SUPPORT**

We are delighted to express our enthusiastic support for HB 1758. At EAH Housing, we believe in fostering a supportive environment for professional growth and development.

HB 1758 proposes a positive step forward by explicitly recognizing professional-level government employment as a qualifying experience for licensure as a professional engineer. We appreciate and endorse this approach, as it acknowledges the significant value that government engineering experience brings to the table.

In our view, professional-level government engineering experience is inherently rich in the requisite competency for licensure. The intricate process of reviewing and approving engineering projects under the guidance of applicable codes, ordinances, and laws ensures a thorough understanding and application of engineering principles.

Moreover, we understand the challenges faced by government agencies in recruiting and retaining skilled professionals, especially in roles as critical as engineers. The pay differentials between public and private sectors can be substantial, making it crucial for local governments to establish a clear career path for their engineering professionals.

This bill not only enhances the career prospects of engineering professionals in local government but also serves as a beacon for new graduates from University of Hawaii entering the workforce. The assurance that they can progress in their licensure journey while gaining valuable experience in the public sector makes a career in local government more attractive and accessible.

Thank you for considering our endorsement of this significant initiative.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Seddon".

Karen Seddon  
Regional Vice President  
EAH Housing

EAH Housing is a non-profit corporation founded with the belief that attractive affordable rental housing is the cornerstone to sustainable, healthy, and livable communities.

1001 Bishop Street, Suite 2880  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
(808) 466-7774



March 28, 2024

TO: HONORABLE JARRETT KEOHOKALOLE, CHAIR, HONORABLE CAROL FUKUNAGA, VICE CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF H.B. 1758 HD1, RELATING TO PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS.** Clarifies that code compliance review of plans for construction applicable to the specific engineering field is considered lawful experience in engineering work.

HEARING

DATE: Thursday, March 28, 2024  
TIME: 9:30 a.m.  
PLACE: Capitol Room 229

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga and Members of the Committee,

The General Contractors Association of Hawaii (GCA) is an organization comprised of approximately five hundred (500) general contractors, subcontractors, and construction related firms. The GCA was established in 1932 and is the largest construction association in the State of Hawaii. Our mission is to elevate Hawaii's construction industry and strengthen the foundation of our community.

GCA **supports** H.B. 1758 HD1, which clarifies that code compliance review of plans for construction applicable to the specific engineering field is considered lawful experience in engineering work.

We support the measure to allow existing city plans examining engineers to obtain an engineering license without having to leave city employment. This will encourage prospective applicants and retain city employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

▪ March 27, 2024

The Honorable Jarett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair  
and Members of the House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Re: Testimony – HB 1758, HD1 Relating to Professional Engineers  
Hearing: March 28, 2024 at 9:30 AM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Committee Members:

Stanford Carr Development submits testimony in **support** of House Bill 1758, which proposes to clarify that plan review of electrical, plumbing, and building plans, is considered lawful experience in engineering work.

Hawaii Administrative Rule §16-115-39(a)(1) defines lawful experience to include, "...office training or experience in engineering under the supervision of licensed professional engineers who are in the same branch in which the person seeks licensure."

A professional engineer as defined in Hawaii Revised Statute §464-1 includes performing work that plan reviewers engage in daily, such as consultation, investigation, and evaluation, specifically consultation with submitting engineers regarding code compliance and safeguarding of life, health, or property through the application of engineering principles and data.

We support the clarifying language of HB 1758 to allow existing City and County of Honolulu (City) Plans Examining Engineers to obtain an engineering license based on the plan review experience qualifying as lawful experience. The clarification will encourage upward mobility within the plans review division, as entry level staff will be able to obtain licensure without leaving the City. Additionally, the retention of institutional knowledge will improve efficiency for the public as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this measure.

Respectfully,



Stanford S. Carr