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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Tuesday, February 13, 2024
4:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Providing Comments on
SB 2994

RELATING TO THE STATE BUILDING CODE.

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) offers comments on SB 2994 which slows down the required three-year code adoption cycle to six years and clarifies that the counties may adopt and amend building codes after the two-year time frame.

HSEO has concerns with provisions in section 1 of the bill.

National codes are updated by national experts based on lessons learned from disasters and failure analyses, as well as advances in technologies.¹ HSEO is concerned with provisions of this measure that would obstruct or delay the adoption of current building codes, as doing so would reduce the rate at which better designs and technologies are included in Hawai'i's buildings. Timely adoption of building codes and standards has such critical importance to the safety and well-being of communities that the Federal Emergency Management Agency requires timely code adoption as a non-negotiable criterion in its funding for disaster mitigation, resilience and recovery

¹ National Institute of Building Sciences. *Benefits and Challenges of a Timely Code Adoption Cycle*.
<https://www.caba.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/IS-2018-92.pdf>

projects. This is explained more on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Building Code Adoption Tracking website.²

Hawai'i Revised Statutes 107-24 states that "the adoption of a code or standard shall be within two years of the official publication date of the code or standard," synchronizing Hawai'i's code adoption with national code adoption. Failure to follow the national cycle could put the health, safety, and welfare of building occupants at risk. Noncompliance could also jeopardize opportunities for federal funding which is often contingent on timely code adoption. HSEO cautions that weakening Hawai'i's existing building code adoption schedule would not be a prudent post-Maui Wildfires course of action.

HSEO advises that up-to-date energy codes are important and cost effective means of reaching Hawaii's energy and decarbonization goals. In HSEO's [Hawai'i Pathways to Decarbonization Report](#), delivered to the Hawai'i State Legislature in December of 2023, building codes are identified as one of the key drivers of energy efficiency within the state and that "energy efficiency and conservation are the single most important and most cost-effective measure to meaningfully reduce electricity demand..."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

² <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/risk-management/building-science/bcat>