

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 7<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-8000 • FAX: (808) 768-6041  
DEPT. WEB SITE: [www.honolulu.gov](http://www.honolulu.gov) • CITY WEB SITE: [www.honolulu.gov](http://www.honolulu.gov)

KIRK CALDWELL  
MAYOR



KATHY K. SOKUGAWA  
ACTING DIRECTOR

TIMOTHY F. T. HIU  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EUGENE H. TAKAHASHI  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

November 14, 2018

The Honorable Ernest Y. Martin  
Chair and Presiding Officer  
and Members  
Honolulu City Council  
530 South King Street, Room 202  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Martin and Councilmembers:

SUBJECT: Bill 64 (2018), CD1 - Relating to Building Permits.

We are unable to support Bill 64, CD1. As noted in past oral comments to the Zoning and Housing Committee, this Bill would do little to improve the overall building permit process and may cause a subsequent backlog of other permit applications already in the system, such as large commercial buildings. It may even affect inspections by increasing the time to review individual projects.

Bill 64, CD1, could lead to incomplete review of plans in order to satisfy the 60-day turnaround deadline. This can lead to discovery of code violations by our inspectors during construction which can result in notice of violations or revocation of permits. This will require the applicant to fill out a new building permit application and/or submit revised drawings for re-review. These plans must be re-routed to affected agencies for approval. So while the initial permit review timeframe may be shortened, the overall process may become longer, and more expensive for the applicant. We believe the economic impacts would be more serious to construction workers if projects were stopped suddenly, as opposed to delays in anticipated work starts.

Additionally, not all permits for single-family and two-family detached dwellings are eligible for the one-time review process. It cannot be used for properties located in flood hazard districts or have discretionary permits such as Existing Use Permits, Conditional Use Permits, or Variances.

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At the moment, reviews are taking much longer because of new review procedures for ePlans, additional agency reviews (e.g., Storm Water Quality, State Historical Preservation, Department of Education, etc.), and prioritizing ADU permits. The delays of permit issuance are also attributed to plans that are improperly drawn or do not address the Land Use Ordinance or Building Codes. Like other agencies, we are experiencing relatively high turnover due to retirements, and the resulting staff shortage and training processes are affecting permit productivity.

We recognize the problems related to current processing times, and accept the intent of Bill 64. We ask for a deferral of this Bill so that we can discuss some of our short- and long-term plans for improving the permit process. To approve this bill would give unrealistic expectations to the public and permit applicants in particular, given the aforementioned challenges.

We again request Bill 64 be deferred.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 768-8000.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Kathy K. Sokugawa  
Acting Director

APPROVED:

  
Roy K. Amemiya, Jr.  
Managing Director