



HAWAII REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS

October 9, 2024

TO: Hāmākua Community Development Plan Action Committee

FROM: Mark Anthony Clemente
Government Relations
Hawaii Regional Council of Carpenters

SUBJECT: Final Draft General Plan 2045

On behalf of the Hawaii Regional Council of Carpenters, I am writing to express our strong support for initiatives aimed at revitalizing the community of Hāmākua through local job creation and sustainable development.

Hāmākua faces unique challenges, including a pressing need for infrastructure improvements and a lack of accessible job opportunities. Many residents are seeking better prospects elsewhere, leading to a loss of skilled labor and community cohesion. Notably, while rural communities across the country may have larger percentages of affordable housing, the North Hilo- Hāmākua Coast Villages and North Kohala have some of the lowest percentages of affordable housing in our state. This disparity highlights the urgent need for targeted efforts to increase housing availability and affordability in these areas.

As one of the few organizations advocating for affordable housing, we recognize that ensuring access to safe and affordable homes is critical for the future of our community. It is essential that we support our local high school graduates by creating job opportunities that pay a living wage. When young people can secure good jobs in their own community, it enables them to stay, thrive, and contribute to Hāmākua's growth.

Investing in the development of infrastructure in Hāmākua —such as roads, public facilities, and utilities—will help create a more resilient community. We urge that projects awarded to contractors prioritize hiring local skilled craftspeople, ensuring that our neighbors benefit from the work being done in their own backyards. This investment not only supports the local economy but also fosters pride and ownership among residents.

Furthermore, we strongly advocate for all projects on county lands to be covered under HRS § 104, which ensures prevailing wages. Living wages are essential for attracting and retaining skilled tradespeople, ultimately leading to higher-quality workmanship and improved project outcomes. By adhering to these standards, we can ensure that the work being done in Hāmākua is of the highest caliber, contributing to a stronger and more sustainable community.

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