

Green issues emergency proclamation on housing aimed at streamlining new projects



Gov. Josh Green issued an emergency proclamation on housing Monday aimed at streamlining regulatory processes for the development of 50,000 housing units.

By Isa Farfan

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HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - Gov. Josh Green issued an emergency proclamation on housing Monday aimed at streamlining regulatory processes for the development of 50,000 housing units.

In a news conference at the state Capitol, Green declared that Hawaii's housing crisis an emergency, and that speeding up housing development will minimize its adverse impacts on residents.

But some, including Sierra Club of Hawaii Executive Director Wayne Tanaka, worry that the proclamation will compromise environmental and cultural laws while not addressing affordable housing.

The proclamation will not only address affordable housing units, but all housing developments defined as "new owner-occupied residential units offered for sale or rental to Hawaii residents," as well as state housing projects and infrastructure related to housing.

Green's administration hopes that by including all housing, the proclamation will begin to address critical shortages of critical parts of the workforce as well as open up housing options for younger buyers.

Working professionals including nurses, firefighters and teachers often do not qualify for affordable housing units, but do not make enough to afford the median home price,

This gap has driven out critical members of Hawaii's workforce according to Green.

Tanaka, however, called the emergency proclamation "alarming."

"This isn't about housing our people. If you look at it, there are no baseline affordability requirements."

Hawaii has the highest median home price in the U.S., almost three times the national average. It also has the most housing regulations in the country.

"We don't have enough houses for our people. It is really that simple. If anyone says this isn't an emergency or isn't a crisis, they don't know what's happening in Hawaii," Green said.

According to Chief Housing Officer Nani Madeiros, it takes three times longer to obtain a building permit in Hawaii. Regulations add between \$233,000 to \$325,000 to the cost of developing a new home.

Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi offered his support for the measure and called housing his top priority.

The proclamation expires in a year.

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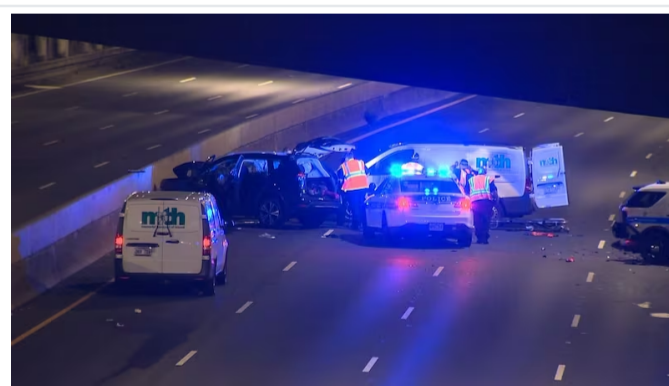
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