

BILL 44 (2022)

Testimony

September 17, 2022

Esther Kia'aina, Chair, and Members of the Committee on Housing and the
Economy
Honolulu City Council

From: Dorothy Pyle, Emeritus History Professor, UHMC

Comments on Bill 44 (2022) to "re-establish" the Oahu Historic
Preservation Committee

My interest and participation in historic preservation issues in Hawaii goes back to 1970 when I was hired by the state of Hawaii as the historian for the newly founded Hawaii Register of Historic Places (now the State Historic Preservation Office). As a group we were charged with creating the policies and mechanisms for the recording, evaluating, registering, and recommending archaeological and historical sites/places/items to the National Register of Historic Places. As you are aware this is a process that has been ongoing for more than 50 years and is needed now more than ever due to population, tourism, and development pressures on our historical past.

I have had many opportunities to husband the issues of preservation along in the past 50 years. I have lived on Maui since the 1970's and while teaching at the college here I assisted the Maui County Planning Department in fulfilling the requirements to become a Certified Local Government. A CLG has certain benefits in recognition and funding from the federal government and I know Maui County has never regretted its participation in this program. Part of CLG certification is the creation of a recognized Board of Commissioners to evaluate lands, buildings, sites, and *wahi pana* for special considerations due to their historic value. Maui has the Maui County Cultural Resources Commission. I served on this Commission for 8 years, 5 years as the chair. The input of knowledge from the community members on the Commission is invaluable to decision making in the county planning process. I strongly recommend that the Honolulu City Council adopt a similar process and commission.

One more comment on the value of Maui's Cultural Resources Commission—
When applications and requests come into the Planning Department that may have questions about historical value, the requests come in with vocal and written comments and sometimes demands.

At the MCCRC meeting concerning the issue there are often highly paid lawyers and consultants to argue their requests for bulldozing or razing historic properties. But the sites themselves sit MUTE. They have no lawyers and consultants to speak for them. That is the role of the members of the Cultural Resources Commission/Historic Preservation Committee. I often found myself at odds with developers and sometimes even the Mayor, but the voices of the sites begged to be heard. Our heritage in Hawaii demands that those voices continue to be heard and are not smothered by growth and development.

I am happy to share additional comments and information with any of you.
Please contact me at dpyle@hawaii.edu or 808-298-1178



September 20, 2022

CITY COUNCIL – CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

Committee on Housing and the Economy

Chair Esther Kia'aina; Vice Chair Calvin Say; and Committee Members

Public Hearing – Tuesday, September 20, 2022 10:30 A.M.

**TESTIMONY of WILLIAM F. ANONSEN
MANAGING PARTNER/PRINCIPAL of THE MARITIME GROUP, LLC
IN SUPPORT of COUNCIL BILL 44 (2022)**

My name is William Anonsen and I'm the Managing Director-Partner/Principal of THE MARITIME GROUP, LLC. We strongly support Council Bill 44 which proposed to reestablish the O'ahu Historic Preservation Council for the City & County of Honolulu by amending the ordinance.

The purpose of preservation is to protect the distinctive historic qualities of old places and is an excellent tool to achieve an inclusive and active community that is conscious of built form concerns. These efforts recognize the need for citizens to be involved in their community in an effort to make it a better place to live. It is not simply making old buildings look new. Historic places may be used for their original purposes or be put to use in other ways that allow them to retain their historical and/or cultural significance. Historic preservation can serve a variety of purposes. Preservation is more than repairing aging buildings, it is a significant technique for encouraging economic vitality and preserving cultural identity and meaning.

The reestablishment of the O'ahu Historic Preservation Council will significantly help in these collective efforts by adopting policies that support historic preservation of residential and commercial spaces that are an asset to their communities. The O'ahu Historic Preservation Council serves in a critical advisory role to local government policy decisions and may also be used to oversee standards set in place by historic districts.

Continuing education and advocacy to enhance the economic and community development potential of historic preservation programs, such as Historic Districts, identifying, protecting, and enhancing buildings, places, and objects of historical and cultural significance. Government agencies, private entities, and individual citizens need to be actively engaged in these cooperative efforts to ensure successful outcomes.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment in support of this measure.

Sincerely,

William F. Anonsen

William F. Anonsen

Managing Director-Partner/Principal

Kēhaunani Cachola Abad, PhD

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**Housing and the Economy Committee
Council Chair Tommy Waters
Council Vice Chair Esther Kia'āina**

Bill 44, O'ahu Historic Preservation Commission

September 20, 2022

Aloha nō Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia'āina, and esteemed Councilmembers,

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to share my **strong support** for Bill 44, which seeks to update, improve, and ultimately spark the implementation of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, Chapter 3-10, establishing an O'ahu Historic Preservation Commission (OHPC).

My support for Bill 44 stems from my involvement in helping with the bill that established Chapter 3-10, my professional training as a Hawaiian archaeologist, and decades of volunteer community advocacy related to wahi pana and wahi kūpuna.

This bill involves significant improvements that would:

1. Ensure the non-duplication and cohesion of historic preservation efforts of the Honolulu City and County and the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD).
2. Require the development of an "O'ahu historic preservation system" to inventory significant historic properties that would be integrated in the SHPD inventory system.
3. Strengthen the composition of the OHPC.
4. Enable an expert OHPC to review proposed projects that may adversely impact historic properties and make recommendations to the SHPD (rather than the DPP that is not resourced with experts able to address such matters).
5. Encourage the Commission to advocate in support of historic preservation initiatives and significant historic properties.

If passed and implemented, Bill 44 would save the Honolulu City and County and private development projects time and resources, and would also help to preserve positive relationships with community members who value historic properties, particularly unmarked Native Hawaiian burials. Such highly sensitive sites have often not been well treated in instances when measures, such as those noted in Items 2 and 4 above, have not been involved.

Had Bill 44 in its current form been enacted years ago, these instances could have unfolded in much more sensitive, proactive, and less costly ways than what had occurred:

- 37 burials encountered during construction in the Honolulu City and County's own Waikiki improvement project in 2000
- 42 burials intruded upon during construction of the Ke'eumoku Walmart project site in 2004.

In these and other similar instances, the DPP permitted the projects without allowing the SHPD to review them and without recognizing the high likelihood of burials being present at those sites and in the types of sandy sediments involved.

Engaging an OHPC in the review process for projects requiring Honolulu City and County permitting will improve the current situation and align Honolulu City and County with the other three counties in Hawai'i, all of which operate with similar commissions.

For all these reasons, I urge the Council to support Bill 44 and implement this crucial set of measures to improve both the preservation of historic properties and the processes involved for those undertaking projects who are ill-served by premature permitting of their projects prior to appropriate reviews.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration of these comments.