

BILL056(22)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 123

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Mar 15, 2023 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 2

Name: Stefanie Sakamoto	Email: ssakamoto@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: BIA Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Mar 14, 2023 @ 11:09 AM
Name: Ted Kefalas	Email: tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	Zip: 96814
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Mar 14, 2023 @ 01:24 PM



**HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
Honolulu Hale
10:00 AM**

March 15, 2023

RE: Bill 56 - RELATING TO PERMITS REQUIRED

Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kiaaina, and members of the Council:

My name is Max Lindsey, Government Relations Committee Chair of the Building Industry Association of Hawaii (BIA-Hawaii). Chartered in 1955, the Building Industry Association of Hawaii is a professional trade organization affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders, representing the building industry and its associates. BIA-Hawaii takes a leadership role in unifying and promoting the interests of the industry to enhance the quality of life for the people of Hawaii. Our members build the communities we all call home.

BIA Hawaii offers the following comment on Bill 56, Relating to Permits Required. The purpose of this bill is to address exemptions from the requirement to obtain a building permit.

While we appreciate the Council's willingness to provide much-needed relief to builders and homeowners with respect to the building permit process, we feel that the original version of Bill 56 would be more effective.

The state of Hawaii is in a dire housing crisis. As the Council is aware, the cost of housing in Hawaii is extremely high, with Oahu's median price of homes being currently over \$1 million. Approximately 153,967 U.S. households are priced out of buying a home for every \$1000 increase in price, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). We are in support of legislation that would allow for the building of much-needed housing at every price point in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



March 15, 2023

10 a.m.

Honolulu City Council Chambers

To: Honolulu City and County Council

Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair

Councilmember Esther Kia'aina, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: BILL 56 (2022) — RELATING TO PERMITS REQUIRED.

Comments Only

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer comments on [Bill 56 \(2022\)](#), which would allow Honolulu County residents greater freedom to repair their homes without obtaining a building permit.

As the Council is aware, the Honolulu County Department of Planning and Permitting faces a backlog of many thousand permits and the permitting backlog sits at roughly 200 days.¹

Those numbers are staggering on their own, but they also represent a real human cost.

There is no way to quantify the harm this permit backlog has inflicted, but there is no doubt that fewer kitchens have been remodeled, fewer windows installed and fewer home projects in general initiated because of the delays.

For construction contractors and workers, the delays have meant a loss of business and a loss of jobs because their customers — businesses and homeowners — did not receive their building permits in a timely manner.

¹ ["Update from the Department of Planning and Permitting on Building Permit Process Backlog,"](#) Honolulu City and County Council hearing, Feb. 9, 2022. See the 1:48:00 timestamp.

Making matters worse, the costs of the permit delays are being aggravated by snowballing inflation. Businesses and homeowners wanting to renovate their properties have seen building material prices skyrocket this year, and labor costs have increased substantially too.

That is why the Grassroot Institute of Hawaii welcomes Bill 56 as a way to speed up home renovations, make our economy more efficient and get people back to work.

As drafted, Bill 56 would remove the requirement that homeowners obtain permits for repairs costing more than \$5,000 a year. This outdated, arbitrary figure unjustifiably limits homeowners' private property rights and raises the time and cost to complete home repairs.

The \$5,000 figure would be replaced by language allowing homeowners to do basic maintenance on their own homes without a permit.

Such maintenance would include projects "that involve only the replacement of component parts of existing work with similar materials for the purpose of maintenance, without limit as to valuation."²

In real terms, that means Honolulu County residents could replace their flooring without having to wait 200 days and pay hundreds of dollars of fees for a permit.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

² [Bill 56 \(2022\)](#), p. 2.