

BILL056(22)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 268

ZONING (ZON)

ZONING (ZON) Meeting

Meeting Date: May 24, 2023 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 12

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 1

Name: Jason Grehawick	Email: jgrehawick@gmail.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 22, 2023 @ 01:33 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Anything that can speed up solar installs and maintenance repair is a huge help!! Ive been waiting for solar install on my town home and its been almost a year!! This is insane</p>		
Name: Hokukani Lee	Email: leewardsea@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 22, 2023 @ 03:51 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Im in support of reducing or eliminating having to apply for permits to renovate homes. The DPP cannot handle permit processing. They're making everyone's lives miserable by making everyone wait for so long! It's costing people money and time. It cannot continue on this way. It's better to completely do away with applying for small job permits.</p>		
Name: Jodi Robinson	Email: jodi@blueplanetfoundation.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Blue Planet Foundation	Position: Support	Submitted: May 22, 2023 @ 04:13 PM
Name: Micah Munekata	Email: mmunekata@ulupono.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Ulupono Initiative	Position: Support	Submitted: May 22, 2023 @ 07:30 PM
Name: Dylan Armstrong	Email: dylan.p.armstrong@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 23, 2023 @ 04:32 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>The Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say, Chair Zoning Committee Honolulu City Council</p> <p>Aloha mai kkou:</p> <p>I support BILL 56 (2022), CD1, which as written and currently proposed amends Section 13-3.1 of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu ("ROH"), as it pertains to exemptions for building permits.</p> <p>In 2023, the existing ROH threshold of \$5,000 for structural replacements components (of a "similar material") is arbitrarily low. While inflation is declining for certain building materials, notably lumber, we experience costs that are far elevated from when the ROH language was adopted, years ago. Therefore, the currently measure addresses an important policy problem.</p> <p>In addition, the new language from Chair Say and the Committee is entirely germane to the purpose of the original measure. Given the current political economy in Honolulu, exemptions for cost-prohibitive public works projects (in public right-of-way) and limitations to prevent residential building footprint expansion, for example, seem useful. Or so I hope the Committee will deem.</p> <p>As you may know, I pay attention to the Council's doings even from a distance. In such matters as Bill 56, I would trust the Zoning Committee with any subsequent but necessary amendments for both measure passage and practicable implementation. Measures like Bill 56 further useful conversations about the public good, wherein our public servants can truly serve the needs of others first.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>		

Yours truly,
Dylan P. Armstrong

Name: Rocky Mould	Email: rmould@hsea.org	Zip: 96816
Representing: Hawaii Solar Energy Association (HSEA)	Position: Support	Submitted: May 23, 2023 @ 08:17 AM
Name: Elton Wong	Email: ewong@kobayashi-group.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 23, 2023 @ 10:42 AM
Name: Stefanie Sakamoto	Email: ssakamoto@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: BIA	Position: Support	Submitted: May 23, 2023 @ 11:21 AM
Name: Chuen Yee	Email: mcy@mcyia.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: MCYIA Interio Architecture and Design	Position: Support	Submitted: May 23, 2023 @ 11:29 AM
Name: Michael Yee	Email: myee@mcyia.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: MCYIA Interior Architecture and Design	Position: Support	Submitted: May 23, 2023 @ 11:41 AM
Testimony: I support Bill 56 (2022) but recommend one change MCYIA Interior Architecture and Design is a local interior design firm doing business on Oahu since 2008. To help this bill achieve its intended purpose, there should be no limit on electrical / plumbing MATERIAL AND LABOR cost for existing kitchen / bathroom interior renovations where location of these spaces does not change and the space does not increase by more than 25% (i.e. size increase to convert to ADA) If there must be a dollar limit for electrical / plumbing, the amount should reflect the much higher current market price for a very common scenario of a residential renovation of kitchen and bathrooms instead of the current very low and not practical \$2,500 amount which will require these projects to still get a building permit.		
Name: Michelle Yao	Email: yyao2008@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 23, 2023 @ 01:22 PM
Testimony: I urged you to pass Bill 56 ASAP. We cannot wait on DPP to get back to us until our property is left to be deteriorated. The wait time is still ridiculous. It is absolutely ridiculous that we have to wait one year to get a basic permit for making some changes to a window or door! How about if the sewage pipe bursted which is an emergency, and we need to wait for a permit?? Please also consider up the threshold for plumbing and electrical work (like for like repair or replacement) to \$10,000. The \$2500 is way too low and won't make a difference. Mahalo.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:

Ted Kefalas	tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	96813
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 23, 2023 @ 02:47 PM
Name: Greg Thielen	Email: greg@ccs-hawaii.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 23, 2023 @ 07:44 PM



COMMITTEE ON ZONING
City and County of Honolulu
May 24, 2023, 9:00 AM

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL 56 (2022), PROPOSED CD2 (Submitted by Councilmember Say), RELATING TO PERMITS REQUIRED

Aloha Chair Say, Vice Chair Dos Santos-Tam, and members of the Committee:

Blue Planet Foundation **supports Bill 56 (2022) Proposed CD2 (Submitted by Councilmember Say)**, specifically the proposed new ROH § 18-3.1(b)(18)(J) to provide an exemption for electrical work involving the replacement of solar photovoltaic component parts or equipment with like-for-like materials to restore system operations within the original designed energy output of the system.

Hawaiian Electric's current plan for achieving Hawai'i's 100% renewable energy goal includes power generation from the rooftop of nearly every home across the islands. As of March 2023, over 98,800 homes on O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i island have installed rooftop solar.¹ Not only does residential solar help to mitigate carbon emissions and address climate change, it is also a proven tool to help homeowners and renters save money and reduce the need for utility investments in the electricity grid, which are paid for by all ratepayers. When paired with batteries, rooftop solar panels can also increase resiliency in neighborhoods, helping homes keep the lights on and communication powered during a blackout.

However, our state's solar permitting process has been an impediment to increased adoption. The existing system places a high administrative burden on government entities, which results in delays and backlogs for approving permits for solar energy and battery storage systems. One common-sense approach to alleviate this permitting backlog within the Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting is to exempt the replacement of *existing* solar photovoltaic panels from the permitting process; recognizing that a permit application was previously vetted and approved prior to the original installation of rooftop solar.

As a result, Blue Planet Foundation supports Councilmember Say's Proposed CD2 to Bill 56 (2022), which would streamline permitting for the replacement of solar photovoltaic panels and advance the adoption of clean energy on O'ahu.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.

¹ "Cumulative Installed PV - As of March 31, 2023" *Hawaiian Electric Company*. Accessed May 22, 2023. (https://www.hawaiianelectric.com/documents/clean_energy_hawaii/clean_energy_facts/pv_summary_1Q_2023.pdf)



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON ZONING
Wednesday, May 24, 2023 — 9:00 A.M.

UluPono Initiative supports Bill 56 (2022), Proposed CD2 (Submitted by Councilmember Say), Relating to Permits Required.

Dear Chair Say and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at UluPono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

UluPono supports Bill 56 (2022) Proposed CD2 (Submitted by Councilmember Say), which addresses exemptions from the requirement to obtain a building permit, specifically the proposed new ROH § 18-3.1(b)(28) that provides for residential energy replacement or installation work exemptions under certain conditions. While UluPono supports this provision, we prefer the broader application of this exemption that was included in a previous proposed draft, BILL056(22), CD1, PROPOSED CD2 – ATUP2 (submitted by councilmember Tupola on March 28, 2023). That version proposed a new ROH § 18-3.1(b)(28) to read as follows:

(28) The following residential energy replacement or installation work:

(A) Replacement or installation work for residential energy efficiency purposes, performed by a licensed electrical contractor, valued at \$10,000 or less per device, where the device installed is UL listed;

(B) Replacement or installation work for residential energy generation purposes, performed by a licensed electrical contractor, valued at \$25,000 or less per system, where the devices installed are UL listed; and

(C) Replacement or installation work for residential energy storage purposes, performed by a licensed electrical contractor, valued at

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

\$25,000 or less per system, where the devices installed are UL listed."

The broader exemptions proposed in BILL056(22), CD1, PROPOSED CD2 – ATUP2 (submitted by councilmember Tupola on March 28, 2023) would apply to energy generation, efficiency, and storage exemptions and has a greater potential to accelerate O’ahu’s renewable energy adoption and directly support our state’s goal to produce 100% renewable energy by 2045, by reducing the overall workload of the City and County of Honolulu’s Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) and shortening development timelines for affected projects and technologies.

According to Civil Beat, “[a] quarter of the department’s positions are vacant, and permitting approvals are taking twice as long – and sometimes even longer – than they did a few years ago, it shows.”¹ “In August 2022, it took an average of over seven months to get a residential permit. In 2017, it took half that time . . . for commercial applications, a project that five years ago would’ve been approved within five months, on average, now takes more than a year.”²

Irrespective of which version is ultimately passed, it is important to consider ways to streamline permit review processes by allowing certain small permits to bypass the standard permit review process. This would reduce the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) staff’s workload, as they will no longer need to review and process permit applications under a certain threshold. Consequently, the DPP staff can concentrate their efforts on larger and more complex projects, which typically require more time and attention. Such an approach would serve to address the backlog of permit applications, improve efficiency, and expedite the permit review time.

The implementation of this bill is expected to have a positive impact on the permit review process, both in terms of reducing delays and increasing efficiency. Overall, the passage of Bill 56 is a significant step forward in streamlining the permit process in Honolulu, and we hope to see more initiatives like this in the future to increase efficiencies in government processes and paves the way forward for renewable energy adoption.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

¹ “Efforts to Reform Honolulu’s Troubled Permitting Office Face an Uphill Battle. Here’s Why,” Christina Jedra, Civil Beat October 23, 2022. <https://www.civilbeat.org/2022/10/efforts-to-reform-honolulu-troubled-permitting-office-face-an-uphill-battle-heres-why/>

² Id.



Hawaii Solar Energy Association
Serving Hawaii Since 1977

**Testimony of The Hawaii Solar Energy Association (HSEA) Regarding Bill 56 (2022), Relating to
Permits Required, Before the Honolulu City Council Committee on Zoning**

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

Aloha Chair Say, Vice-Chair Dos Santos-Tam, and committee members:

The Hawaii Solar Energy Association (HSEA) **supports Bill 56 (2022), CD2 proposed by Committee Chair Say**, which addresses exemptions from permitting requirements.

HSEA members include the majority of locally owned and operated renewable energy companies doing business in the state of Hawaii along with leading global cleantech manufacturers and service providers that invest and sell in our market. We employ thousands of residents in diverse green economy jobs that are innovating, designing, and building Hawaii's pathway to a renewable energy future. We advocate for policies that help Hawaii achieve critical climate and resilience goals by enabling residents and businesses to invest in and benefit from the transition to clean energy. These investments provide reliable and affordable power that reduces energy cost burden and contributes to Hawaii's energy security as we decarbonize our economy and electric grid.

We support the proposed CD2 introduced by Committee Chair Say because it: 1) adds a ***new section ROH § 18-3.1(b)(18)(J) to provide an exemption for electrical work involving the replacement of solar photovoltaic component parts or equipment with like-for-like materials to restore system operations within the original designed energy output of the system; provided that the original approved system capacity is not exceeded;*** and 2) adds a ***new section ROH § 18-3.1(b)(20) to provide an exemption for plumbing repair or like-for-like replacement of plumbing components when the repair or replacement is installed by a licensed plumbing contractor valued at \$2,500 or less in the aggregate in any 12-month period that only involves valves, pipes, or fixtures.***

In addition, we believe further amendments that exempt 1) additions of battery storage to existing solar PV systems and 2) upgrades to main electrical service panels that are part of a solar PV, energy storage, or energy efficiency retrofit permit application should also be considered by this committee. These amendments in whole or part have been proposed in other draft versions of the bill.



Hawaii Solar Energy Association
Serving Hawaii Since 1977

Thank you for providing the opportunity to testify in ***support*** of this measure.

Respectfully,

/s/ Rocky Mould

Executive Director

May 23, 2023

Re: Bill 56

Dear City Council Zoning Committee:

I am in support of Bill 56 that will take all the unnecessary building approvals from needing a building permit and still maintain public health and safety. Additionally, this will free up the Department of Permitting and Planning to focus on more important building improvements that affect public health and safety.

Thank you,

Elton Wong

E-mail: ewong@kobayashi-group.com



**HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON ZONING
Honolulu Hale
9:00 AM**

April 5, 2023

RE: Bill 56 - RELATING TO PERMITS REQUIRED

Chair Say, Vice Chair Dos Santos-Tam, 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 is in support of Bill 56, Relating to Permits Required. The purpose of this bill is to address exemptions from the requirement to obtain a building permit.

Bill 56 may help alleviate the current building permit backlog issue by reducing the number of projects that must go through the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP), by allowing minor modifications to existing permitted projects without triggering a requirement for another permit. We appreciate the Council's willingness to hear and amend this bill to ensure that it provides much-needed relief to builders and homeowners with respect to the building permit process.

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.

MCYIA Interior Architecture and Design

1050 Queen St, Suite 201

Honolulu, HI 96814

(808) 200-1100

May 23, 2023

Chair Say, Vice Chair Dos Santos-Tam, and councilmembers of the Zoning Committee:

MCYIA Interior Architecture and Design is a local interior design firm doing business on Oahu since 2008. I have been a practicing interior designer for over 25 years and the past president of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) Hawaii Chapter.

On behalf of my company and as an individual, I fully support the current version of Bill 56 (2022). This bill will greatly improve the lives of so many homeowners and business owners which face very long wait times to process a building permit for simple renovations and/or property improvements.

To help this bill achieve its intended purpose.

- Keep the dollar limit for electrical to be LABOR only. Lighting fixtures can easily cost more than \$2,500.
- Keep the dollar limit for plumbing to be LABOR only. Plumbing fixtures can easily cost more than \$2,500.
- The \$2,500 limit LABOR AND MATERIAL for plumbing and the \$2,500 limit for electrical is way too low and not practical for even a simple kitchen and bathroom renovation. This is the equivalent of $\$2,500 / 4.712\% \text{ GET} / \$200/\text{hr rate} = 11.93$ hours or 1.5 days of work for plumbing and also 1.5 days of work for electrical.

A more practical valuation for LABOR ONLY

Plumbing (6 days x \$200/hour x 4.712% GET = \$10,052.35)

- 1 day for demolition
- 2 days for kitchen install
- 3 days for bathrooms (1 day each for 3 bathrooms)

Electrical (4 days x 200/hour x 4.712% = \$6,701.57)

- 1/2 day for demolition
- 2 days for kitchen
- 1.5 days for bathrooms (1/2 day each for 3 bathrooms)

Note: Commonly, plumbers and electricians work in teams of two so the above estimate could be low.

Therefore, I recommend the following:

- 1st choice: No limit on electrical / plumbing MATERIAL AND LABOR cost for existing kitchen / bathroom renovation where location does not change and the space does not increase by more than 25% (i.e. size increase to convert to ADA)

2nd choice: No limit on electrical / plumbing to MATERIAL limit for existing kitchen / bathroom renovation where location does not change and the space does not increase by more than 25% (i.e. size increase to convert to ADA)

&

Increase LABOR valuation for plumbing to \$10,000

&

Increase LABOR valuation for electrical to \$7,000

Sincerely,

Chuen Yee
Owner and Principle Interior Designer



May 24, 2023

9 a.m.

Honolulu City Council Chambers

To: Honolulu City and County Council, Committee on Zoning

Councilmember Calvin Say, Chair

Councilmember Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: BILL 56 (2022), CD1 — RELATING TO PERMITS REQUIRED.

Comments Only

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer comments on [Bill 56 \(2022\), CD1](#), which would increase the dollar amounts of existing building permit exemptions.

Specifically, the bill would increase the annual valuation exemption for repairs or replacement of existing parts from \$5,000 to \$7,500; for certain electrical work from \$500 to \$2,500; and for certain plumbing work from \$1,000 to \$2,500.

The main reason for increasing these exemption valuations is so Oahu homeowners could more easily complete maintenance and renovations — since they no longer would have to wait unreasonable lengths of time to obtain their building permits.

The current permitting backlog is problematic for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that time spent waiting for a permit often equates to higher costs for labor and materials.

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

So the Grassroot Institute of Hawaii supports this bill.

It also supports the two amendments being considered — one by Councilmember Calvin Say and the other by Councilmember Andria Tupola — that would increase the exemption for repairs or replacement of existing parts to \$10,000.

Calvin Say's conference draft amendment also would add an exemption for certain solar work, and that proposed exemption should be retained if his amendment is the one that moves forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments. Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

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Honolulu City Council
Committee on Zoning
City Council Chamber
Wednesday May 24, 2023
9:00 AM

RE: Bill 56 Relating to Permits Required

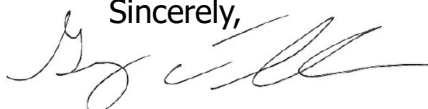
Chair Say, Vice Chair Dos Santos-Tam, and members of the committee,

I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT** of Bill 56 Relating to Permits Required. The ongoing struggles within the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) to issue permits in a timely manner is a widely known and acknowledged problem. Bill 56 represents one step forward in a positive direction in resolving this.

By expanding the existing list of exempt projects we provide relief to Homeowners engaged in these relatively minor projects from having to engage with the frustrating hassle of dealing with DPP. Furthermore we clear many of these minor projects from the DPP pipeline allowing them to focus more closely on more significant projects. A third and possibly overlooked benefit has to do with minor modifications to already permitted projects. Currently any variation from approved plans is considered illegal construction by DPP and requires either a re-review or whole new permit to resolve. If the modifications do not require a permit in the first place though, the modifications are irrelevant and this further reduces the DPP logjam.

While this measure is a simple, small step forward, it is a positive step in the right direction. For this reason I request your support in moving Bill 56 forward.

Sincerely,



Greg Thielen
President/RME