

BILL056(22)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 298

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Jun 7, 2023 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 11

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 2

Name: Ma Consuelo Nieva	Email: mconsuelonieva@gmail.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 5, 2023 @ 12:22 PM
Testimony: I am in support of bill 56 and would like to get this passed as soon as possible!		
Name: Vance Bernades	Email: vbernadesjr@hotmail.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 5, 2023 @ 12:25 PM
Testimony: I am in support of Bill 56 and wish it to be passed immediately.		
Name: Indar Lange	Email: Indar@OurHomeInvestments.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 5, 2023 @ 12:35 PM
Testimony: I am a real estate investor here in Hawaii and the permitting process is insane. We need order, and efficiency in situations like this where 8000+ backed-up permits are TERRIBLE. This is taking away jobs from our construction workers, safe and beautiful houses for our keiki to live in, and decreasing our home supply.		
Name: Kaiulani Shinsato	Email: kaiulani.shinsato@hawaiianelectric.com	Zip: 96840
Representing: Hawaiian Electric	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 6, 2023 @ 11:12 AM
Name: Ted Kefalas	Email: tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Jun 6, 2023 @ 01:03 PM
Name: Camile Cleveland	Email: camile@huanani.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Elemental Exclerator	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 6, 2023 @ 06:31 PM
Name: Stacey Johnson	Email: contact@kaoipropertybuyers.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 6, 2023 @ 07:14 PM
Testimony: The housing supply has not kept up with the demand for housing in hawaii. This is primarily due to the long process it takes to get permits. Investors like myself are losing money waiting for permits to be approved, then causing us to stop providing more housing for the community. There are tons of vacant houses sitting that are waiting for homeowners to occupy. Passing this bill will help make hawaii affordable again.		
Name: Tiffany Kekumu	Email: tiffany.kekumu@gmail.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Jun 6, 2023 @ 07:28 PM
Testimony: Aloha,		

As a Realtor I work with clients that sometimes have to deal with permitting. Currently I have a client who has money tied up in escrow waiting for the permit to go through. They needed to sell their house and unfortunately there was a car port that was falling apart and they replaced the bad material with good and for some odd reason doing that prompted them to get flagged for a permit. Which the work has been done already. Just the contractor now had to file an after the fact permit. It's been over a year now and they paid thousands to and are still waiting. Not sure where in the process it got stalled at but over year seems a bit long.

Name: Heather Freeman	Email: heatherhairmakeupbeauty@gmail.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 6, 2023 @ 08:35 PM

Testimony:
I, Heather Freeman, support bill 56.

Name: Celena Freitas	Email: cfreitas82@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 6, 2023 @ 10:58 PM

Testimony:
I support bill 56. This is one small step to help local families maintain their homes and keep it in livable condition. It will eliminate some of the backlog of over 8,000 permit applications waiting for DPP approval to hopefully take a step toward clearing that backlog and awarding permits to local families that have been waiting for far too long. I support bill 56.

Name: Greg Thielen	Email: greg@ccs-hawaii.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 7, 2023 @ 09:04 AM

Name: Stefanie Sakamoto	Email: ssakamoto@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: BIA hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 7, 2023 @ 09:09 AM

Name: Elton Wong	Email: ewong@kobayashi-group.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jun 7, 2023 @ 10:02 AM



**Hawaiian
Electric**

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

Bill 56 (2022), CD2

Relating to Permits Required

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

10:00 am

City Council Chamber

Ka'iulani Shinsato

Director, Customer Energy Resources Programs

Hawaiian Electric

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kiaaina, and Council Members,

My name is Ka'iulani Shinsato and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric in regard to Bill 56 (2022), CD2. Bill 56 (2022), CD2 addresses exemptions from the requirement to obtain a building permit under Section 18-3.1, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021. Hawaiian Electric appreciates the Zoning Committee's willingness to work with stakeholders on revisions to this Bill, and supports this latest version of Bill 56 (2022), CD2.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.



June 7, 2023

9 a.m.

Honolulu City Council Chambers

To: Honolulu City and County Council

Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair

Councilmember Esther Kiaʻāina, 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 \(2022\), CD2](#), 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 \$10,000; 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 stands at 209 days¹ and 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.

¹ ["Update from the Department of Planning and Permitting on Building Permit Process Backlog,"](#) Honolulu City Council, May 25, 2023.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii



**Testimony of Elemental Excelsior to the City & County of Honolulu City Council
in consideration of Bill 56 (2022), CD2, June 7, 2023**

Dear Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia'āina, and distinguished Members of the City Council:

Elemental Excelsior respectfully submits our **support for Bill 56 (2022), CD2**, relating to permits required.

Elemental Excelsior is a Honolulu-based non-profit organization that supports climate positive startup companies that help solve Hawai'i's most urgent environmental problems. Each year we select 15-20 companies that advance climate technology and social equity, then fund each company with up to \$1 million in investment and support. To date, we have awarded over \$50 million to 150+ companies, and additionally supported more than 100 new tech demonstration projects right here in Hawai'i & the Asia Pacific.

We offer support on **Bill 56 (2022), CD2**, in particular measures ROH § 18-3.1(b)(18)(I) and (J) relating to permit exemptions for electrical work repairs. These provisions increase the cost valuations for exempt electrical repair work and exempt "like-for-like" solar photovoltaic (PV) component replacements. Both of these measures are critical to ensuring residential PV systems may easily be updated and maintained, saving costs and time for consumers. We also support the broad intent of this bill, as it is expected to result in decreased workload for the Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP), allowing staff to focus on permit approvals and expedite the currently lengthy permit review process for new residential energy efficiency, storage, and generation projects.

These proposed amendments to Bill 56 will help expedite the permitting process for critical energy projects. Permitting delay is a large roadblock to widespread energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption, and ROH § 18-3.1(b)(18)(I) and (J) in Bill 56 along with other permitting exemptions would certainly address longstanding permitting issues that impede progress on Hawai'i's renewable energy and climate resilience goals. It should be noted that hundreds of cities and localities across the country have adopted streamlined, on-line solutions such as SolarAPP+ that have cut permit waiting times to a few days or even hours. In turn, this has cut costs to residents to install energy improvement systems by thousands of dollars. Honolulu should do the same or we will stand to lose millions of dollars of economic activity.

The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) have the potential to offer hundreds of millions in federal funding to help Hawai'i residents - particularly those with low- and moderate-income - benefit from the clean energy transition in the short and medium term. Additional benefits from these federal climate funds include less

pollution in communities, reduced energy and transportation costs, an increase in good jobs, investment in the local economy rather than spending on imported oil, and reducing dangerous greenhouse gas emissions.

Enabling state and local policies are necessary, however, to ensure that these federal funds (especially competitive funds) can be secured and expeditiously deployed in Hawai'i versus flowing to other jurisdictions. One of the major bottlenecks to maximizing IRA and IIJA federal funding implementation and community benefits in Hawai'i include permitting delays and high "soft costs" on projects. Bill 56 will help address some—though not all—of these barriers by expediting permitting processes through exemptions and lowering costs for residents who are repairing or maintaining home energy systems.

Elemental Excelerator has helped support dozens of climate tech companies that create jobs, transition our economy to 100% clean energy, and accelerate equitable access to zero emission solutions for all residents. By passing this bill, O'ahu will make it easier, faster, and cheaper for residents to retrofit and install home energy systems, empower entrepreneurs and workers, and aid in lowering the barrier for low- and moderate-income residents to benefit from the clean energy transition.

The permitting exemptions in Bill 56 are helpful to our climate and community, and **Elemental Excelerator supports the passage of Bill 56 (2022), CD2.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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Honolulu City Council
City Council Chamber
Wednesday June 7, 2023
10:00 AM

RE: Bill 56 Relating to Permits Required

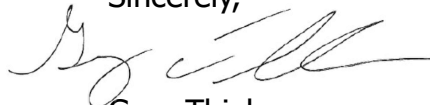
Chair Water, Vice Chair Kia'aina, and members of the Council,

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



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

June 7, 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 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.

I am in support of Bill 56