

BILL039(23)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 368

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Jul 12, 2023 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 1

Name: Trey Gordner	Email: trey@gogordner.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Jul 10, 2023 @ 10:53 AM

Testimony:

Recognizing the Council's challenge in siting a new and much-needed landfill I recommend that Bill 39 be amended in 4 key ways:

- 1) Append to Sec. 8-10(b): for a maximum term of 10 years.
- 2) Remove from Sec. 8-10(b): "or is determined by the city to be impacted by an active landfill"
- 3) Sec. 8-10(c): Make the exemption apply automatically, without the need for an application
- 4) Sec. 8-10(d): Limit the exemption to properties surrounding the new landfill, not existing ones

1) Creating a permanent tax-free zone would have perverse consequences by attracting new development, especially of low-cost housing, thereby concentrating poverty and exposing low-income residents disproportionately to environmental risks. A comparable scenario has played out on Big Island as uninsurable cheap homes have been erected in the lava zones, exposing their lower-income residents to increased environmental risk.

2) Allowing city employees discretion to waive 100% of property tax invites fraud, abuse, and bribery. As it stands, the language in Sec. 8-10(b) is much too vague and should either propose clear guidelines for city staff or be eliminated altogether. I recommend the latter.

3) Requiring an application introduces administrative burden, which favors relatively wealthy and well-educated homeowners over lower-income households who may lack the time, bureaucratic savvy, or language skills to repeatedly qualify. It also generates additional overhead expenses for the city and is unnecessary in this case, where GIS can precisely determine which properties fall within the established radius.

4) Granting exemptions to properties surrounding existing landfills is an unnecessary and unfair concession to property owners, who already negotiated with owners of existing landfills when they were opened, and whose proximity to the landfill is already priced into their property values. To provide two awkward examples:

- The entirety of Ko Olina Kai, the luxury residential development abutting the Ko Olina Golf Club, falls within a 1-mile radius of Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill. I would argue that exempting some of the wealthiest households on island from all property taxes is an imprudent use of public funds.
- Just half of the Honokai Hale development is within the 1-mile radius of WGSL—homeowners will no doubt take issue with paying full property taxes while those across the street pay none.

In practical terms, neither development is affected by WGSL—they can't even see it, as it is separated from them on 2 counts by Farrington Highway and the mountainside.

For all of these reasons, I believe the 4 amendments stated above are necessary for successful policy outcomes.

Finally, if the Council is open to more imaginative alternatives, a more direct and more fiscally sound approach would be to provide home equity insurance to homeowners within the 1-mile radius, protecting them against loss in property values due to landfill placement. This approach has been successfully tried in Syracuse, New York, and Oak Park, Illinois. I am willing and able to help the Council explore this policy alternative on a volunteer basis: trey@gogordner.com.

Name: T. George Paris	Email: cthstab@gmail.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: HIWSF	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 11, 2023 @ 09:13 AM

IRON WORKERS STABILIZATION FUND

June 7, 2023
10:00 am

Honolulu City Council

City Council Chamber

Re: BILL 39(2023): - RELATING TO REAL PROPERTY TAXATION.

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia'aina, and Members of the Council:

We STRONGLY SUPPORT BILL 39(2023): which establishes a real property tax exemption for certain real property located near an active landfill.

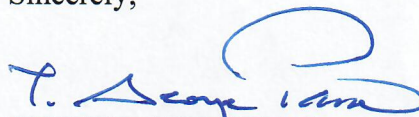
The scientific consensus affirms what the communities of West O'ahu, especially Nānākuli, have been experiencing for decades, that landfills are a health hazard. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention/National Center for Health Statistics Neighborhood Life Expectancy Project (see attachments for visual maps), our members and their families in the two census tracts abutting the PVT Landfill operated in Nānākuli live 10 years less than the state average of 82 years, being the 2nd and 3rd lowest life expectancies in the entire state. This is unacceptable. As a matter of fairness, every community in Hawaii deserves a "clean and healthful environment" (HI State Const. Art. XI, Sec. 9). No one should suffer the ill effects of landfills, so we need to decrease our reliance upon landfills and eventually stop using them altogether.

Hawai'i recognized that "no one segment of the population or geographic area should be disproportionately burdened with environmental and/or health impacts resulting from development, construction, operations and/or use of natural resources" (Hawaii State Department of Health, *Hawaii Environmental Justice Initiative Report*, 2008). Many of those living within a mile of the operation of an active landfill are living paycheck to paycheck. A real property tax break will bring about meaningful change and opportunity for those residents to better care for their health and safety, including through purchasing and maintaining air filters in their houses.

The people of West O'ahu, especially those living within one mile of the PVT Landfill, have borne the brunt of our collective waste. We urge the City to provide a tax break to those residents impacted so that they can take necessary actions to care for their health and safety.

We urge the City Council to PASS BILL 39(2023). Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



T. George Paris
Managing Director



Life Expectancies

Census tracks surrounding
PVT Landfills including
Nānākuli & Princess Kahanu
Homesteads: **~72 yrs.**
HI Average: **~82 yrs.**
A 10 year loss

CDC/US Department of Health



National Vital Statistics System

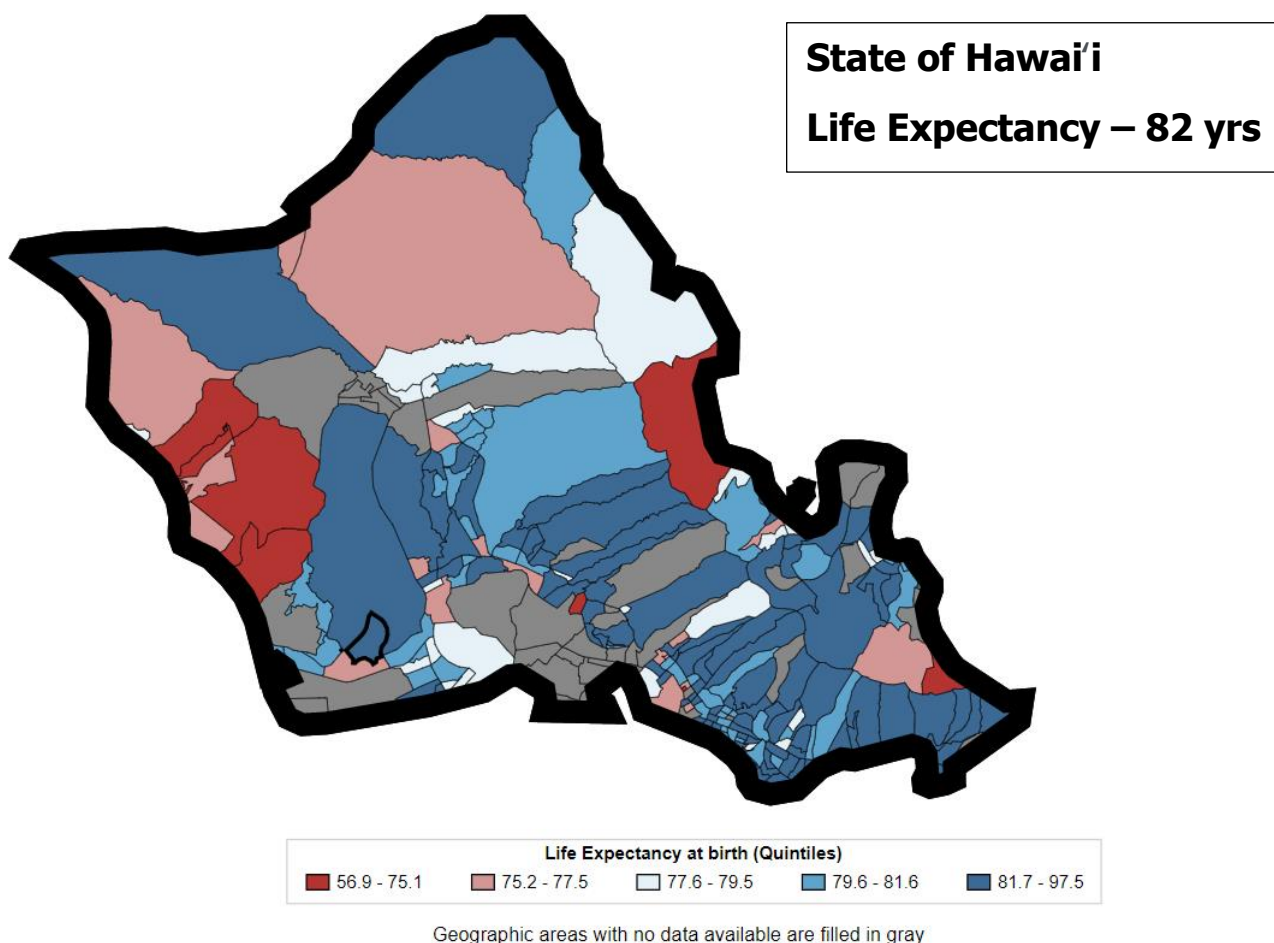
U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy
Estimates Project - USALEEP

usaleep

Neighborhood Life
Expectancy Project

Life Expectancy at Birth for U.S. States and Census Tracts, 2010-2015

LIFE EXPECTANCY* FOR THE ISLAND OF O'AHU, HAWAI'I



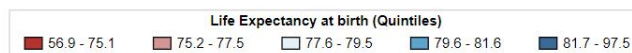
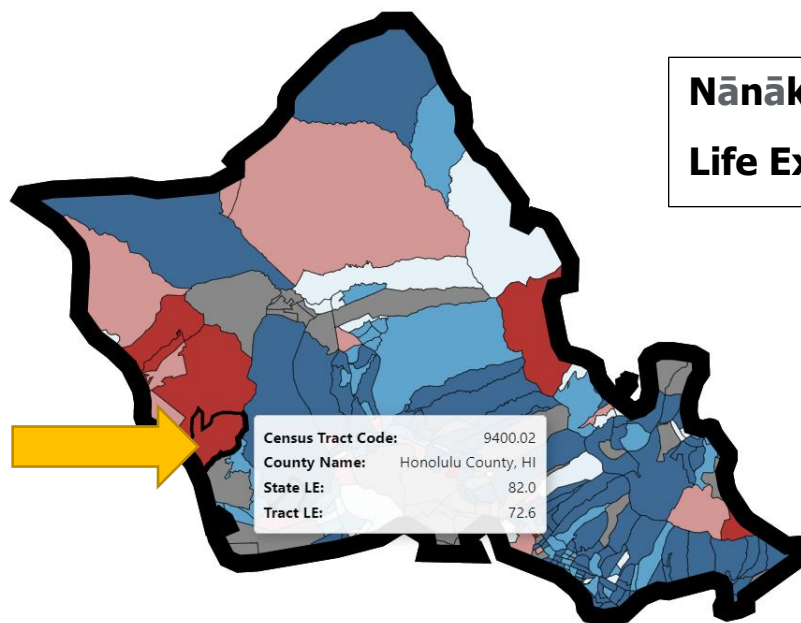
*The Life Expectancy at birth are for U.S. Census Tracts, 2010-2015. These estimates are the result of the collaborative project, “[U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project \(USALEEP\)](#),” between the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS), and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, March 9). *Life expectancy data viz.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved March 9, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data-visualization/life-expectancy/index.html>.

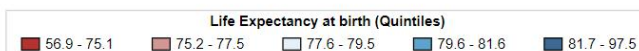
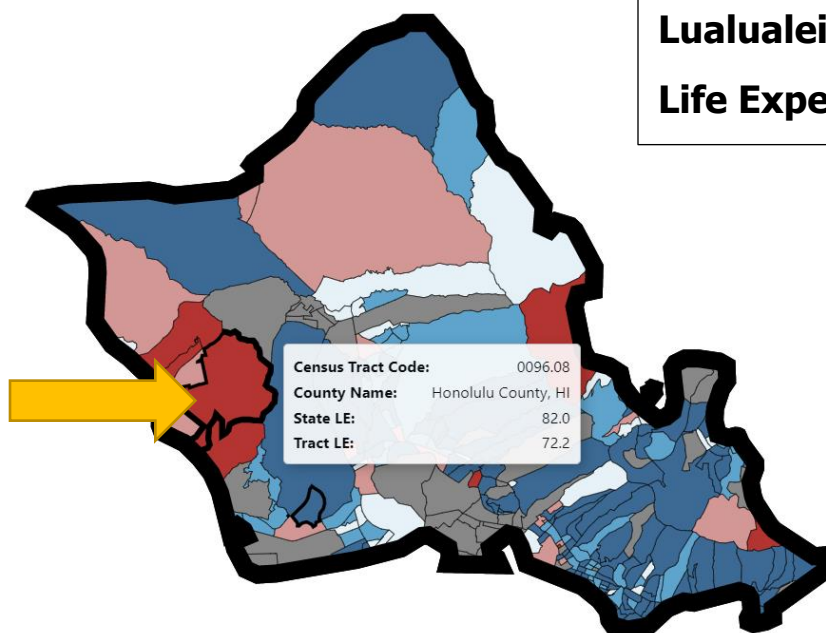


...Visualizing the Nation's Health

Life Expectancy at Birth for U.S. States and Census Tracts, 2010-2015



Geographic areas with no data available are filled in gray



Geographic areas with no data available are filled in gray