



KAILUA NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 31

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Mr. Tommy Waters, Chairman
Honolulu City Council
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Subject: Kailua Neighborhood Board Testimony Regarding Resolution 24-65 Relating to Residential Lots and SB3202 and HB1630

Aloha Chairman Waters,

At the Kailua Neighborhood Board meeting on March 7, 2024 the following resolution was adopted:

The Kailua Neighborhood Board opposes Senate Bill 3202 and House Bill 1630 which require the counties to allow the development of a minimum of 3 housing units per existing residential lot.

The basis for our strong opposition includes:

- (1) Zoning and land use determinations for residential lots are inherently a local function that should not be mandated from the state level where neighborhood composition is less fully understood. Hawaii Revised Statute (HRS) 46-4 regarding County Zoning states that "Zoning in all counties shall be accomplished within the framework of a long-range, comprehensive general plan prepared or being prepared to guide the overall future development of the county. Zoning shall be one of the tools available to the county to put the general plan into effect in an orderly manner." SB 3202 and HB 1630 take away the Counties' ability to comprehensively plan for the island and the public's ability to participate in the planning process by dictating that a minimum of 3 housing units be allowed per existing residential lot.
- (2) These bills would eliminate the Counties' ability to comprehensively plan for the health, safety, and welfare of its residents because, if passed, these bills would mandate 3 or more housing units on residential lots as small as 2,000 sq. ft. or less, whether or not there is adequate sewer capacity, street capacity, parking availability, pedestrian walkways, and bike lanes. Increased density in an unplanned fashion also means less green space and more impermeable surfaces which increase storm water runoff. Increased density also means less side and front yard setbacks and creates more traffic congestion on narrow streets.
- (3) These bills would seem to allow even more dwelling units and greater density than "monster houses" which can be apartments in disguise. Allowing such a drastic increase in housing density would be out of character with surrounding neighborhoods. Ordinances serve a public purpose and should not be allowed to be so blatantly overridden.
- (4) The stated reason for HB 1630 is that more houses are needed. Yet, the Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting 2021 annual report (page 23, Table II-2) shows that, without taking the radical action of these bills, the "remaining housing unit capacity" on Oahu is 80,225 based upon "the quantity of housing projects committed or proposed". Furthermore, there are between 10,000 and 14,000 illegal short-term vacation rental units on Oahu which, if returned to residential use, would provide substantially more housing for Oahu residents. Finally, HB 1630 cites that over the last five years Hawaii has already added 27,000 homes to the housing inventory; it should be noted that Hawaii's population has actually decreased by over 16,000 between 2020 and 2023, so increasing housing inventory when combined with decreasing population is already helping to solve the housing shortage problem.
- (5) These bills mention urban districts established by Chapter 205. It should be noted that Chapter 205 says all lands shall be classified as urban, rural, agricultural, or conservation and provides a definition of rural

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as “low density residential lots of not more than one dwelling house per one-half acre”. This means virtually all residential lots in Kailua are classified as “urban” and would fall under the jurisdiction of these bills.

We are pleased to find that Resolution 24-65 substantially aligns with our concerns about SB 3202 and HB 1630 and support the passage of Resolution 24-65.

Mahalo!

Aloha,

William M. Hicks

William M. Hicks
Chairman, Kailua Neighborhood Board

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