

BILL050(24)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 350

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Aug 7, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 11

Oppose: 2

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Robert Finley	Email: bob22224@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 5, 2024 @ 01:51 PM

Name: Ross Isokane	Email: isokane@gmail.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 5, 2024 @ 04:20 PM

Testimony:

I wish to comment on this Bill in the current format as it appears to impose incremental restrictions and requirements (to be administered by DTS) for community event organizers, which may discourage and result in fewer community events in neighborhoods all over Oahu. I understand that some constituents in the Waikiki neighborhood may desire this outcome for their neighborhood. But other individuals in other neighborhoods may not feel the same way.

Although I am submitting this testimony as an individual (i.e., on my own behalf), I'll note I am also a member of the Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board No. 13 ("NB 13"). In May 2024, NB 13 unanimously adopted (9-0-0) Resolution 2024-03 "Urging City/State officials to support and encourage economy-boosting and uplifting community events in Downtown-Chinatown" (refer to <https://www8.honolulu.gov/nco/nb13/> for full text).

To provide high-level context on this resolution, the resolution noted that community events are essential for Downtown-Chinatown due to their ability to increase neighborhood foot traffic which is paramount to (1) the success of its small business and (2) the activation of spaces and areas to mitigate the negative influence of crime and illicit drug use. Especially in light of the City's efforts to revitalize Downtown-Chinatown, the resolution urged DTS and other City/State leaders to support and encourage legacy organizers of these events in Downtown-Chinatown rather than impede them with excessive rules and regulations.

If leaders in Waikiki wish to discourage organizers of certain events in their neighborhood, I'd encourage them to refer those organizers to board members of NB 13 (so we can work with them to see if Downtown-Chinatown would be a viable alternative and good fit).

SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS ON BILL

(d)(1)(B)(ii) Conditions to be met prior to issuance of permit - Public purpose; Percentage of net profits donated to the Waikiki Business Improvement District and Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District

+ If a community event is deemed to fulfill a public benefit (especially to the extent supported by the neighborhood), ROH should not impose additional financial burdens on event organizers; I believe they deserve to be compensated by retaining the potential profits for their significant efforts and upfront costs/risks. And while many organizers may end up

donating a portion of profits to worthy causes under their own volition, I don't think the City should mandate that.

+ Likely an oversight in drafting, but I would object to a regulation that results in profits from an event in Downtown-Chinatown being channeled to Waikiki.

(d)(6) Conditions to be met prior to issuance of permit - implementing a liquor controlled area (for street festivals)

+ Not exactly sure this should be in the purview of DTS. Doesn't the Honolulu Liquor Commission have authority?

+ I can understand the rationale of this requirement being imposed on a case-by-case or neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis (e.g., this would be prudent for residential-only neighborhoods). But for (1) specific, infrequent holiday events (e.g., celebrations for Saint Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Halloween); (2) for specific neighborhoods like Downtown-Chinatown (a neighborhood that caters to the arts, entertainment, and nightlife after normal business hours and on weekends); and (3) for legacy event organizers with responsible track records (I believe Don Murphy is a great example), I believe a tailored approach (allowing them to operate under the same rules as in the past so long as they didn't result in overwhelming documented violations or incidences) should be applied.

(g) Director's adoption of administrative rules

+ Totally fine with DTS adopting and publishing its specific, administrative rules that augment ROH for this area (so long as they are reasonable and necessary).

+ I believe these administrative rules (once adopted) should be posted prominently on their website (i.e., can be easily found with navigation links on their website).

+ I believe proposed changes to these administrative rules in any given year should be justifiable/rationalized and public comment should be solicited.

+ I believe, so long as there is no compelling, supportable reason for a change, these rules should be consistently applied over time (i.e., not change arbitrarily between one year and the next).

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Margaret Murchie	Margaret@margaretm.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 6, 2024 @ 05:33 AM

Testimony:

Thank you for finally being able to control the closures of Waikiki streets and nearby parking for frivolous block parties, parades and events that negatively impact businesses, residents, visitors, first responders, access and egress. It is definitely an issue that has gone widely out of control by past administrations. I have talked to workers in restaurants and other businesses in Waikiki, that were unaware of the closures and had problems getting to their places of business and local restaurants see reservation cancellations. Everyone gets stuck in congested traffic at either end of the events with limited options particularly around Ala Moana/Hilton and Diamond Head /Kapahulu end. Public transportation has no easy access. Hotel guests cannot get in or out during these events. Valets cannot do their jobs and there really is no Plan B. It got much worse with the rigged lottery system with some people gaming the system and ignored for much too long. In reading the proposed bill, there may be loopholes (lv-bb) but hopefully will not be overlooked. It is truly ridiculous that our

street access is closed almost every weekend and sometimes, unexpectedly mid week. Scrutiny is important. Even the various runs could be held elsewhere on the island where there is less congestion and impact on the public. It's not fair. Thank you for finally bringing this issue to the table. We want everyone to enjoy Waikiki. Commenting in individual capacity but also should add I am member of Diamond Head/Kapahulu/St Louis neighborhood board and Public Safety and Transportation committee.

Name: Margaret Murchie	Email: Margaret@margaretm.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 6, 2024 @ 05:44 AM

Testimony:

Forgot to add that I am also a property owner in Waikiki, located across from zoo parking lot, which is relevant.

Name: Rick Egged	Email: rick@waikikiimprovement.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Waikiki Improvement Association	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 6, 2024 @ 01:11 PM

Name: Helene Shenkus	Email: s.shenkus@festivalcos.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: The Festival Companies- Royal Hawaiian Center	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 6, 2024 @ 02:07 PM

Name: Richard Kelly	Email: Aloharichard1@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 6, 2024 @ 02:35 PM

Testimony:

The proposal of this bill feels like another attempt by the chair to stifle smaller businesses' in favor of the hotels, again. As an 18 year Waikiki resident, I have often enjoyed the many cultural events hosted on Kalakaua. So much has changed since I moved here. There IS much less opportunities here in Waikiki so there really isnt a need for further reduction. Yes, a shut down once in awhile can be an inconvenience, but so is OVER-GOVERANCE! The parades and festivals provide not only residents but also visitors opportunities to enjoy different cultures, meet others and provide opportunities for many small island businesses extra marketing opportunities and income to support their families. Why dont you all try and focus on affordable housing and lower costs for island families and kapuna. Price gouging IS a thing here. What are you doing about that? PUT all your energy into lowering costs before bowing to the hotel corporations. Hotels and other large businesses dont need the money and opportunities as much as locals. Stop the price gouging and stop limiting small businesses! Start by refusing money from the hotel lobbies!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Rebecca Soon	rebecca.ji.soon@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 6, 2024 @ 03:55 PM
Testimony: This bill provides the opportunity to re-envision how Waikīkī can be a center for the cultural and environmental future that this important space can be. While there are ongoing conversations to be had around the specifics of how this bill is implemented, this is a critical step in the conversation around how, who, and what are the access points for parades and other measures that impact the daily nature of this community.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Margaret Kerr	margoleahi97@gmail.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 6, 2024 @ 04:23 PM
Testimony: I support limiting the number of parades, runs, races, that close down the streets in Waikiki. Just this past weekend, on both Saturday and Sunday mornings, I could not leave my home because races/walks closed Monsarrat and Paki Ave and Kalākaua. this is not fair to the residents of this area to be confined to their homes like this. These functions also limit access to Kapiolani Park on the weekends because parking is blocked along Kalākaua Ave for all these events so the average tax paying citizen cannot access the park or the beach. This is not right. The park and beaches in Waikiki should be open to all on the weekends. These continual weekend closures are frustrating. Thank you for hearing me.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Denise Boisvert	infofordenise@yahoo.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 6, 2024 @ 04:30 PM
Testimony: I fully support this bill.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kim Jorgensen	hawaiiicondo@yahoo.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 6, 2024 @ 04:32 PM
Testimony: This bill will benefit residents and businesses in Waikiki.		
Name:	Email:	Zip:

Rey Patio	3003kalakaua@gmail.com	96815
Representing: 3003 Kalakaua Condominium	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 6, 2024 @ 04:51 PM
Testimony: Aloha, I represent a condominium located at the end of Kalakaua Avenue on the Gold Coast. Over the years, I have managed the property while also being a resident and establishing a community with my neighbors. Although we support activities that benefit our local community as a whole, we have seen the negative effects of numerous road closures in our neighborhood. We find ourselves in most situations unaware and uninformed about the event because most signage is located at the beginning of Waikiki. Our neighborhood is inundated with illegal parking, especially when the parking areas surrounding Kapiolani Park are inaccessible. As a result, we support Council Chair Waters and this important legislation.		
Name: Madelyn McKeague	Email: madelyn@hawaiiancouncil.org	Zip: 96707
Representing: Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 7, 2024 @ 09:09 AM

Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council

My Name is Robert Finley, and this is my individual testimony on Bill 50.

I am a long time Waikiki Resident, going back to when Kalakaua was a two-way street, and have lived, worked, and now retired in Waikiki.

My 16 years working in a major hotel gave me a both a resident and employee perspective of what happens when Kalakaua is closed for a street event to both the 25,000 residents, about the same number of industry workers and the thousands of visitors in the Resort area of Waikiki.

The visitor industry has to plan how to transport visitors and supplies, while the City must plan for EMS, Fire and HPD should it be necessary during an event. With the current 450+ shortfall of sworn Police Officers this is a challenge for the City.

Kalakaua, Kuhio and Ala Wai are heavily involved in daily area transportation and heavily used by residents in our neighboring communities for thoroughfare as well. During an event the City usually adjusts the traffic lights on Kuhio to better move heavy traffic however crossing of Kuhio for pedestrians, especially ADA limited pedestrians, becomes a nightmare with long waits and an increase in dangerous "Jaywalking".

While the 15 "Legacy" Events do support the Visitor Industry and are primarily Parades or athletic events that last about 3 hours. Without these events the visitor spending we depend on could be greatly reduced and the free entertainment for the residents would be reduced. However, in 2023 there were 15 Street Events that closed Kalakaua from 2pm till Midnight and greatly disrupted the traffic flow.

Reducing the number of street events while protecting the legacy, first amendment and Mayoral events will help make Waikiki a better place to live and work for our residents and visitor industry staff.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Robert Finley

2222 Aloha Drive

Waikiki, Hawaii 96815



WAIKĪKĪ IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Testimony of Rick Egged
President, Waikiki Improvement Association
Before the
Honolulu City Council
Wednesday, August 7, 2024
In consideration, of

Bill 50 (2024) Waikīkī Street Closures

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Council:

My Name is Rick Egged, representing the Waikīkī Improvement Association (WIA). The WIA is a membership organization consisting of major stakeholders in Waikīkī including, landowners, hotels, retailers and restaurants, the businesses that serve them and those interested in the future of this important part of our community and economy.

The Waikīkī Improvement Association (WIA) strongly supports Bill 50 (2024) creating a second category for street festivals and limiting their number. Street festivals create a much higher level of disruption than parades or sporting events. A street festival typically closes Kalākaua Avenue from 2PM to 12 midnight. Waikīkī traffic slows to a crawl as there are limited access points. Residents returning home or going to dinner or events get stuck in traffic and grow increasingly frustrated. Hotel guests coming to Waikīkī from the airport or a day exploring O‘ahu can’t make it to their rooms. Those attempting to get to the airport must leave hours early or struggle in traffic to make their flights.

Closing Kalākaua should only be allowed for major events having a positive impact on the community. I believe that is the intent of the law. Unfortunately, it hasn’t worked out that way. In 2023 there were 15 street festivals. Already in 2024 there have been 10 street festivals applications. This bill will help bring this unsustainable situation under control.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Testimony of Helene "Sam" Shenkus
VP, Director of Marketing Royal Hawaiian Center
Before the Honolulu City Council
Wednesday, August 7, 2024
In consideration of
Bill 50 (2024) Waikiki street parades and festivals

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Council:

My name is Helene "Sam" Shenkus, representing the Royal Hawaiian Center (RHC). The RHC is the premier shopping, dining, entertainment and cultural destination in Waikiki, spanning three blocks of Kalakaua Avenue since our opening in 1980.

Royal Hawaiian Center (RHC) strongly supports creating a second category for street festivals and limiting their number to three, in addition to the three existing Legacy events. Since we are located on Kalakaua Avenue, the monthly street festivals have created major business interference for our 4,000 resident employees getting to work and customers, as well as visitors stuck in gridlock between Noon to Midnight. The May 11th Le'ahi Festival, sponsored by Da Ultimate Grindz, created havoc for our restaurant customers that had made Mother's Day dinner reservations at our restaurants. Mother's Day weekend is one of the largest single restaurant sales volume weekends of the year and the total closure of Kalakaua Avenue created both significant traffic congestion and hundreds of late or cancelled dinners. Approximately 35%-40% of our total dinner business was impacted so imagine all the dinner cancellations that occurred throughout Waikiki on that Saturday night. Why was a street festival allowed on such an important business weekend?

Closing Kalakaua reduces the number of customers for our merchants, which reduces their business revenues and eventually adds to the cost of doing business in Waikiki. Since Oahu's tourism industry is still recovering from the impacts of Covid and challenging global currency valuations, every customer is critical. We validate an average of 17,000 resident parking tickets per month, and when their commute into and out of Waikiki is so frustrating, it is a totally avoidable business disruption.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

**Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement
91-1270 Kinoiki St., Bldg. 1
Kapolei, HI 96707**

Honolulu City Council

Bill 50 – Relating to Parades, Street Festivals, and Other Activities

RE: Support of Bill 50

August 7, 2024

The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement writes in **support** of Bill 50 to amend existing ordinances within the Waikīkī Special District to ensure safe, successful, and meaningful celebrations and events throughout the area.

Parades, street festivals, and other activities in Waikīkī are a great way to celebrate and entertain generations of families, long-time kamaʻāina, and malihini new to the islands. However, fun should not supplant safety. In creating separate categories for the many activities of Waikīkī, officials can plan and accommodate for them appropriately. It is critical that we manage tourism in a sustainable manner that balances economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, community desires, and visitor industry needs. This bill is an administrative fix to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Waikīkī is a central destination for thousands of people every single day and it is important to safely manage an area with this enormous amount of foot and vehicle traffic. For these reasons, we humbly ask that you **PASS BILL 50**.

Me ka haʻahaʻa,



Madelyn McKeague

Director of Advocacy, CNHA

About the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement

CNHA is a member-based 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a mission to enhance the cultural, economic, political, and community development of Native Hawaiians. For more information, visit www.hawaiiancouncil.org/.