

BILL051(24)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 399

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Sep 4, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Ted Kefalas	Email: tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 3, 2024 @ 07:40 AM

Sept. 4, 2024, 10 a.m.
Honolulu Hale

To: Honolulu City Council

Tommy Waters, Chair

Esther Kia'āina, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: Bill 51 (2024) — RELATING TO ADAPTIVE REUSE

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice-Chair Kia'āina and other members of the Council,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [Bill 51 \(2024\)](#), which would amend county ordinances to allow for the adaptive reuse of existing commercial businesses.

Converting non-residential structures to residential use is an innovative way to boost Hawaii's housing stock and foster the creation of vibrant, walkable communities, as discussed in the Grassroot Institute's policy report, "How to facilitate more homebuilding in Hawaii."¹

Unfortunately, many adaptive reuse projects are frustrated by regulations that make it difficult or prohibitively expensive to refit commercial buildings for residential use, such as window or ventilation requirements.

By carving out an alternate approach to current ordinances on light and ventilation for adaptive reuse projects, this bill would help facilitate adaptive reuse on Oahu.

It also would help meet the state's Act 37 requirement that the counties adopt or amend existing ordinances to allow for adaptive reuse by the end of this year.

¹ Jonathan Helton, ["How to facilitate more homebuilding in Hawaii."](#) Grassroot Institute of Hawaii, December 2023.

There are additional steps the Council could take to encourage the growth of affordable housing via adaptive reuse, but Bill 51 would represent an important step forward. We look forward to future conversation about this topic.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii