

**BILL050(24)**  
**Testimony**

**MISC. COMM. 430**

TRANSPORTATION (TRANS)

## **TRANSPORTATION (TRANS) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Sep 24, 2024 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 3

Oppose: 3

I wish to comment: 1

Name: Margaret Murchie	Email: Margaret@margaretm.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 23, 2024 @ 11:44 AM

Testimony:

As a Waikiki property owner thank you for finally (hopefully) being able to control the closures of Waikiki streets and nearby parking for frivolous block parties, parades, races and events that negatively impact businesses, residents, visitors, first responders, access and egress impacting us almost every other weekend. 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 (nka Park with proposed and approved new hotel on tiny Kobe Steakhouse lot) and Diamond Head /Kapahulu end. The latest concert, this past Saturday at the Waikiki Shell caused a real gridlocked traffic mess far away from the venue, putting many pedestrians in peril. 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. There needs to be a cap so that we can all enjoy recreating in and around Waikiki. Not testifying as Member of the Diamond Head/Kapahulu/St. Louis neighborhood board #5 but for reference, I am the head of the traffic and public safety committee and member of the parks and recreation committee. We just want to make sure that the public has a safer and better quality of life and fully support getting a handle on these very limiting and incessant closures. Thank you.

Name: Robert Finley	Email: bob22224@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 23, 2024 @ 12:20 PM

Name: Ross Isokane	Email: isokane@gmail.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Sep 23, 2024 @ 02:06 PM

Testimony:

To repeat some of my concerns from written testimony submitted for the 8/7/24 full council meeting, the group that drafted this bill may or may not have realized that many of the proposed changes (i.e., in SECTION 3 of the bill specifically as it pertains to proposed amendments to ROH Section 15-24.20(b) through (h)) applies island-wide (i.e., the proposed impacts are NOT isolated to Waikiki events).

If there are individuals/groups that support imposing additional rules/regulations on non-Waikiki events, I'll be interested in getting perspective on their rationale (i.e., to understand how these new rules/regulations on non-Waikiki events are

justified/warranted).

For example:

+ Has there been an excessively high volume of citations for violations or registered complaints by the public for these non-Waikiki events that indicate these proposed new rules/regulations for non-Waikiki events are necessary for the public good?

+ Has there been any public testimony that specifically addresses non-Waikiki events to indicate there's overwhelming public support for these proposed new rules/regulations for non-Waikiki events?

Name: Sarah Worth	Email: sarahkworth@yahoo.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 23, 2024 @ 10:14 PM

Testimony:

Although I am a member of the Waikiki Neighborhood Board but I write this testimony as an individual. I strongly OPPOSE Bill 50 for the following reasons:

(1) Donated funds go to two corporations run by one individual who has a financial conflict of interest since he also runs Waikiki parades and festivals;

(2) Non-local travel agencies avoid donating funds by claiming there is no fee to participate in their Waikiki parade, however, one can only participate if one purchases a week-long O`ahu package which includes fees for room, some meals, airfare and excursions through that travel agency;

(3) The number of Legacy Events is unreasonable and given the restriction on monthly road closure permits, Bill 50 could disallow new and/or smaller companies from having a fair opportunity to hold a street festival or parade in Waikiki; and

(4) The Waikiki Neighborhood Board had already declined supporting a prior event street closure bill which favored parades over street festivals after the aforementioned financial conflict of interest was revealed by a member of the public. Nearly a year later, instead of introducing this new bill to the board, Bill 50 was introduced just one day before the Waikiki Neighborhood Board meeting, thereby avoiding the risk of board disapproval again. Given the fact that at the September 10, 2024 Waikiki Neighborhood Board Meeting no mention was made of Bill 50's upcoming September 24, 2024 by neither our councilmember nor his representative and then an email notification from this councilmember's office was sent only twenty-six hours prior to the hearing today, does not reassure the people that Councilmember Tommy Waters truly values our community's input.

Name: Rick Egged	Email: rick@waikikiimprovement.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Waikiki Improvement Association	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 24, 2024 @ 10:24 AM

Name: Gregory Misakian	Email: greg.misakian@sbcglobal.net	Zip: 96815
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Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Sep 24, 2024 @ 11:13 AM
Name: Gregory Misakian	Email: greg.misakian@sbcglobal.net	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Sep 24, 2024 @ 11:25 AM

Chair Tyler Dos Santos-Tam and members of the Committee

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 Committee on Transportation**  
**Tuesday, September 24, 2024**  
In consideration, of

## **Bill 50 (2024) Waikīkī Street Closures**

Aloha Chair Tam and Members of the Committee:

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 SUBMITTED OPPOSING BILL 50**

**From: Gregory Misakian**

**For: Honolulu City Council, City and County of Honolulu**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2024**

**2:30 P.M.**

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Council,

My name is Gregory Misakian, and I am submitting testimony as an individual in opposition to Bill 50.

I currently serve on the Waikiki Neighborhood Board, where the discussion regarding street festivals and parades on Kalakaua Ave. has come up a number of times. Public testimony presented to the Waikiki Neighborhood Board was varied, with some members of the public favoring more street festivals and some less. I also chaired a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) regarding this issue and spent time discussing it with stakeholders, and by surveying residents and businesses along Kalakaua Ave. The survey results of the PIG also determined that the residents and business owners had varied views, which appeared to be almost evenly split.

While the public and businesses should be who the City Council is listening to, it has come to my attention, via a recent Waikiki Neighborhood Board meeting on August 13, 2024, that the person who initiated Bill 50 is Mr. Rick Egged, who is the President of the Waikiki Improvement Association (WIA), a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization. Mr. Egged is also the Executive Director of Aloha Festivals, and he has a vested interest in the parades and festivals that his organizations are involved with or sponsor.

Looking at Bill 50 I see numerous concerns, including section (d) (1) (B) (ii), which states that a yet to be established percentage of festival net profits would go to the Waikiki Business Improvement District (WBID), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and the Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District Association (WBSIDA), also a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Please note that Council Chair Waters serves on the Board of the WBID and Mr. Rick Egged serves as President of the WBSIDA.

When you better understand the intent and scope of the bill and know the back story, as I and others do, it should become clear that there is an apparent conflict of interest.



**At the August 13, 2024 Waikiki Neighborhood Board meeting, Mr. Egged was on the agenda and was speaking regarding Aloha Festivals, legacy events, and Bill 50.**

**The discussion starts at timestamp 2:01:25.**

**At timestamp 2:02:14, Mr. Egged made his first mention of Bill 50.**

**At timestamp 2:02:40, Mr. Egged stated, regarding Bill 50, “WIA has requested this bill, actually, and so um, we’ve had this, this ... not all the things in the bill are what we requested, some of them were added by Chair Waters.”**

**At timestamp starting at 2:17:30, a discussion with Mr. Egged revealed that Mr. Egged was not a registered lobbyist for Bill 50, which I confirmed. My comments and questions, and Mr. Egged’s responses, are summarized further below.**

**At timestamp 2:18:30 I asked Mr. Egged about his registration as a lobbyist for an unrelated issue.**

**At time stamp 2:19:10 Mr. Egged responded, “The registration was done, because the way the law is written, if you even talk about doing legislation you have to register, so even though we didn’t propose anything specifically at that time.” “We will register for Bill 50.”**

**At timestamp 2:19:28 my response back to Mr. Egged was, “OK, so, even though you’ve already pushed Bill 50, you’re not registered for Bill 50 at this time?” Mr. Egged responded; “I thought I was already registered in 24, but if not, you’re correct.”**

As this issue was never brought back properly to the Waikiki Neighborhood Board by Council Chair Waters or the City Council, and Bill 50 has materialized in a very concerning way, I am asking that Bill 50 not be approved. I am also requesting an investigation into how this bill was introduced, as it appears that Mr. Egged was required to register as a lobbyist first.

I remind the City Council that there should always be a fair process, with the public’s best interest coming first.

Mahalo,

Gregory Misakian

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