BILL050(24)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 476

TRANSPORTATION (TRANS)

TRANSPORTATION (TRANS) Meeting

Meeting Date: Oct 22, 2024 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 4

Oppose: 6

I wish to comment: 1

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ross Isokane	isokane@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Oct 21, 2024 @ 11:36 AM

Testimony:

I oppose Bill 50 (as a resident of Downtown-Chinatown, a neighborhood in constant need of support in our revitalization efforts) due to the negative island-wide impacts that will result in fewer of our legacy events/block parties taking place (according to my conversations with our experienced legacy event organizers).

Over the last two (2) years, the city administration has been imposing additional rules and regulations on legacy events in Downtown-Chinatown since Hallowbaloo 2022 last took place. These additional rules and regulations:

(1) Are *not* currently codified in ordinances.

(2) Are *not* written in the Department's administrative rules.

(3) Were *never* imposed on our legacy events in the past.

These legacy Downtown-Chinatown events, to my knowledge, were produced in accordance with the then-existing (and already numerous) historical *written* rules and regulations. They resulted in safe and successful events with *no* noted or abnormally high (in the context of the tens of thousands of attendees) numbers of violations, incidents, or public-facing complaints reported/registered (i.e., on the public record).

These additional, unwritten rules and regulations recently imposed by the city have contributed to the absence of our most popular legacy events over the last two (2) years in 2023 and 2024 (e.g., resulting in the planned Hallowbaloo 2024 not happening for the second straight year according to written public testimony submitted by the event organizer). Bill 50 would seek to codify these additional, unwritten rules and regulations into ordinances.

The absence of the tens of thousands of attendees these legacy events would normally bring into Downtown-Chinatown is a blow to our revitalization efforts and our small business community.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Robert Finley	bob22224@gmail.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Oct 21, 2024 @ 12:34 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Gregory Misakian	greg.misakian@sbcglobal.net	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Oct 21, 2024 @ 01:14 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Rick Egged	rick@waikikiimprovement.com	96815
Representing: Waikiki Improvement Association	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 21, 2024 @ 01:51 PM
Name: Eric (Rick) Schneider	Email: rick@eventsint.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Events International	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Oct 21, 2024 @ 04:32 PM
Name: lynne matusow	Email: lynnehi@aol.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 21, 2024 @ 04:35 PM

Testimony:

My name is Lynne Matusow. I was a member of what was then called the Downtown Neighborhood Board for 27 years. During that period there were countless meetings concerning street closures, under various administrations and councilmembers. Many of us believed that the administrations were paying lip service and nothing would be done. It appears those days are gone. We now have a mayor and councilmember who want to get something done. They recognize the Waikiki problem, with too many street closures, just because the streets are there.

Local businesses are suffering, losing customers, because their customers cannot navigate the traffic. If a rent paying, tax paying entity loses business because of a street closure event, the event sponsor should make them whole. I caught Victor Lim's testimony. He is 100% correct. We have the same problem in Downtown/Chinatown. Especially with Hallowbaloo, where residents were not able to access their buildings, where residents and business employees had their personal water bottles confiscated, where businesses were blockaded by street vendors, year after year after year. Where complaints were made to the Liquor Commission and not recorded, year after year after year.

Both Waikiki and Downtown/Chinatown are residential areas. Downtown is growing by leaps and bounds, with more senior housing, with unused commercial space being converted to apartments, with new hotels. The needs of the local residents and businesses must be addressed. The number of permits must be reduced, liquor must be in designated areas like beer gardens, set limits need to be established for the number of persons attending the event so we don't have a crush of people which could result in an emergency situation.

I like that you are using Waikiki as the template. Many of the Waikiki rules should be followed island wide and, if some activities have to be relocated from Waikiki they should be divided island wide. Downtown/Chinatown cannot and should not bear the brunt. We have too many here already for what is a growing residential area whose denizens work all hours of the day and night, encompassing newborns through centenarians, lots of dogs, who need quiet, their sleep for decent health.

Hopefully 2024 will be the year for success.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
James Barahal	jbarahal@mac.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Honolulu Marathon Association	I wish to comment	Oct 21, 2024 @ 06:02 PM

Testimony:

The Honolulu Marathon Association supports this much needed legislation. However, we are opposed to section 5 a., which does not allow for future legacy event status.

This clause will be very detrimental to our Hapalua Half Marathon ,an event with nearly 10,000 participants including several thousand from around the world.

This April will be the 14th annual Hapalua,, although the event started at 16 years ago. Normally this would qualify us for legacy status. However, we were forced to suspend operations for two years due to Covid restrictions.

In many years, we have failed to get a permit during the October lottery drawing and have been compelled to rely on a Mayor's waiver to conduct the event.

The legacy status is very important to us as by the time of the October quarterly lottery, we have already spent hundreds of thousands of dollard on event operations Our major sponsor, Japan Airlines, has also committed tremendous resources, both in terms of sponsorship and marketing well in advance of the event. Additionally, thousands of the participants have made expensive travel, plans months and occasionally years in advance, so any potential cancellation of the event due to lack of permitting would be devastating.

The Hapalua has had over 100,000 participants in its history, and has attracted over 40,000 people from outside of Hawaii. The economic impact of this event has been over $200 million.

We feel that the legacy status is critically important not only for the Hapalua, but for other potentially significant sporting events to be created in Hawaii. The necessary investments needed to create a global event cannot be obtained with the uncertainties of a year to year permitting lottery.

Thank you for your consideration.

Aloha and respectfully yours,

James Barahal, MD

President/CEO

Honolulu Marathon association

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jasmine Mancos	jemancos@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Chinatown Coven	Oppose	Oct 21, 2024 @ 08:07 PM

Testimony:

The language on this bill leaves too many outstanding questions over the intent and implications. The lack of clarity will harm small businesses and adversely affect neighborhoods that support street festivals. I am opposed to this bill and believe more time and research is needed before it can be moved out of committee.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Sarah Worth	SarahKWorth@yahoo.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Oct 22, 2024 @ 02:17 AM

Testimony:

Bill 50 does NOT decrease the number of street closures. Instead of six less street closures for festivals, Waikīkī will instead, just have six more parades. Please do not be fooled by this propoganda of misinformation.

In addition, if Waikīkī street closures for festivals are such a liability to public safety, then ALL street festivals should be removed from our streets. Why would there be a decreased risk of fire of a medical emergency just because a street festival is a "legacy" event?

The reasoning behind Bill 50 does NOT make sense and it favors foreign, mainland and big corporations over small, local businesses. Please vote no or at the very least, defer Bill 50 until an objective review of the transportation accessibility of fire rescue, paramedics, police and other first responders can be evaluated in relation to parades versus street festivals.

I appreciate your time and consideration,

Sarah Kim Worth

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ernest Caravalho	ecaravalho17@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Oct 22, 2024 @ 06:41 AM

Testimony:

As Chair of the Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board, I oppose the final reading of Bill 50 in its current form, though speaking today as an individual. While I acknowledge the intent to regulate parades, street activities, and festivals, I

believe the proposed regulations could have unintended consequences on local businesses and cultural events. Chinatown, in particular, thrives on its vibrant and unique character, and any changes should be carefully considered with community engagement and transparency. Additional review is crucial to address potential impacts before moving forward with this legislation. There for I oppose Bill 50 due to the negative impact it will have throughout the City and County of Honolulu. Ernest Caravalho

Name: Robert Finley	Email: bob22224@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Oct 22, 2024 @ 02:06 PM
Testimony: Verbal testimony in favor, written testimony submitted earlier		

Chair Tyler Dos Santos-Tam and members of the Committee

My Name is Robert Finley, and this is my individual testimony in favor of Bill 50 CD1.

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

TESTIMONY OPPOSING BILL 50

RELATING TO PARADES, STREET FESTIVALS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.

From: Gregory Misakian

For: Honolulu City Council, City and County of Honolulu
Transportation Committee Meeting

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024, at 2:30 PM

Aloha Members of the Committee,

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 helped to initiate 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 (as written) 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.

On 10/7/24 I received a very odd email from Mr. Egged, informing me that he was now registered as a lobbyist for Bill 50 (as of 8/14/24), and requesting I correct my testimony (which was previously submitted for the City Council Transportation Committee Meeting on 9/24/24). He also copied the Waikiki Neighborhood Board Chair, Robert Finley. As I serve on the Waikiki Neighborhood Board, I did not appreciate this email or the implication that I needed to correct

my testimony, which was and is 100% accurate, and resubmitted without changes, except adding this paragraph and the following paragraphs.

I am not the only one who has raised concerns regarding Mr. Egged and his lobbying efforts. Civil Beat also raised this concern in a story published on June 19, 2017 titled, "What Honolulu Lobbyists Don't Tell You."

(Excerpt from the Civil Beat story published on 6/19/17)
Rick Egged, who lobbies for the Waikiki Improvement Association, said the need to get the form notarized is why he forgot to submit his this year. The report languished on his desk for six months until Civil Beat called to ask why he didn't file a report. Within hours, Egged submitted the form.

Additionally, I have raised valid and substantiated Sunshine Law concerns regarding the way Mr. Egged is on agenda for Waikiki Neighborhood Board meetings. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) has provided an informal written opinion and the Neighborhood Commission Office (NCO) has also acknowledged my concerns and the OIP opinion to be valid. Yet, I continue to see concerns with the way Mr. Egged is on the Waikiki Neighborhood Board meeting agendas, as it is vague and doesn't allow the public (or the Board) to know what will be presented, in addition to there being no presentation materials submitted on the shared Google drive.

I respectfully ask that you vote no on Bill 50, for the clear and concerning reasons I bring to your attention.

Mahalo,

Gregory Misakian

WAIKĪKĪ IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Testimony of Rick Egged
President, Waikiki Improvement Association
Before the
Honolulu City Council Committee on Transportation
Tuesday, October 22, 2024
In consideration, of

Proposed CD1 to 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, 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.

However, we oppose adding a blanket cap on legacy events. The events that have the longevity to achieve legacy status become very valuable to the community the Hapalua or half Marathon is a prime example for over 14 years it has become an important event for Hawaii and on the countries long distance calendar.

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.

306 Kamani Street, Honolulu HI 96813, Phone (808) 545-5900, Fax 545-5901, office@eventsint.com

October 21, 2024

City and County of Honolulu
530 South King Street, Suite # 100
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
(808) 768-582

TESTIMONY on Bill 50 – 2004

In Opposition to requiring Beer Gardens at all Street Festivals

By Rick Schneider, CEO/President of Events International Inc.

Events International has been producing street festivals in Honolulu since 1987. It was our prime business for many years. Over our 37 years in operation, we have produced more street festivals than any promoter active today.

The requirement in Bill 50 to have a beer garden at every street event serving alcohol is ill advised, unnecessary, and a great detriment to the community at large. In our 37 years of producing hundreds of these events we have never been cited for a violation or had any serious problems. This clause in the bill is a remedy for a problem that doesn't exist. Conversely, it will take away activities that the community at large enjoys, adding to the quality of life in Honolulu.

The hard truth is that without the ability to sell alcohol throughout the event, there is not enough revenue from other sources to sustain these events. Last year we co-produced Festa Italiana in Kaka'ako. The event was an overwhelming success catering to over 8,000 Honolulu residents and guests. Families were able to roam the event freely with parents able to enjoy a beer, wine or cocktail while their children enjoyed all the event had to offer. A beer garden would have created a negative environment that would have greatly diminished the experience. It would also have heavily curtailed sales at the bar which would make the event financially unviable. At the end of the day, last year's event broke even. If this bill passes, we will not be able to do the event this coming Spring.

The community as a whole wants these events to happen. As long as promoters operate responsibly, there is no need to institute these rules. Please strike this clause from the bill.

Respectfully

Eric (Rick) Schneider
CEO/President