

Bill 46 (2024) Testimony

Submitted by Ross Isokane



MAKAKILO/KAPOLEI/HONOKAI HALE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 34

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BLVD SUITE 160 •
HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
PHONE (808) 768-3710 • FAX (808) 768-3711 • INTERNET:
<http://www.honolulu.gov>

RESOLUTION

STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 13 IN SUPPORT OF
ESTABLISHING AN EMPTY HOMES TAX IN HONOLULU

Whereas, the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 (“Board”) serves as a citizens’ advisory board dedicated to enhancing effective citizen participation in government decisions, as outlined in the City and County of Honolulu’s Neighborhood Plan of 2008; and

Whereas, the Downtown/Chinatown Neighborhood Board NO. 13 passed resolution 2024-04, entitled “Supporting Bill 46 (2024) to Establish an Empty Homes Tax in Honolulu” on September 5, 2024; and

Whereas, an empty homes tax can increase housing supply by incentivizing property owners to rent or sell, promote affordable housing, revitalize neighborhoods by enhancing occupancy, generate revenue for local governments to support community services, discourage speculative investment, encourage responsible ownership, and provide targeted relief for residents facing housing costs; and

Whereas, Hawai’i is experiencing a housing crisis; and

Whereas, housing is a vital necessity that underlies numerous challenges faced by families within our community; and

Whereas, the [2019 Hawaii Housing Planning Study](#) identified a critical need for over 22,000 additional housing units for local families on O’ahu; and

Whereas, this study also projected a decline in demand due to out-migration, with many residents leaving Hawai’i due to the high cost of living and lack of affordable housing; and

Whereas, despite the pressing demand for housing, over 34,000 units remain vacant on O’ahu, as reported by the U.S. Census; and

Whereas, the City Council has made multiple attempts in the past five years to address the issue of vacant units, reflecting the community’s call for action to convert these properties into housing for local families; and

Whereas, we commend Chair Tommy Waters and Budget Chair Radiant Cordero for introducing Bill 46 (2024) and their efforts to establish a viable pathway for its implementation; and

Whereas, while Bill 46 (2024) alone will not resolve the housing crisis, it represents a crucial part of a broader strategy to improve affordable housing options and reduce homelessness and displacement; and



Whereas, Bill 46 (2024) aims to establish an empty homes tax that encourages the use of vacant properties for local residents, helping to alleviate housing pressures; and

Whereas, the rationale for this bill includes increasing the availability of homes for local families and generating funds for affordable housing initiatives; and

Whereas, we recognize that Bill 46 (2024) and Bill 46 (2024) CD1 include various exemptions to mitigate potential unintended consequences, ensuring fairness while addressing housing needs; and be it

Resolved, that the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 stands in solidarity with Neighborhood Board No. 13 in supporting the establishment of an empty homes tax in Honolulu; and be it

Resolved, that Board No. 34 supports the concepts contained within [Bill 46 \(2024\)](#) and [Bill 46 \(2024\) CD1](#); and be it

Ordered, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, the City and County of Honolulu Department of Design and Construction, Honolulu Council Members, and all Neighborhood Boards.

ADOPTED BY THE MAKAKILO/KAPOLEI/HONOKAI HALE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 34
AT ITS REGULAR MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2024, BY A VOTE OF 6-0-0

