

BILL055(24)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 513

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

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

Support: 0

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 1

Name: Stefanie Sakamoto	Email: ssakamoto@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: BIA Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Nov 7, 2024 @ 06:33 AM



**HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
Honolulu Hale
10:00 AM**

November 7, 2024

RE: Bill 55 - RELATING TO ADOPTION OF THE FIRE CODE

Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kiaaina, and members of the Council:

My name is Roseann Freitas, President and CEO of the Building Industry Association of Hawaii (BIA-Hawaii). Chartered in 1955, the Building Industry Association of Hawaii is a professional trade organization affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders, representing the building industry and its associates. BIA-Hawaii takes a leadership role in unifying and promoting the interests of the industry to enhance the quality of life for the people of Hawaii. Our members build the communities we all call home.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Bill 55, Relating to the Adoption of the Fire Code. We are specifically writing with comments regarding section 17.3.5.2.1.11.6, clearance of brush or vegetative growth from structures. We have concerns about the broad language which could lead to unintended consequences for property owners.

The bill's language appears to set a sweeping requirement that would effectively eliminate vegetation taller than 18 inches within 30 feet of a structure. While there is an exception for plants that "do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire," this exception appears vague and difficult to interpret. All plants are inherently flammable to some degree, and there are no clear guidelines or standards that a design professional can reference to document compliance with this provision. This vagueness creates significant potential for misinterpretation and inconsistency with regards to enforcement.

Further, section 17.3.5.2.1.11.6(5) requires that property owners keep roofs clear of leaves and needles. While we understand the intent, this requirement should be further clarified. A zero-tolerance policy that mandates the removal of every single leaf is both unrealistic and unenforceable. Regular maintenance to remove significant buildup is reasonable, but minor amounts of natural debris are inevitable in areas with trees. This requirement may also have the unintended consequence of impacting insurance claims.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.