BILL050(24)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 520

TRANSPORTATION (TRANS)

TRANSPORTATION (TRANS) Meeting

Meeting Date: Nov 19, 2024 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 6

Oppose: 36

I wish to comment: 1

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Steven Matsuno	steven@kirinrestauranthawaii.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Kirin Restaurant	Support	Nov 14, 2024 @ 03:17 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

Having worked in Waikiki for the past 45 years, I support this measure.

No longer novel nor special, the burdens of the roughly 40 closures of the State's most recognizable district are far too taxing.

Legacy events no longer feel special. Withstanding the Kalakaua closures were something that made you feel good. To make concessions for a worthy cause felt noble and worthwhile. But with the sheer number of times this now takes place, the sense of helping out is now replaced with resentment. "Sorry for the inconvenience", occasionally fine,

Our island has a lot to offer other than Waikiki. Events may be re-directed to to other places. Some highlighted the effects on diminished numbers of events to be detrimental to their situation. This proposal would benefit areas like Chinatown since the restrictions would apply specifically to Waikiki. This is a sensible alternative to the find win/win remedies.

Finally, area residents and businesses are simply worn out from the disruptions that have become too much to endure. The reduction is most welcome and cannot come soon enough.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Mahalo,

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Helene Shenkus	s.shenkus@festivalcos.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
The Festival Companies- Royal Hawaiian Center	Support	Nov 15, 2024 @ 04:46 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Rick Egged	rick@waikikiimprovement.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Waikiki Improvement Association	Support	Nov 15, 2024 @ 05:04 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
lynne matusow	lynnehi@aol.com	96817

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 17, 2024 @ 10:34 AM

Testimony:

Although I support the bill, I strongly object to the removal of the definition of liquor controlled area and the requirement that the Applicant provide for and implement a liquor controlled area.

I served on what was then known as the Downtown Neighborhood Board for 27 years. During that period, there was one street event, serving alcohol, which was a major problem. Residents trying to access their homes, workers trying to access their business, had their personal water bottles confiscated by event representatives. We were promised it would not happen again. Yet it did. Again and again. This year the community was told a different operation was taking over security for the event. We will never know if that worked as the event was cancelled.

These events must not obstruct entrance to residential properties and businesses, both of which pay taxes. You received testimony, dated October 21, 2024, from Eric (Rick) Schneider, CEO/President of Events International, that with beer gardens (aka liquor controlled areas) certain events will not occur as these requirement created a negative environment. Mark Tarone cancelled this years Hallobaloo because of a similar restriction.That poses an interesting question. If events cannot make money because of these restrictions, is the event really only taking place to promote alcohol consumption.

Many areas where events occur have establishments which serve alcohol, in all its forms, including beer, wine, hard liquor. They pay taxes. They pay rent. They should profit from these events, not be in competition with them.

Please keep the liquor controlled area and the requirement that the Applicant provide for and implement a liquor controlled area provisions in the bill. The community will suffer if the language is removed.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ross Isokane	isokane@gmail.com	96813

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Nov 18, 2024 @ 09:53 AM

Testimony:

While I oppose the current approved version of Bill 50 (dated 7/31), I have no objections if the Council goes with Proposed CD1 - TW3 (dated 11/14).

Proposed CD1 - TW3 (with the updated language to reduce the proposed island-wide rules and regulations) is the most consistent with the current viewpoints of the recently elected Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board (as evidenced by the Departmental Related Communications posted for this Bill on 10/7/2024, as submitted by the current Neighborhood Board Chair).

Many thanks for receiving all perspectives and for making the proposed revisions which, I believe, will help support events in Downtown-Chinatown. These events will help move our current community forward in our revitalization efforts by

activating our otherwise empty streets.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Sarah Worth	SarahKWorth@yahoo.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 18, 2024 @ 01:32 PM

Testimony:

Good Afternoon Transportation Committee Chair Dos Santos-Tam,

Even though I am a member of the Waikīkī Neighborhood Board (hereinafter referred to as "WNB"), I testify today as a resident of Waikīkī.

Last Tuesday, the Waikīkī Neighborhood Board, once again, did NOT support Bill 50 and asked for it to be DEFERRED; there are too many unanswered questions.

Instead of abidding by our community's wishes or answering the concerns listed below, Tommy Waters insisted that the bill be pushed out of the Transportation Committee.

I submitted testimony at past C&C hearings and have asked :

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* Why are there no safety reports from HPD or Fire on whether parades or festivals are safer? If public safety is such a concern, would public responders recommend no street closure events in Waikīkī?

* Why is Tommy Waters only concerned about public safety during festivals but NOT during Legacy festivals & parades;

* Why did Waters remove the cap on Legacy Events? Without the maximum restriction..

* ...Bill 50 wil NOT reduce street closures. In fact, the current "maximum" total will only increase over time as parades start qualifying for Legacy status!

* Why doesn't Transportation Director Roger Morton implement public safety protocols on ALL events (Legacy included) instead of just targeting non-legacy festivals (ie. close only one lane, shift event boundaries, time/location restrictions)?

* Why has Director Roger Morton not collected the mandatory 51% on the profits made by the parades sponsored by Mainland and foreign tour companies, and seems to only focus on festivals organized by local business owners? Parade participants, chaperones, and family members must buy a week long travel, excursion, and hotel package through these non-local, tour corporations (profit per person ~$400). That's millions of dollars, made off of our streets, just leaving Hawai`i!!

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Please do not be fooled. Bill 50 is not about the safety of Waikīkī residents; it's about big "non-profit" corporations pushing out even more of our small, local businesses from Waikīkī.

Until we have answers, Bill 50 does not make sense and should be DEFFERED.

Mahalo nui loa,
Sarah Kim Worth

Name:	Email:	Zip:
David Millwood	hawaiiguy@me.com	96822
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Millwood Ohana Productions	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 07:58 AM

Testimony:
The lottery system needs updating. It doesnt work in the current business enviroment.
The waikiki neighborhood board has already exprssed they are in favor of one street festival per month. But it would be better to have a system in place that would allow consistency ie., perhaps every second Saturday, etc.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Gregory Misakian	greg.misakian@sbcglobal.net	96815
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 08:59 AM

Testimony:
My name is Gregory Misakian, and I serve on the Waikiki Neighborhood Board, but I am submitting testimony as an individual.

At the most recent Waikiki Neighborhood Board (WNB) meeting it was clear that numerous Board members did not support Bill 50, and the Board as a whole had not voted either way. The WNB was informed by Chair Waters that this would be deferred until January, to give the WNB more time to discuss. Please note, the WNB does not meet in December.

I echo what Ms. Sarah Worth has testified to and hope that the Transportation Committee understands their responsibility to also address transportation related issues. As Bill 50 was raised as a public safety issue, for first responders having

access through the street, then that is what the Committee should be discussing.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Hang Ngo	hannahicpa@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Cultural Woodcarvings Inc	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 10:41 AM

Testimony:

As a woodcarver, having the festival helps me introduce Hawaiian culture to more people.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Hideki Yasui	info@hana-limahawaii.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 10:48 AM

Testimony:

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Name:	Email:	Zip:
Fabienne Dumlao	info@kuikihawaii.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 10:50 AM

Testimony:

I strongly urge that Kalakaua Avenue remain open for local vendors, street festivals, and night markets, as it plays a crucial role in fostering community connection, supporting small businesses, and enhancing the cultural vibrancy of our neighborhood. As a resident and active participant in these events, I have witnessed firsthand how important this space is for both the local community and the visitors who come to experience the authentic spirit of our area.

Kalakaua Avenue serves as a vital gathering place where people from all walks of life come together to celebrate local culture, art, food, and music. The street festivals and night markets provide an accessible platform for local vendors to showcase their products—many of which are handcrafted, unique, and deeply tied to the island's heritage. These events not only give small business owners a much-needed space to thrive but also offer visitors a rare opportunity to experience Hawaii in a more personal, intimate way, away from the typical tourist traps.

These events are also a critical aspect of the local economy. Local vendors depend on the foot traffic generated by these festivals to survive and grow their businesses. In turn, this stimulates other sectors of the community—restaurants, cafes, and bars—all benefiting from the increase in local commerce. Keeping Kalakaua Avenue open ensures that money stays within the community, empowering residents, entrepreneurs, and artists to contribute to the broader cultural and economic landscape.

More than just an economic driver, Kalakaua Avenue is a space where a sense of belonging and community can flourish. Whether it’s meeting neighbors at a food stall or discovering a new piece of local art, these events bring people together, building bonds that strengthen the fabric of our society. The festivals also give our younger generation a chance to showcase their talents, take pride in their culture, and find inspiration for future endeavors. For visitors, it’s a place to experience the true "Aloha spirit"—warm, welcoming, and full of shared experiences.

Furthermore, the events on Kalakaua Avenue promote sustainability and environmental awareness, as many vendors focus on eco-friendly practices and locally sourced materials. By supporting these markets, we help ensure that we are fostering a more sustainable future for Hawaii and the next generation.

In conclusion, Kalakaua Avenue is not just a street—it is a vital part of our community's identity. Keeping it open for local vendors, street festivals, and night markets is essential to the cultural, economic, and social well-being of our neighborhood. It provides a space where businesses thrive, culture is celebrated, and a sense of unity is built. I strongly advocate for the continuation of these events and the preservation of Kalakaua Avenue as a key community asset.

WE SMALL BUSINESSES NEED THESE EVENTS ON A MONTHLY BASE TO SURVIVE! MAHALO NUI!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Anthony Kim	rhythmtouch@gmail.com	96797
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 10:50 AM

Testimony:
Thera nothing to do at nights in Waikiki. The festivals have tourist experience all things Hawaii in 1 location. Waikiki is a joke at night everything closes early

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kris Domingo	kriszy_10@yahoo.com	96797
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 10:53 AM

Testimony:
Hi,

My name is Kris Domingo. I am one of the food vendors who sells at Kalakaua during these events. We are a small business, these events helps us boost our sales and help us to meet our daily needs for our family. If we can continue doing these events it will be of so much help for us. Mahalo!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
John Tam	akim1034@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 10:53 AM

Testimony:

Tourist walking around at night's nothing to buy and do. Only a few things open after 8. Without night life tourist will not come as often

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kuuipo Monis	kuuipomonis@gmail.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 10:54 AM

Testimony:

Waikiki Festivals provide a vibrant platform to celebrate the local culture, showcase local businesses and artists, foster a sense of community, boost the economy, and offer a fun, accessible way to experience the unique Hawaiian spirit through food, music, dance, and other traditional elements, all while enjoying the beautiful weather outdoors.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
clayton handley	claytonh@dadahawaii.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Kirin Restaurant	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 10:54 AM

Testimony:

Honorable Members of the Council,

My name is Clayton Handley, and I am writing in support of Bill 50, which seeks to reduce the number of street festivals and events in areas like Waikīkī. As a manager at Restaurant and a resident of Honolulu, I believe this measure is necessary to address the challenges these frequent events create for local businesses, residents, and commuters.

Currently, the sheer number of street closures and festivals severely impacts accessibility for businesses like ours. Customers avoid the area altogether during these events, which dramatically reduces our foot traffic and sales. Unlike street vendors, who operate without the burdens of labor costs, overhead, licensing, and advertising, restaurants like ours struggle to stay competitive. With the rising costs of doing business, this unfair competition is devastating.

In addition, as a resident who frequently drives through the area, I have experienced firsthand how these events create significant delays and inconvenience, especially with streets fully closed to cars. The upcoming reduction of Kūhiō Avenue to one lane will only worsen this situation, making it nearly impossible for customers and residents to navigate the area.

Limiting the number of permits to six per year, as proposed in Bill 50, strikes a balance between supporting cultural and community events while reducing the disruptions caused by their frequency. This will help local businesses recover, ensure better accessibility for residents, and improve traffic flow.

I respectfully urge you to pass Bill 50 and prioritize the needs of local businesses, residents, and our community as a whole. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Clayton Handley
Manager, Restaurant on Kalakaua

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Luisalberto Manrique	diamondheadtaffy@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 10:59 AM

Testimony:
We wish to oppose the bill 50 due to the amount of economic business that it provides for local hard working families to be able to vend in an already commercialized and corporate Waikiki location.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Macy Khounkeo	olaysthailaoexpress@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:09 AM

Testimony:
Help small businesses

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Sharla Viernes	stviernes@hotmail.com	96791
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:14 AM

Testimony:
Kalakaua street festivals help us local small businesses not only to grow but to show case our variety of different food culture and crafts to the world through tourism.
We also have many visitors telling us how much they enjoy it and hope they can see it again on their next trip back to honolulu

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Xumin Liu	Leoxumin@gmail.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:17 AM

Testimony:

That's good and meaningful event. It's a Win-win for local and tourist. We should support it.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ricky Lam	rlam183@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:22 AM

Testimony:

Street festivals allow tourists to see and experience many different parts of Hawaii culture. It also allows people to support small local businesses.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Sandy Yeh	islandwoodart@yahoo.com	96830
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:30 AM

Testimony:

We would like City and County approves Millwood Ohana Production for more Festivals' in Kalakaua because It was a unique opportunity to show up to tourist around the world Our Hawaiian Cultural Art and Craft, Gifts, Food and produces...that they are enjoyed, appreciated so much and always looking forward for meeting with us on the next coming one.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Michael Lee	michaelleedesigns@gmail.com	96701
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:30 AM

Testimony:

I am a local artist born and raised in Hawaii who participates in the street festivals on Kalakaua Av. These festivals provide the bulk of my income and allow me to share my art with the tourists who all love to meet the artist. I know that the festivals also employ many local workers. Please do not limit the amount of festivals as they are a benefit to both tourists and local people.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Danielle Rush	d@illuminatedarthawaii.com	96825
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
illuminated ART Hawaii	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:38 AM

Testimony:

Gives local vendors and small businesses the opportunity to get in front of tourists and is extremely financially helpful in keeping us open!

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Loreto Macadaeg	ls400sx@gmail.com	96791
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:38 AM

Testimony:

Aloha, I would like to say that these 1 day a month events help little businesses grow, not only that, It showcases all the different types of foods from all over the world in one place. We are the melting pot of the world in everyone's eyes. We should be able to show that to the tourist/visitors. I have heard many stories of visitors of how much they love and enjoy these festivals not only because of what they see, because there is nothing like it in the world! Please let the small businesses show them how wonderful these events are. Foods, clothing, crafts etc. Honestly this shows how well diverse we are as we should be and how much aloha has gone through each and every small businesses that attend. I would be okay with 1 event a month but more would be even better. Lets show everyone outside of the sate how we do it through different cultures, tastes, and styles by continuing these events. Mahalo

Name: Parinyanut Douangchanh	Email: ohskitchenhawaii@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:47 AM

Testimony:

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Name: Katie Millwood	Email: katiemillwood2@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:50 AM

Testimony:

I do not support this bill

Name: Payslie Carrizosa	Email: payslie.carrizosa@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:50 AM

Testimony:

I do not support this bill !!!

Name: Rudy Ducusin	Email: streatsofaloha@gmail.com	Zip: 96797
Representing: Str'Eats Of Aloha	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:51 AM

Testimony:

Not only the locals and general public but especially those on vacation enjoys these festivals. Tourists get to see out culture and gives us small businesses a place to sell and gain exposure. Its great for the economy as well

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Adam Pili	kaleo319@icloud.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:52 AM

Testimony:

I do not support this bill.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Vincent zha	vincent.418@hotmail.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:53 AM

Testimony:

we live in waikiki and enjoy the market festival so much all my friend and neighbors enjoy all the festivals and markets. its part of our live those who doesnt like it is few amount of people if they dont like loud they shouldn't live in waikikialso we want to support our small business

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ruby Klement	rubycora@yahoo.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:55 AM

Testimony:

I make my own skin care products from scratch in small batches from locally grown Noni fruits, essential oils and herbs. As a female small business owner going to a street fair and festivals are the best place to show case my product line. The Waikiki festivals is the best since we meet a lot of tourist from the mainland and people all over the world. This is a big help for small business owner like me to sell and expand to help their business grow. This is the reason why i Oppose to BILL050.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Saburban Castillo	saburban808@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:59 AM

Testimony:

Local Vendors get the chance to showcase what they are selling.

Families are able to walk the strip and enjoy the festivals.

There’s always traffic in waikiki but that shouldn’t be the reason to cancel festivals that are either once or twice a month. It gives the people something to look forward too.

Yes, parking for the residents can be hectic for the people that lives in waikiki but it’s only for the day. It’s not a huge problem.

The police force that work the festivals have fun also. Their are people that goes up to them and take pictures with them. How cool is that?!?!!

but in all honesty, keep the festivals going!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lillian Li	lillianlvsha@gmail.com	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 11:59 AM

Testimony:

Support small business owners in the island, more activities to do for tourists.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Fran Rizzo	franrizzo@hotmail.com	95061
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 12:05 PM

Testimony:

I am writing to oppose Bill 50 limiting street festivals in Waikiki. My family and I visit Hawaii often and we thoroughly enjoy the festivals. It allows us to meet the local people and support their small businesses. Hawaii is such a beautiful and unique place, I don't go there to shop at high end chain stores. The festivals provide a safe and fun evening family activity. The charm of most other large cities that we travel to have pedestrian streets. Perhaps you should consider closing Kalakaua Ave more often for these festivals. I'm sure both tourists and local people would appreciate that.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ray Aliwis	808majestic@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 12:07 PM

Testimony:

I do not support this bill

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Satauo Ketiama	ksatauao@yahoo.com	96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Nov 19, 2024 @ 12:09 PM
Testimony: I do not support this bill.		

Name: P Z	Email: angelping77@yahoo.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Nov 19, 2024 @ 12:47 PM
Testimony: Opposite		

Name: Ytala Chacon	Email: ytalachacon79@gmail.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Nov 19, 2024 @ 01:02 PM
Testimony: I do not agree with reducing the number of streets for the show because that will take away the opportunity for many families to be able to work and cover their basic needs. All of us who work there have needs and what Millwood does is give us an opportunity to be able to put food on the table at home. Don't close that opportunity to our children.		

Name: Clayton Handley	Email: claytonh@dadahawaii.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Na	Position: Support	Submitted: Nov 19, 2024 @ 01:45 PM

Testimony:

Here’s a letter supporting Bill 50:

Honorable Members of the Council,

My name is Clayton Handley, and I am writing in support of Bill 50, which seeks to reduce the number of street festivals and events in areas like Waikīkī. As a restaurant manager and a resident of Honolulu, I believe this measure is necessary to address the challenges these frequent events create for local businesses, residents, and commuters.

Currently, the sheer number of street closures and festivals severely impacts accessibility for businesses like ours. Customers avoid the area altogether during these events, which dramatically reduces our foot traffic and sales. Unlike street vendors, who operate without the burdens of labor costs, overhead, licensing, and advertising, restaurants like ours

struggle to stay competitive. With the rising costs of doing business, this unfair competition is devastating.

In addition, as a resident who frequently drives through the area, I have experienced firsthand how these events create significant delays and inconvenience, especially with streets fully closed to cars. The upcoming reduction of Kūhiō Avenue to one lane will only worsen this situation, making it nearly impossible for customers and residents to navigate the area.

Limiting the number of permits to six per year, as proposed in Bill 50, strikes a balance between supporting cultural and community events while reducing the disruptions caused by their frequency. This will help local businesses recover, ensure better accessibility for residents, and improve traffic flow.

I respectfully urge you to pass Bill 50 and prioritize the needs of local businesses, residents, and our community as a whole. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Clayton Handley

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Khang Dang	khangngdang@gmail.com	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 02:10 PM

Testimony:
We love Waikiki Festival/block party event. There are also many road construction which cause problem in traffic, why you are only blaming only Waikiki Festival events?

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Joey He	hyq153323@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 02:22 PM

Testimony:
Oppose

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Douang Luangrath	douangluangrath1@gmail.com	96791
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Nov 19, 2024 @ 02:27 PM

Testimony:
Oppose

ROYAL HAWAIIAN CENTER

Testimony of Helene "Sam" Shenkus
Royal Hawaiian Center - VP, Director of Marketing
Before the Transportation Committee
Tuesday, November 19, 2024
in consideration, of
Bill 050 (24) Relating to Parades, Street Festivals, and Other Activities

Aloha Tam and Members of the Transportation Committee
My name is Helene "Sam" Shenkus, representing the Royal Hawaiian Center (RHC). The RHC is the premier shopping, dining, entertainment and cultural destination in Waikiki, spanning three blocks of Kalakaua Avenue since our opening in 1980.
Royal Hawaiian Center (RHC) strongly supports adding the following language to Bill 50: "Maximum number of street activity permits issued".

RHC also strongly supports limiting their total number, which would include Waikiki Special District legacy street festivals, to two (2) permits per triannual period of the calendar year, for a total of eight (8). Since we are located on Kalakaua Avenue, the monthly street festivals which are held on Saturdays, have created major business interference for our Center, our merchants' employees and customers, as they get stuck in gridlock between Noon to Midnight. For example,the May 11the Le'ahi Festival, sponsored by Da Ultimate Grindz, created havoc for our restaurants' customers that had made Mother's Day dinner reservations. Our Mother's Day weekend is one of largest single restaurant sales volume weekends of the year and the total closure of Kalakaua Avenue created traffic congestion and hundreds of late or cancelled dinners. These hundreds of cancelled reservations throughout Waikiki generated lost revenues for the businesses and the frustration of countless families.

Closing Kalakaua reduces the number of customers for our merchants, which reduces their business revenues and eventually adds to their cost of doing business in Waikiki. Since Oahu's tourism industry is still recovering from the impacts of Covid and challenging global currency valuations, every customer is critical. We validate an average of 17,000 resident parking tickets per month, and when their commute into and out of Waikiki is so frustrating, it is a totally avoidable business disruption.
Mahalo for your consideration.

WAIKĪKĪ IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Testimony of Rick Egged
President, Waikiki Improvement Association
Before the
Honolulu City Council Committee on Transportation
Tuesday, November 19, 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.