BILL004(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 107

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Feb 26, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 2

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Linda Nikcevich	lindaz5123@gmail.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Feb 24, 2025 @ 04:03 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
MAHEALANI cypher	malamapono744@aol.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Ko`olau Foundation	I wish to comment	Feb 25, 2025 @ 06:34 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Winston Welch	winston@outdoorcircle.org	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
The Outdoor Circle	I wish to comment	Feb 26, 2025 @ 09:11 AM

Testimony:

Aloha City Council Members,

The Outdoor Circle has worked with the City for over 113 years to keep our City free of visual blight, including offsite signage and advertising. This is an integral part of who we are and what we value as shown in poll after poll and reinforced by court cases protecting our visual environment. Generations of people in Hawaii as well as visitors have come to cherish our protected visual environment and we are the envy of the world in this regard.

The Star-Advertiser came out with its editorial on Monday, Feb 24th, 2025 regarding Bill 4, and this editorial opinion is also match what we advocate for.

To quote:

"Caution on Bill 4 has been expressed by members of Hawaii's Outdoor Circle, which has successfully opposed billboards and obtrusive signage in Hawaii for more than a century — a service that should inspire gratitude from all Hawaii residents....

We agree that by no means should a city shortage of funds to maintain public facilities be a pretext for skirting signage rules that protect Hawaii and Honolulu from looking as jumbled and ticky-tacky as certain U.S. mainland tourist locations. Current law already prevents that, however, and so it shouldn't be an issue.

The City Council should approve Bill 4, and it wouldn't hurt to include restrictions on signage in Bill 4 that match or reinforce state law, addressing the Outdoor Circle Council's legitimate concerns. Similarly, Resolution 50 endorses savvy city management, and so including language incorporating state law would be fitting."

The City can accomplish its goals in Bill 4 and comport with our existing signage laws. To that end, we look forward to working with Council Member Cordero and the Administration to address our concerns.

Thank you for the work you do for our city and the opportunity to testify.

Winston Welch, Executive Director, The Outdoor Circle.

February 24, 2025

Aloha Honorable Council Members,

RE: Bill 4 Relating to Sponsorships

I am writing in support of utilizing sponsorships. I am speaking about the smaller dollar sponsorships that could be used to fix our park system. Specifically park names with small sponsorship banners at the bottom. Allow sponsors to stick logos on benches, signs, picnic tables, trails, trash containers… Allow sponsorship on the website and all social media, all within reason.

I completely agree with the Outdoor Circle that there must be restrictions. All sponsor signage must be compliant with all city and state rules. No large billboards allowed. I would even allow rules to be different between locations if necessary.

Hawaii is an amazing place filled with natural and historic wonders enhanced by stunning views all around the islands. Yet, as locals, we wrestle with the push and pull of understanding and sharing the Aloha spirit yet balancing the use of our lands with tourists. A way forward would be could allow public entities to work in conjunction with the local constituents, commercial businesses, and local government in public-private partnerships like "Friends of" groups. That way, the concerns of the people who live nearby can also help our park and land offices to be the eyes and ears of the locations and good stewards of the land. The commercial entity gives a way to help the local groups maintain the parks or whatever entity.

This partnership could be adding restrooms to beaches, kiosks at parking lots and parks to collect fees, trash containers with private pick-up service, upgraded benches and picnic tables, and most importantly grooming and marking trails for safety's sake.

Set standards for federal, state, county, and local Hawaii parks, trails, and beaches so that there is a high level of consistency and quality across the board. Within these standards start fixing all trails and beaches, adding signage, and legal parking along with restroom options. Label trails similar to ski hills with colored diamonds. Clear safety warnings need to be presented at the location, with warnings when the tickets are bought to enter the area and with tourist information. Why is Hawaii at #43 in the national ParkScore listing not in the top ten? If you are that low on a national basis what must the state and local park system be rated?

Instead of police who are in short supply protecting these areas, hire park rangers. Pay for the rangers by having a visitor fee at every park, trail, and beach with a kama aina free or greatly discounted rate. Start charging for parking and advocating public transportation to many of these overcrowded locations. Too often, we see signs like at Makapu to lock up your valuables. A regular occurrence is having cars broken into, tying up police, and ruining our sites and Hawaii's reputation. Ha'iku Stairs is an optimum example of where this public/private/commercial partnership can relocate the entrance and add parking to stay out of the neighborhood. A trail like that could require a $25 fee to do the hike. Use reservation systems like Diamond Head and capitalize on parking and trail pass income. Hikers will pay anywhere from $5-$50 for the experience. The price can also deter inexperienced hikers, plus pay for additional staff to man all the trails, waterfalls, and natural features throughout the island. It can put patrols watching parking lots and entrances near neighborhoods to create a pleasant experience for everyone.

In closing, I do agree with commercial sponsorship throughout Hawaii. It must be limited, approved, and follow city and state standards. A commercial financial boost along with creating and working with local groups will be a win-win for all.



February 26, 2025

To: Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair
And Members, Honolulu City Council

From: Mahealani Cypher, President
Ko`olau Foundation

Re: Bill No. 4, CD1, Relating to Sponsorships - Concerns/Recommendations

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

On behalf of the Ko`olau Foundation, I wish to express our concerns and recommendations regarding Bill No. 4, C.D. 1, which would allow the City to approve commercial sponsorships in return for naming rights of City and County properties.

The Ko`olau Foundation is a 501(c)(3) recognized non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of our Hawaiian history, culture and heritage. As such, we are concerned about the possibility that the City may be initiating a program that could lead to the loss of traditional names for various city parks and places that may be important cultural and historic treasures.

We should note that this Council was extremely supportive and understanding when the Ko`olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club was able to persuade you to support the re-naming of Kane`ohe Beach Park to Naoneala`a, named after Chief La`amaikahiki – an historic figure who lived at that beach centuries ago. We thank you for that.

Since that event, other communities have come to us and asked about re-naming places in their own areas that once had traditional Hawaiian names or were dedicated to specific historic figures.

It has troubled us for some years now, particularly when a city property is re-named by the City, it loses the original name – often assigned in honor of someone's contributions or their place in our island's history.

In reading news reports about this particular initiative, it was also concerning that an example of a place being considered for renaming with this sponsorship program, is Blaisdell Center. I remember when the City named this complex the Neal Blaisdell Center years ago, after

a beloved and popular former Mayor. I wonder how much that sponsorship is worth? I wonder how much it would cost for a business sponsor to rename the Fasi Municipal building or Honolulu Hale?

Do you remember what an uproar occurred a few years ago when someone in Chicago trademarked the words, “poke bowl”? This is something you might want to think about.

Please let me clarify: we wholly support the Council’s interest in finding alternative funding resources, and this is not a bad bill – we commend you for the idea – maika`i!

However, we wish to offer some mana`o – some thoughts or suggestions for you to consider before you prepare this bill in its final form:

First, perhaps including language that exempts from this sponsorship program historic properties that are listed or eligible to be listed on the national, state or Honolulu’s lists of historic places.

Second, it might be possible to route a suggested sponsor site through the Oahu Historic Preservation Commission for their mana`o.

And lastly, could you please ensure that no language in this bill enables the sponsor to hold complete control of a city property, unless agreed to in advance in the sponsorship agreement by City Council resolution.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns and recommendations.

Mahalo for your consideration of our mana`o.