

BILL026(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 229

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Apr 16, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 0

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Representing: Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 14, 2025 @ 04:56 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Letter of Opposition</p> <p>Subject: Reject Bill 26 (2025): Stop HART's \$12B Rail Fiasco and Prioritize Honolulu's True Needs</p> <p>Dear Honorable Chair Tommy Waters, Esteemed Councilmembers, and Stewards of the City and County of Honolulu,</p> <p>As a voice for fiscal sanity and the soul of our island home, I stand before you with the precision of a ledger and the passion of an ohana betrayed to urge you to reject Bill 26 (2025)—a reckless appropriation of \$665,994,753 to prop up the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation's (HART) runaway rail, a \$12 billion sinkhole careening toward \$22 billion with no end in sight. From a CPA's cold, hard lens, this bill is a financial travesty, bleeding our city dry while corruption festers and material costs soar 300-400% beyond reason. I implore you, guardians of Honolulu's purse, to halt this madness and redirect funds to housing, food security, and infrastructure that truly serve our people!</p> <p>The numbers tell a grim tale. Bill 26 funnels \$491.3M from the General Fund and \$174.7M from the Transit Fund, with a net \$3.15M for HART's operations—6.7 staff, vague "current expenses" (\$1.76M), and \$169.7M in debt service. Yet, the rail, 11 miles from Waipahu to Halawa, serves a pathetic 10,000 daily riders against a promised 120,000, costing \$1.1B per mile—five times global norms. Originally budgeted at \$2.7B in 2006, it's now \$12B deep, with \$9-10B more to reach Kaka'ako, not Ala Moana, by 2031 at best. Corruption—\$1B in change orders, \$20M in shady contracts—has stained HART's ledger, while steel and concrete prices, up 30% since 2022, mock cost controls. This is no transit dream; it's a fiscal nightmare "going nowhere fast."</p> <p>Honolulu's books can't bear this burden. Our \$3.8B debt, with \$350M annual service, eats 10% of the \$2.5B 2024 budget—Bill 26's \$491.3M transfer starves urgent needs. Property taxes rose 5% last year; more hikes loom if HART's \$22B tab lands. Compare this to bus rapid transit (\$50M/mile) or my championed SB1249, protecting farmers to cut our 90% food import dependency. Bill 24's bonds for housing—where \$1.1M median prices lock out families—or flood fixes (Wahiawa's \$10M in 2024 damages) deliver real value. HART's \$1.76M in "expenses" lacks itemization—Procurement's \$50,000 smells like another \$10M Ansaldo overpayment (2017). Where's the audit?</p> <p>Transparency? Quarterly reports and GET surcharge tracking are crumbs when \$1.2M in questioned costs (2023) go unanswered. The AA+ credit rating you safeguard risks collapse if rail defaults—1% rate hikes add \$5M/year to debt. As a CPA, I see red flags: no completion plan, no cost cap, no trust. As Honolulu's heart, you know our people—60% oppose more rail funds (2024 poll)—deserve better. My SCR 204 advocacy for safe hazardous material disposal shows I back accountability, but HART's ledger is a bonfire of public trust.</p>		

Councilmembers, you're not bookkeepers—you're architects of Honolulu's future. As Confucius warned, "When wealth is centralized, the people are dispersed." Bill 26 disperses our wealth to a rail serving no one, while 60% of renters pay over a third of income and farmers beg for protection. Einstein said, "Insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results." Stop HART's insanity—reject Bill 26 and demand a public audit, cost controls, and a plan to finish or pivot to buses. The Seven Generations Prophecy commands, "Consider the next seven generations." A Waianae elder echoed, "Build for our keiki, not for greed."

Your vote can end this fiscal hemorrhage and redirect millions to homes, farms, and roads. Veto Bill 26, and let's forge a Honolulu where every dollar counts, every family thrives, and our legacy shines with aloha, not debt!

With steely resolve and fervent Aloha,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM

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