BILL053(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 394

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Aug 6, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 9

Oppose: 22

I wish to comment: 2

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jacob Wiencek	jacob.m.wiencek@pm.me	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 1, 2025 @ 04:58 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Councilmembers,

Honolulu faces a deep and long-standing cost-of-living challenge, largely driven by unaffordable housing. Working- and middle-class families are being pushed out of our city because they cannot afford the rent, much less own their own homes. This Council has made several important reforms over the last few years to change that paradigm. However, passing Bill 53 is significant step in the WRONG direction. There are two main problems with Bill 53 as it stands:

1.) Requiring Neighborhood Boards to review proposed affordable housing projects introduces yet another roadblock in our already byzantine system of regulations. Even a sixty-day delay can have seriously negative financial and construction consequences that hurt the sustainability of these projects. While we should always encourage and facilitate community information exchanges, having a mandate to incorporate Neighborhood Boards as a de facto part of the approval process is just needless bureaucracy.

2.) The institution of parking minimums in affordable housing projects is contradictory to the stated aims of increasing the affordable housing supply. Parking minimums often results in wasting precious housing (and commercial) space on unproductive parking lots/garages that do NOTHING to alleviate traffic congestion or bring prices down for working- and middle-class families. By instituting requirements for parking minimums, this bill would actually REDUCE the impact of any potential increase in affordable housing by wasting precious space on cars. Finally, there is a property rights component to parking minimums. I do not believe the city government should be mandating in such fine detail how to develop affordable housing projects. Let renters and developers work this out on their own.

I STRONGLY encourage the Council to REJECT this bill. It is counterproductive to the stated aims of affordable housing and this bill will NOT drive down costs for hard pressed working- and middie-class families.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Dalan Kam	kamhamspam@gmail.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 2, 2025 @ 10:20 AM

Testimony:

Hello, I am writing in opposition of this bill because it would effectively continue a car-centric transportation paradigm. Families or individuals would be incentivized to use their given parking spot, if given one over more economically

sustainable options. Car ownership is incredibly expensive, and we should not be incentivizing financially insecure people to be taking on such a burden when walking/biking/public transit are becoming increasingly viable options for commuting.

Mandating a parking minimum also would require the state to spend money building and providing said parking, whose space could otherwise be used for more affordable housing and whose money could be used to fund more affordable housing or better multimodal infrastructure to further incentivize car-lite and car-free lifestyles.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Geena Thielen	geena@ccs-hawaii.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 2, 2025 @ 03:59 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Brett Kulbis	brett.kulbis@use.startmail.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 3, 2025 @ 10:26 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jared Tsuchiyama-Sando	jaredtsuchiyama@gmail.com	96701
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 3, 2025 @ 05:38 PM

Testimony:

Hello honorable council members,

While I do support encouraging developers to work with the neighborhood boards to come up with solutions, I am against mandating parking as part of the development. As the city and state is trying to achieve its carbon emission reductions it seems counterintuitive to mandate that developers incentivize car usage by building parking stalls. I do understand that congestion is a concern and people parking off street however I think that this is something that should be worked out on a project per project basis as is currently the case. If a project is going to be built next to a rail station do we expect parking stalls to be mandated? The state is already considering developing public parking stalls in TOD areas -and I am concerned we are going to put a policy in place that will have unintentional consequences for the next decade. Developers will build parking for market demand and artificially keeping that demand there for every project in the future will impact the cost to build housing. Mandating room for cars in every project going forward may take car parking off the street but it will promote more congestion and traffic in our urban core which is the reason many boards are often uncomfortable with new development. Thank-you for the opportunity to testify.

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Damien Waikoloa	damien.waikoloa@gmail.com	96822
Representing: Hawai'i YIMBY	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 4, 2025 @ 07:37 AM

Name: Landon Lee	Email: leelando@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 4, 2025 @ 11:29 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

I am submitting testimony in strong opposition to Bill 53 (2025), which would require one parking space for every two units in new affordable rental housing projects. This mandate directly undermines Honolulu's housing and climate goals, and is based on outdated assumptions about car ownership that do not reflect the needs of many low-income residents in our city/

A 2020 study by the Ulupono Initiative, The Cost of Parking in Hawai'i, found that the average cost to construct a single structured parking stall in urban Honolulu is approximately $42,000. These costs are not absorbed by developers, they are passed on to tenants in the form of higher rents, even if the tenant doesn't own a car. For renters at 50% of the Area Median Income, the cost of providing just one parking stall can represent up to 37% of their rent. In other words, mandated parking is not free, it is an invisible tax on affordability.

The Ulupono study also noted that parking mandates are one of the most costly and least flexible land use regulations, not to mention how they discourage efficient land use and reduce the number of units that can be built. These effects are especially harmful in places like Honolulu, where land and construction costs are already high and walkability and transit access are improving.

Requiring more parking sends us in the wrong direction. It encourages car dependency, increases housing costs, and reduces the feasibility of affordable housing projects, all while contradicting the City's climate and land use goals, including those in the O'ahu General Plan and the Climate Action Plan, which aim to reduce vehicle miles traveled and prioritize sustainable, multimodal transportation options.

Honolulu does not need more parking. We need more affordable homes, especially in neighborhoods where people can walk, bike, or take transit. I respectfully urge you to reject Bill 53 (2025) and avoid policies that raise costs and limit options for our most vulnerable residents. Mahalo for your consideration.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Eduardo Hernandez	eduardo@hbl.org	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawai'i Bicycling League	Oppose	Aug 4, 2025 @ 04:33 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Harris Nakamoto	junfour@gmail.com	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 4, 2025 @ 05:06 PM

Testimony:

As a board member on Neighborhood Board #10 (Makiki, Lower Punchbowl, Tantalus) and chair of our Nice Neighborhoods Committee, I observed and experienced first hand the negative impact of an unmanaged Bill 7 project. Our example is the project at 1427 Ernest Street where we have met with the neighboring residents on 3/1/25. Complaints of illegal drug activities and non-resident visitors who enter the apartment units at all times of the day and night. The data shared by HPD showed a significant uptick of criminal/drug activity. Resident cameras also documented their concerns to narcotics and vice. Even residents at 1427 Ernest Street shared their concerns of non-resident visitors. Overall, the steps taken were to invite its project developer to attend a neighborhood board meeting and speak to the board and concerned residents to seek solutions. However, there has been no response and no attempt, as Bill 7 does not require such communication and dialogue.

One solution proposed was to have an on premises resident manager who would be able to monitor visitors and criminal activity. All of these discussions were captured in minutes of our board and committee.

I support affordable housing and all the environmentally positive aspects included. However, without guardrails, there is a significant negative impact to our neighborhoods, our Kupuna, our Keiki, our pets and our families.

I write in support of Bill053(25). Thank you.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
CHUCK LEE	Success881@hawaiiantel.net	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 4, 2025 @ 09:18 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

My name is Chuck Lee and I've been a Makiki resident living on Pensacola Street for over 20 years.

I'm also an advocate for Affordable Housing and initiatives but have some concerns with some Affordable Housing projects (mainly Bill 7 ones) that are built and being built in my neighborhood (in particular on Pensacola Street) and am very concerned with current and future negative impacts on our Makiki/Lower Punchbowl/Tantalus community.

I also want to commend CM Nishimoto for introducing Bill 53 (Affordable Housing) and applaud him for addressing 3 very important aspects in positively addressing the challenges we are experiencing with the Bill 7 projects (having a Resident Manager, a parking stall for every 2 units and a developer presentation of the project to the Neighborhood Board and community).
I also want to commend Director Kevin Auger (Housing and Land Management) for introducing himself at our Neighborhood Board Meeting and being transparent and listening to the Bill 7 concerns of the Board members and community and trying to make it a requirement that the developers make a presentation to the Neighborhood Board and community.

I've learned of some negative issues from a neighboring Bill 7 project at 1427 Ernest Street)...issues of concern were: domestic violence, drugs and drug dealing on the property and surrounding areas, thefts from residents and outsiders, many local residents in the immediate neighborhood are scared to walk their dogs or walk the area with their families).

My future concerns involve 3 projects in a small area on Pensacola street from Wilder Avenue down to Lunalilo street.
One bill 7 project is called Pense
Metro (29 units w 4 parking spaces) and it took over 2 years to build and got recently completed about 3 or more months ago and till this day there are NO OCCUPANTS, the other yet to be built Bill 7 project is at 1421 Pesacola (21 units?) and the other large project currently being built (90 units??) is at the corner of Wilder Avenue and Pensacola.
So a total of approx.140 units .

We already have very limited parking in this area...a couple of years ago the entire left side of Pensacola from Wilder Avenue to Lunalilo Street was eliminated for an underutilized Bike Lane.
Traffic and impacts on our community infrastructure will be affected!
I strongly recommend that the City Council adopt this very important Bill and DPP and Office of Housing and Land Management take a pause for a
bit to evaluate and consider these valid concerns and recommendations on these projects as well as all others being planned or being built on the island!
MAHALO

Chuck Lee

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ted Kefalas	tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Oppose	Aug 5, 2025 @ 08:09 AM
Name: Evan Oue	Email: eoue@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: NAIOP Hawaii Chapter	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 5, 2025 @ 08:36 AM
Name: McKibbin Mist	Email: mckibbinm@pacificrimland.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: BIA Hawaii	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 5, 2025 @ 08:50 AM
Name: Abbey Seitz	Email: abbey@hiappleseed.org	Zip: 96816
Representing: Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 5, 2025 @ 08:58 AM
Name: Regina Wong	Email: reginawo@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 5, 2025 @ 09:32 AM
Testimony: I am in support of the Bill 53 amendment.		
Name: Micah Munekata	Email: mmunekata@ulupono.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Ulupono Initiative	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 5, 2025 @ 09:38 AM
Name: Brett Kulbis	Email: brett.kulbis@use.startmail.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 5, 2025 @ 09:52 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Justin Menina	jmenina77@gmail.com	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 5, 2025 @ 09:56 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

I strongly oppose Bill 53 (2025), which would require one parking space for every two units in new affordable rental housing. This mandate undermines Honolulu's housing and climate goals and is based on outdated assumptions about car ownership.

A 2020 Ulupono Initiative study found each structured parking stall in urban Honolulu costs around $42,000. These costs are passed to tenants—often low-income—regardless of car ownership, raising rents and limiting affordability. For renters at 50% AMI, a single stall can represent up to 37% of their rent.

Parking mandates also reduce housing supply, encourage car dependency, and contradict City plans like the O'ahu General Plan and Climate Action Plan, which aim to reduce vehicle miles traveled and support active, healthier forms of transportation.

As a board member of Neighborhood Board No. 8 (McCully-Mō'ili'ili), I see firsthand how costly parking burdens communities—especially kupuna who rely on walking, biking, and transit and this diversion of resources to support bundled parking costs onto affordable housing will disproportionately affect low-income households

Honolulu needs more affordable homes, not more parking. Please reject Bill 53.

Mahalo,

Justin Menina

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Leigh Ann Lopez	leigh25@hawaii.edu	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 5, 2025 @ 09:59 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Tupola and Vice Chair Tulba,

I am writing in strong opposition to Bill 53, which proposes to add off-street parking requirements for affordable housing developments.

Parking mandates are costly and counterproductive. According to the Ulupono Initiative's report "The Costs of Parking in Hawai'i," the cost of structured parking in Honolulu can reach up to $55,000 per stall for affordable rental projects, and as high as $69,000–$77,000 per stall for mixed-income or market-rate for-sale developments. These expenses are not absorbed by developers—they are built into the total cost of a project, resulting in fewer affordable units and higher rents or home prices for local residents.

I urge the Council to reject Bill 53 and instead support development that is flexible, transit-accessible, and aligned with our climate resilience goals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,
Leigh Ann Lopez

Name: Perry Arrasmith	Email: perry@hawaiisfuture.org	Zip: 96797
Representing: Housing Hawai'i's Future	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 5, 2025 @ 10:00 AM
Name: Julia Fink	Email: julia@aiahonolulu.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: The American Institute of Architects (AIA), Honolulu Chapter	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 5, 2025 @ 10:42 AM
Name: cathy gleason	Email: gleasonc001@gmail.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 5, 2025 @ 03:31 PM

Testimony:
i am in support of affordable housing that takes into consideration the residents who will reside in these units and the surrounding community they will join.

A major stress of these developments is the competition for street parking in already overpopulated areas. i dont think it

is fair to assume that just because our new neighbors live in affordable housing, they do not have the right to a parking space. Also, all our community members should have at the very least the right to safely enter and exit vehicles on streets already too narrow to accommodate any more traffic.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
angel willey	angelwangelmd@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 5, 2025 @ 04:25 PM

Testimony:

Support this bill to please keep a large rental (low income) out of our neighborhood. Not enough room or space.

Respectfully,
Angel Willey
Makiki/Prospect

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jason Takeuchi	jasontakeuchi@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 5, 2025 @ 05:10 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

My name is Jason Takeuchi and I'm an architect and lifelong resident of City Council District 6. I believe in affordable housing and feel the need in our communities. I also believe in guidelines that support new housing to make any development feel like it belongs and will contribute to the social welfare of the surrounding community.

Current Bill 7 rules do not allow for neighborhood board or community input, and does not require any vehicle parking. The lack of these requirements has brought negative attention to Bill 7 projects and has caused frustration to neighborhoods unaware of development and the future traffic and parking issues it brings.

My local neighborhood board has passed a resolution opposing a proposed Bill 7 project for numerous reasons such as code, safety, and scale, without owner/developer response or interaction (they were invited to meetings multiple times). I believe the requirement for fair and respectable review and communication with neighborhood boards are the right step towards eliminating community opposition and getting more housing constructed in a just manner.

The proposed amendment requiring one parking stall per two units is appropriate, especially in communities where street

parking is highly competitive and in higher mauka elevations where bus routes do not exist. Without these guidelines, we risk seeing more monster homes in the form of affordable housing developments.

After years of understanding what works well and what doesn't with Bill 7, Bill 53 (2025) presents a more thoughtful approach with lessons learned. I'm writing in support of Bill 53 (2025) because I believe in affordable housing that all communities can support.

Jason Takeuchi, AIA

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Holly Shea	HollyOShea@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 5, 2025 @ 05:25 PM

Testimony:
Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for this bill.

I support affordable housing that is done responsibly, under proper oversight, with community in mind, and which provides a long term solution to the housing crisis we are facing.

It is important that the people living in the neighborhoods which are impacted by these projects are informed and are given a chance to weigh in.

After hearing directly from those neighbors impacted by one such project, having an on-site resident manager to enforce rules is a great proposal.

Having adequate parking for cars is necessary especially when building in an area that already suffers from overcrowded street parking conditions.

Thank you.
Holly

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Chloe Marechal	chloevmarechal@gmail.com	34947
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 5, 2025 @ 10:36 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

My name is Chloe Marechal, and I am writing to strongly oppose any further development of luxury condos or large-scale projects on the North Shore of O‘ahu. I have come to this wonderful island since I was a little girl, your island is a sacred place for all who come to see her, to feel the energy she creates when visiting.bThis area holds deep cultural and community significance and should not be treated as a commodity for wealthy investors.

Developments such as $8 million condos are driving long-time residents and Native Hawaiians out of their homes by inflating property values and disrupting local life. These projects increase traffic, overwhelm aging infrastructure, and harm the natural environment. Most importantly, they serve non-local interests, not the needs of the community.

The North Shore is one of the last remaining areas on this island that still reflects the true spirit of Hawai‘i. You must preserve it. I urge you to protect this land, to listen to the local people, and to reject any development that puts profit before community.

Mahalo for your time.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	waianaenb569@gmail.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 5, 2025 @ 10:38 PM

Testimony:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry OPPOSE the "off-street parking" - one (1) parking space for every 2 units for Bill 53 RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Each unit should have their own parking space to prevent "over-crowding" on public streets. Currently, vehicles on parked close to STOP signs, fire hydrates, street corners blocking the drivers view from oncoming cars, and parking on sidewalks and as a result pedestrians are left to walk on the roadway during oncoming traffic.

I don't support the proposed project going to the neighborhood board in that district.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Claire Santos	cpsantos@bu.edu	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 5, 2025 @ 10:42 PM

Testimony:

I fully support Councilperson Nishimoto's Bill 53 amendment as a critical first step in restoring balance to the affordable housing options that are currently favoring only developers who intentionally abuse the spirit & intent of the original Bill 7. These developers erect substandard microunits that are neither livable nor affordable; they provide no green space; and instead of being used as affordable working class rentals they are rented out as subsidized low income & no income housing that we all pay for. We are forced to cope with the criminal activity that comes with that particular income level. The no-parking tenement towers are a blight on any community.

This amendment restores community participation in project approval & management, and it should also include the restoration of Special District Guidelines which should never have been violated (height limits, building design, setbacks, landscaping, etc.) and must forbid the downgrading of projects from affordable workforce housing to low income & no income subsidized housing. Decent middle class market value neighborhoods must not be subjected to degradation & increased criminal activity brought by developers who will soon enough sell-off the property and leave the mess behind.

Name: Trevor Nagamine	Email: tnagamine.nb25@gmail.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 6, 2025 @ 12:55 AM
Name: Kimi Wilkinson	Email: Kimiw@savio.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: THE TENANTS OF 1427ERNEST ST, HONOLULU HI 96822 C/O SAVIO ASSET MANAGEMENT LLC	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 6, 2025 @ 08:15 AM
Name: Michele Luke	Email: mluke@kdubm.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 6, 2025 @ 08:41 AM
Name: Carol Wakayama	Email: ckwakayama@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 6, 2025 @ 09:11 AM
Name: Jameson Dahl	Email: jamesond@savio.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 6, 2025 @

		09:54 AM

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Honolulu City Council
City Council Chamber
Wednesday August 6, 2025
10:00 AM

RE: Bill 53 Relating to Affordable Housing

Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and members of the Council,

I am writing in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to Bill 53 Relating to Affordable Housing. This bill specifically affects Bill 7 (Ordinance 19-8) affordable housing projects. The bill adds parking requirements, a resident manager requirement and a Neighborhood Board review requirement.

My partners and I have built and leased up two Bill 7 projects, have a third that will be ready for occupancy within a month, a fourth under construction and two more slated to break ground this year. In addition we have another 6 buildings in various stages of design or permitting. 100% of the units in our buildings are set aside for those earning 80% AMI and below. This represents over 500 affordable units being built at a negligible cost to the City and County of Honolulu.

The reason there has not been broader interest in utilizing Bill 7 is that the margins are much slimmer than other real estate developments. So slim that we are constantly battling to control costs to allow each project to proceed. Based on that experience I will offer this simple truth. Bill 53 will kill Bill 7. This Council may as well simply repeal the original law as that is the effect this bill will have. A vote for Bill 53 is a vote to end Bill 7. A vote for Bill 53 is a vote against affordable housing for the residents of Oahu. For this reason I am asking the Council to vote against Bill 53.

Sincerely,

Geena Thielen
President/RME

Testimony Opposing Bill 53 (2025) – First Reading

Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

I am submitting written testimony in opposition to Bill 53 (2025) due to the additional *regulatory burdens* it imposes on affordable rental housing projects. While I recognize that the first reading is generally a formality, I urge this Council to ensure these issues are addressed and corrected during upcoming committee hearings.

Concerns with New Regulatory Mandates:

- Unnecessary Increase in Regulatory Burden: Bill 53 introduces new mandates—such as a requirement for one parking space for every two units, a mandatory resident manager unit (with employment for the duration of the project), and a procedural requirement to present projects to the neighborhood board before permitting. These requirements add layers of complexity, time, and expense for affordable housing developers. Honolulu's housing crisis demands streamlining, not complicating, the path to more affordable homes.

- Rising Costs Threaten Affordability: Every added mandate—reserved parking, a non-revenue manager unit, and additional administrative steps—directly increases development costs. These costs are ultimately paid by renters or discourage developers from bringing new projects to market, reducing the supply of affordable units the ordinance purports to support.

- Overly Rigid and One-Size-Fits-All Requirements: Not all affordable rental residents require parking, and some projects may not need a full-time resident manager. Blanket mandates restrict the adaptability and innovation essential for serving diverse neighborhoods. Local market realities and project scales vary, but this bill removes the flexibility to respond effectively.

- Stifling Private Sector Engagement: These added requirements may deter private investment—the very engine that can accelerate solutions to our affordable housing shortfall. With less participation, Honolulu risks falling further behind on desperately needed rental housing.

Since the first reading is merely procedural, I implore the Council to use committee hearings to fix these counterproductive requirements. Streamline the permitting process, maintain flexibility, and remove mandates that add cost but little value. We need a regulatory environment that encourages—not obstructs—the development of affordable rental homes.

Mahalo for considering these deeply held concerns. Please amend Bill 53 at the next stages to truly advance housing affordability in Honolulu.

Brett Kulbis
U.S. Navy Veteran

Ewa Beach

Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

August 6, 2025

Honolulu City Council
530 South King St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: OPPOSE BILL53(25): RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Councilmembers,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing to express my strong opposition to Bill 53(25), which would increase minimum parking requirements for affordable housing developments under the city's affordable rental housing program. This proposal would undo key elements of the Bill 7(19) reforms, which wisely removed parking mandates to help make small-lot affordable housing more viable. As Civil Beat[1] previously reported, excessive parking requirements were one of the biggest reasons why so few units were built under previous affordable housing programs. Adding back even a 0.5-stall-per-unit requirement will increase costs, reduce usable building area, and likely discourage the very kinds of low-cost housing we urgently need.

Across the country, cities that have reduced or eliminated parking minimums, such as Buffalo, Portland, and Seattle have seen clear increases in housing production, particularly near transit. The American Planning Association[2] has documented how parking mandates drive up construction costs, often by tens of thousands of dollars per unit, while producing empty parking stalls that low-income residents may not need or want. Mandating parking doesn't just raise costs—it actively limits how many units can be

[1] *Can Fixing Parking Rules Make Honolulu More Affordable?* - https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/01/can-fixing-our-parking-rules-make-honolulu-more-affordable
[2] *People Over Parking* - https://www.planning.org/planning/2018/oct/peopleoverparking

Hawai‘i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

built, especially on narrow urban lots. Honolulu’s unique land constraints and high construction costs make these negative effects even more harmful here.

We should be working to lower barriers to affordable housing—not reintroduce them. The original parking exemption in Bill 7(19) was based on sound planning principles: let the market determine parking needs, especially in areas well served by transit. Bill 53(25) would reverse this progress and make it harder, not easier, to solve our housing crisis. We urge the Council to reject this bill and continue supporting flexible, affordable development that puts people over parking.

Hawai‘i YIMBY (Yes In My Backyard) is a volunteer-led grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting bold and effective solutions for Hawai‘i’s housing crisis. We urge your support and thoughtful consideration on this measure, and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Damien Waikoloa
Chapter Lead, Hawai‘i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega
Chapter Lead, Hawai‘i YIMBY

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EMAIL
bicycle@hbl.org

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

Wednesday, August 6, 2025 - 10:00am
Opposition for Bill 53

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Council,

My name is Eduardo Hernandez, and I am the Advocacy Director for the Hawaiʻi Bicycling League (HBL). We are a non-profit organization founded in 1975 with the mission of enabling more people to ride bicycles for health, recreation, and transportation. We strive to create communities across our islands that have safe, accessible, and inclusive environments for people to bike, walk, and roll.

HBL stands in **OPPOSITION for Bill 53**, which proposes to add off-street parking requirements for affordable housing developments. At a time when Oʻahu is facing a dire housing shortage, adding costly and outdated parking mandates to affordable housing is a step in the wrong direction—one that will deepen our housing crisis, raise rents, and undermine our climate goals.

Instead of adding parking requirements, the focus should be on supporting multimodal options like bikeshare, encouraging developers to add docking stations for Biki and, off-street secure bike parking. We could instead consider adding incentives for landscaping that help to expand tree canopy and make walking and biking more comfortable. These measures offer a higher value proposition than a one-size fits all parking mandate.

When land use development is planned to prioritize walking and biking, the end result is that our streets and neighborhoods become safer for everyone. We urge you to vote down Bill 53.

Ride Aloha,
Eduardo Hernandez

Advocacy Director
Hawaiʻi Bicycling League

GRASSROOT INSTITUTE OF HAWAII

1050 Bishop St. #508
Honolulu, HI 96813
808-864-1776
info@grassrootinstitute.org

Removing barriers to Hawaii's prosperity

Aug. 6, 2025, 10 a.m.
Honolulu Hale

To: Honolulu City Council
Tommy Waters, Chair
Andria Tupola, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: Bill 53 (2025) — RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola and other members of the Council,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **opposes** Bill 53 (2025), which would impose additional restrictions on the county's Bill 7 affordable rental housing projects.

These proposed rules would require one parking space for every two units of a Bill 7 project; a presentation before the neighborhood board of the community in which the project is to be built; and the hiring for each Bill 7 project of an on-premises resident manager.

Individually, each of these proposed new rules would add to the cost of building much-needed housing units.[1] Together, they could make some projects financially infeasible, which would defeat the purpose of granting homebuilders certain city incentives in exchange for producing affordable housing.

Currently, Bill 7 projects are not required to include off-street parking. The builders are allowed to provide whatever number of parking spaces they believe are necessary for their projects, balancing the marketability of their units with the costs associated with providing off-street parking.

Honolulu's high land costs mean that each required parking space can add to project costs in one of several ways: acquire additional land for parking spaces; dig to build underground parking stalls; construct podium

[1] "Hawaii Housing Planning Study 2024," prepared by SMS Research and Marketing Services, Inc., FSR Consulting LLC and Ward Research, Inc. for the Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Table 39A, p. 124. According to the study, Honolulu needs 25,710 new units built between 2023 and 2027 to keep up with demand.

parking, which consists of parking spaces on an elevated platform built above ground level; or reduce the amount of housing they would otherwise build to accommodate the parking mandate.

A 2020 study commissioned by the Ulupono Initiative found that podium parking in urban Honolulu costs as much as $42,000 per space, while surface level parking can cost as much as $22,500 per space.[2] A separate 2019 estimate put the cost of underground parking at $48,000 per space.[3]

These estimates were done five and six years ago, respectively. Those costs are no doubt much higher now, thanks to inflation, increased shipping rates, and other price increases.

Taking a look at the Honolulu Construction Cost Index for highrise buildings, such costs increased by 19% over the past five years, from 267.1 in the first quarter of 2020 to 318.1 in the first quarter of 2025.[4] Applied to Ulupono's parking costs, this means each podium parking space could easily cost $50,000.

For a 40-unit project, a parking requirement of one space for every two units would mean 20 parking spaces — or $400,000 in extra construction costs for the homebuilder. This could easily result in fewer housing units being built, or none at all.

A required public presentation before an area neighborhood board could also add to project costs. The bill would not require the neighborhood board to approve the project, but negative feedback from a board could cause a homebuilder to reduce the number of units in a proposed project or add features that could increase construction costs.

Finally, requiring a Bill 7 rental project to employ and house an on-site resident manager would also add to project costs. Glassdoor, a company that matches employees with employers, notes the median pay for a property manager in Honolulu is $72,000 a year.[5] Across a 15-year period, this cost could be substantial.

For all these reasons, Grassroot asks that the Council reject Bill 53.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

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[2] "The Costs of Parking in Hawai'i," prepared by PBR & Associates for the Ulupono Initiative, August 2020, p. 3.
[3] Kathleen Rooney and Donald Shoup, "There's No Such Thing As Free Parking," Civil Beat, Dec. 9, 2019.
[4] "Quarterly Statistical & Economic Report," Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, 2nd Quarter 2025, Table E-7, p. 108.
[5] "How much does a Property Manager make in Honolulu, HI?" Glassdoor, accessed Aug. 4, 2025.

NAIOP
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
HAWAII CHAPTER

August 4, 2025

Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair
Councilmember Andria Tupola, Chair
Honolulu City Council

RE: **Bill 53- RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
Hearing date: August 6, 2025 at 10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola and members of the committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of NAIOP Hawaii with **COMMENTS on Bill 53- RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**. NAIOP Hawaii is the local chapter of the nation's leading organization for office, industrial, retail, residential and mixed-use real estate. NAIOP Hawaii has over 200 members in the State including local developers, owners, investors, asset managers, lenders and other professionals.

Bill 53 establishes new requirements for affordable housing projects including:

1. Requiring one stall for every two units within a project;
2. Requiring a resident manager unit on the property which does not count towards the affordable rental housing unit requirements; and
3. Requiring a presentation to district neighborhood board prior to submit a building permit application.

NAIOP Hawaii respectfully expresses strong concerns with Bill 53 due to the impacts the new requirements will have on the development of affordable housing. Primarily, the requirement for Bill 53 projects to provide one stall for every two units would: 1) decrease unit counts on small lots; 2) increase the cost of developing housing units in Honolulu; and 3) undermine the affordability goals of the county in transit-rich areas. NAIOP Hawaii is concerned that these impacts, especially the increase cost, would halt future Bill 53 projects entirely, particularly in areas where flexibility around parking is key to project feasibility.

Furthermore, the new requirement to mandate an onsite resident manager unit which would not contribute to the required affordable rental units will impact project feasibility. This requirement would impose operational and design burdens on small projects where this role may

not be financially or logistically feasible. Further, the manager unit does not count toward affordable unit totals, effectively reducing yield while increasing costs.

Lastly, the new requirement for a full neighborhood board association presentation prior to submitting a building permit application creates an additional costly and time-consuming delay for these housing units. Developers may face unpredictable delays if a board doesn't schedule a meeting within 60 days. Even with a waiver, the outreach burden adds cost and complexity early in the timeline. The language creates an additional step in the development of Bill 53 projects which again will impact the production of affordable rentals.

Ultimately, the additional costs associated with the new requirements under Bill 53 will undermine project feasibility and reduce or even eliminate housing projects. Though individually modest, the combined impact of new pre-application outreach, added parking, and staffing requirements creates a significantly more costly and risky development environment.

NAIOP Hawaii shares the Council's goals of developing affordable housing for our residents. We are concerned that Bill 53 will nullify a significant tool for the production of affordable housing in Honolulu. NAIOP appreciates the City's commitment to collaborating on this issue and looks forward to working together.

Mahalo for your consideration,



Reyn Tanaka, President
NAIOP Hawaii

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
HONOLULU HALE
10:00 am

AUGUST 6, 2025

Subject: BILL 53 - RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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

My name is Roseann Freitas, 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.

BIA Hawaii respectfully opposes Bill 53 (2025), which would amend ROH Chapter 32 to require one parking stall for every two units in new affordable rental housing project; inclusion of a resident manager unit and employment of a resident manager, with the unit excluded from the affordable rental unit count; and mandatory presentations by all project developers to the relevant neighborhood board.

While we share the Council's commitment to increasing the supply of affordable rental housing, we are concerned that the proposed requirements in Bill 53 will unintentionally increase development costs, reduce the number of units built, and slow project timelines—ultimately making it harder to meet Honolulu's pressing housing needs.

Parking stalls are a significant cost in multi-family housing, especially in areas where land and construction costs are already high. Requiring parking will add a significant cost to each unit, which can make affordable projects financially infeasible. Parking mandates also reduce the number of units that can be built on a given parcel, further limiting supply.

While we understand that resident managers are important for larger complexes, smaller affordable rental projects may not have the financial capacity to support a dedicated unit and salary for a full-time manager. The requirement to exclude the manager's unit from the affordable rental unit count also reduces the net number of affordable units delivered to the community.

Further, while we agree with the need for consistent community engagement and awareness, making neighborhood board presentations a required step for every project may add uncertainty and delay to projects already constrained by funding and permitting processes.

We respectfully urge the Council to reconsider Bill 53 in its current form. A more flexible approach—such as allowing parking and management requirements to be determined based on project size, location, and resident needs—would help avoid adding costs and delays to affordable housing projects.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our comments on this matter.

HAWAIʻI APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony for Hawaiʻi Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Opposition for Bill 53
Honolulu City Council – Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks
Wednesday, August 6th at 10AM

Aloha Chair Tupola and Vice Chair Tulba,
Mahalo for the opportunity to express **OPPOSITION for Bill 53,** which proposes to add off-street parking requirements for affordable housing developments. At a time when Oʻahu is facing a dire housing shortage, adding costly and outdated parking mandates to affordable housing is a step in the wrong direction—one that will deepen our housing crisis, raise rents, and undermine our climate goals.

Parking mandates are costly and counterproductive. According to data from the Ulupono Initiative, the cost of structured parking in Honolulu can reach up to $55,000 per stall for affordable rental projects, and $69,000–$77,000 per stall for mixed-income or market-rate for-sale developments.[1] These expenses do not come out of thin air—they are baked into the overall cost of development, reducing the number of affordable units that can be built and increasing the cost of rent or sale for local families. Bill 53 would add these costs to projects already struggling to pencil out in a high-cost construction environment, effectively acting as a tax on affordable housing.

This bill is out of step with national best practices and local priorities. Across the country, over 90 jurisdictions—including cities far larger and more car-dependent than Honolulu—have eliminated or significantly reduced parking minimums, recognizing that such mandates hinder housing production and promote sprawl.[2] In 2020, the Honolulu City Council removed parking minimums for new housing and commercial development in the urban core through Ordinance 20-41. Bill 53 undermines that progress by reinstating one-size-fits-all mandates that discourage the development of smaller, more affordable housing types.

More parking does not mean more housing security. Individuals living in affordable housing are less likely to own cars, and data shows that lower-income residents often prioritize affordable rents and proximity to transit, jobs, and schools over parking availability.[3] Mandating more parking often means

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[1] Ulupono Initiative, "The Costs of Parking in Hawaiʻi," Prepared by PBR Hawaiʻi, August, 2020. https://ulupono.com/media/ivcfs2pu/the-cost-of-parking-in-hawaii-report-2020-08.pdf.
[2] Parking Reform Network, "Parking Mandates Map," January 6, 2025. https://parkingreform.org/resources/mandates-map/
[3] Zonta, Michela, "Expanding the Supply of Affordable Housing for Low-Wage Workers", Center for American Progress, August 10, 2020. https://www.americanprogress.org/article/expanding-supply-affordable-housing-low-wage-workers/.

reducing the number of affordable homes that can be built on a given parcel due to land and cost constraints.

Bill 53 contradicts the City's climate and equity goals. We cannot meet our climate commitments or equity objectives if we continue to design our neighborhoods around car storage instead of people. Forcing developers to build more parking locks residents into car dependency and undermines investment in walking, biking, and public transit infrastructure. It also disproportionately harms lower-income residents who are least likely to benefit from car-centric policies.

In summary, we urge the Council to reject Bill 53. Instead of making it harder and more expensive to build affordable housing, we should be doing everything we can to support flexible, transit-oriented, and climate-resilient development.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Abbey Seitz

Abbey Seitz
Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Director of Transportation Equity

Email: communications@ulupono.com

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, August 6, 2025 — 10:00 A.M.

Ulupono Initiative offers comments on Bill 53(25), Relating to Affordable Housing

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the Council:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono offers comments on Bill 53(25), which requires the construction of new affordable rental housing projects under ROH Chapter 32 to contain one parking stall for every two units within each project; requires a resident manager unit and employment of a resident manager; specifies that resident manager units may not be counted towards the affordable rental unit requirement; and requires all project developers to make a presentation to the relevant neighborhood board.

While we applaud the intention of Bill 53 to address affordable housing for O'ahu residents, we have concerns that the parking mandate provision may unintentionally contribute to pricing them out. Requiring one parking space per two units undermines the bill's primary affordable housing objective because this effectively forces all residents—including the estimated 35% of Urban Honolulu affordable housing tenants who don't own cars—to subsidize other people's vehicle parking through higher rents.

Our Hawai'i-specific analysis shows parking construction costs of $22,500 per surface parking space and up to $42,000 for structured podium parking. For a single person renting a small studio in Urban Honolulu, this could add to $410 per month to their rent, even if they don't own a vehicle.[1] Parking mandates actually subsidize and even encourage more driving,[2] often at the expense of more affordable housing and transportation choices. Further, research demonstrates that guaranteed parking doubles vehicle ownership rates and increases traffic congestion—outcomes that contradict community livability goals.[3]

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[1] https://ulupono.com/media/ivcfs2pu/the-cost-of-parking-in-hawaii-report-2020-08.pdf
[2] https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0042098021995139?journalCode=usja and https://www.sightline.org/2021/01/28/more-parking-isnt-harmless-it-actually-makes-us-drive-more/
[3] https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0042098021995139?journalCode=usja and https://www.sightline.org/2021/01/28/more-parking-isnt-harmless-it-actually-makes-us-drive-more/

Hawai'i already dedicates more than 53 square miles to parking.[4] We believe the solution is better managing demand through shared parking agreements, cash-out programs, and more transportation choices that reduce the need for single-occupant car use.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,
Micah Munekata
Director, Government Affairs

[4] Derived from https://ulupono.com/news-listing/cost-of-hawai-i-s-vehicle-transportation-system-soars-to-27-4-billion-annually/

Testimony Opposing Bill 53 (2025) – First Reading

Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

I am submitting written testimony in opposition to Bill 53 (2025) due to the additional *regulatory burdens* it imposes on affordable rental housing projects. While I recognize that the first reading is generally a formality, I urge this Council to ensure these issues are addressed and corrected during upcoming committee hearings.

Concerns with New Regulatory Mandates:

- Unnecessary Increase in Regulatory Burden: Bill 53 introduces new mandates—such as a requirement for one parking space for every two units, a mandatory resident manager unit (with employment for the duration of the project), and a procedural requirement to present projects to the neighborhood board before permitting. These requirements add layers of complexity, time, and expense for affordable housing developers. Honolulu's housing crisis demands streamlining, not complicating, the path to more affordable homes.

- Rising Costs Threaten Affordability: Every added mandate—reserved parking, a non-revenue manager unit, and additional administrative steps—directly increases development costs. These costs are ultimately paid by renters or discourage developers from bringing new projects to market, reducing the supply of affordable units the ordinance purports to support.

- Overly Rigid and One-Size-Fits-All Requirements: Not all affordable rental residents require parking, and some projects may not need a full-time resident manager. Blanket mandates restrict the adaptability and innovation essential for serving diverse neighborhoods. Local market realities and project scales vary, but this bill removes the flexibility to respond effectively.

- Stifling Private Sector Engagement: These added requirements may deter private investment—the very engine that can accelerate solutions to our affordable housing shortfall. With less participation, Honolulu risks falling further behind on desperately needed rental housing.

Since the first reading is merely procedural, I implore the Council to use committee hearings to fix these counterproductive requirements. Streamline the permitting process, maintain flexibility, and remove mandates that add cost but little value. We need a regulatory environment that encourages—not obstructs—the development of affordable rental homes.

Mahalo for considering these deeply held concerns. Please amend Bill 53 at the next stages to truly advance housing affordability in Honolulu.

Brett Kulbis
U.S. Navy Veteran
Ewa Beach

Housing Hawaii's Future
PO Box 3043
Honolulu, HI 96802-3043

August 6, 2025

TO: Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council
RE: Bill 53, Relating to Affordable Housing

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a movement led by young residents fighting to create opportunities for Hawai'i's next generations by ending the workforce housing shortage. Our organization supports affordable, workforce housing that promotes a more liveable, walkable Honolulu for Hawai'i's residents.

We strongly oppose Bill 53, a measure which will kill Bill 7 housing projects by increasing cost, increasing delay, and inviting NIMBY opposition.

Bill 51 will greatly increase the cost of Bill 7 projects. According to an August 2020 study from Ulupono, structured, multi-level podium parking costs approximately $42,000 per stall. Such cost, in addition to the cost of a building manager–will immediately imperil Bill 7 projects. With parking alone, the cost of a Bill 7 building with 36 units–with 18 required stalls now factored as a result of Bill 53–would increase by $756,000 in 2020 dollars.[1] Beyond added taxpayer subsidy by the City and County of Honolulu, how should such costs be defrayed?

Our goal is a liveable, walkable Honolulu. Instead of increasing parking requirements, let's champion policies that make our cities more walkable–and livable–by promoting mixed-use development, upzoning existing parcels in our urban communities, and promoting urban infill. After all, this was the intent of Bill 7.

Let's put people (and housing) before more regulatory barriers. Let's build accessible housing for young people in urban Honolulu (where the jobs are). **Let's defer Bill 53.**

Aloha,

Lee Wang
Executive Director
Housing Hawai'i's Future
lee@hawaiisfuture.org

Perry Arrasmith
Director of Policy
Housing Hawai'i's Future
perry@hawaiisfuture.org

[1] According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, this figure, when adjusted for inflation, actually rises to **$938,204.03** in June 2025 dollars.

AIA Honolulu

Friday, August 1, 2025

Tommy Waters, Chair
Andria Tupola, Vice Chair
Honorable Council Members
Honolulu City Council

Subject: Bill 53 2025
Relating to Affordable Housing

Dear Chair Waters and Honorable Members of the Council,

AIA Honolulu respectfully submits the following COMMENTS on Bill 53.

We are concerned that this proposal will significantly undermine the intent and viability of **Bill 7 (Chapter 32, Ordinance 19-8)**, which was carefully crafted to stimulate affordable, workforce rental housing by removing barriers such as parking minimums (e.g. no parking required within transit-oriented development areas).

Requiring Bill 7 projects to provide parking at the ratios proposed in Bill 53—especially alongside a new requirement for full neighborhood association approval—would add costly and time-consuming hurdles. These changes could halt future Bill 7 projects entirely, particularly in areas where flexibility around parking is key to project feasibility.

We believe licensed architects are well equipped to advise their clients on when parking is appropriate, especially in walkable neighborhoods near job centers and transit. Mandating it across the board, however, risks reversing the progress made under Bill 7.

While AIA Honolulu shares the Council's broader goals of responsible, community-aligned development, **Bill 53 as currently drafted risks nullifying Bill 7's critical tools for addressing O'ahu's affordable housing crisis**. Rather than reintroducing parking mandates and approval hurdles, we urge Council to support an exempt or flexible regime for Bill 7 projects—one that respects market-driven parking decisions and preserves expedited pathways.

Thank you for considering our comments. We are available to assist in refining Bill 53 to better align with the policy goals of both neighborhood responsiveness and housing affordability.

Sincerely,

Phil Camp, AIA
2025 President, American Institute of Architects, Honolulu

August 6, 2025

Trevor Nagamine
PO Box 37966
Honolulu, HI 96837
tnagamine.nb25@gmail.com

Councilmember Tommy Waters, Chair
Honolulu City Council
530 S. King St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Bill 53 (2025) — Relating to Affordable Housing

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council,

My name is Trevor Nagamine, and I am a resident of Mililani. I am also a member of Neighborhood Board No. 25 (Mililani/Waipio/Melemanu); however, I am submitting this testimony in my individual capacity, and this testimony does not reflect an official position of Neighborhood Board No. 25. I am writing today in opposition to Bill 53.

The minimum parking requirement contemplated by Bill 53 would undermine Bill 7 (2019)'s objective of streamlining affordable housing projects. Allowing developers to determine parking requirements based solely on market needs is reasonable in urban Honolulu, where TheBus service is frequent and bikeshare/carshare options (i.e. Biki and Hui) are available. Mandating parking by ordinance would serve no purpose than to make housing units permitted under Bill 7 (2019) more expensive with no meaningful benefit.

I respectfully ask that this bill be deferred indefinitely. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Mahalo,

Trevor Nagamine

To: Honolulu City Council

Subject: Support of Bill 7 & Opposition of Bill 53

Aloha Honolulu City Council Members,

We, the undersigned residents of 1427 Ernest Street—a Bill 7 affordable housing project—write to express our strong support for the positive outcomes achieved through the collaborative efforts of the business community and the City in implementing Bill 7. This legislation has successfully expanded access to affordable rental units, directly benefiting tenants like us by providing much-needed housing stability and affordability.

Recently, our property management solicited our feedback on whether Bill 7 has contributed to greater housing security and affordability. *We are pleased to affirm that it has, offering us reliable, long-term housing options in a challenging market.*

We understand that this feedback may be paired with additional documentation concerning potential legislation that, in its current form, could impact the ongoing viability of initiatives aimed at building more affordable housing. In that it may have a dispirate impact, whose net result may be, albeit, unintentionally ***discriminate*** against the very market Bill 7 is seeking to serve.

In gratitude for the housing security and affordability Bill 7 has provided us, we cannot say "Mahalo" enough. Thus we urge the Council to preserve and build upon this success in any future considerations with diligence and due care, this includes, Bill 53, to avoid any unintended consequences that could undermine the goals exemplified in Bill 7.

Mahalo and Best Regards,

The Undersigned Residents of 1427 Ernest Street

Name:		Unit: 103	Signature:		Date: 8-5-25
Name: Mikayla Crabbe-Jones		Unit: 105	Signature:		Date: 8-5-25
Name: Rudolph Kapanapu		Unit: 101	Signature:		Date: 8-5-25
Name: Chrenael Morris		Unit: 306	Signature:		Date: 8-5-25
Name: Renee Walker		Unit: 110	Signature:		Date: 8-5-25
Name: Bronze Balga		Unit: 104	Signature:		Date: 8-5-25
Name: Daniel Ruiral Jr		Unit: 108	Signature:		Date: 8/5/25

Name	Unit	Signature	Date
Pamela Carobrese	#205		
Jeffrey Agustin	206		8.5.25
Ronald Borja	214		8.5.25
Chassidy Pacib	302		8.5.25
Kuhekili Alip	106		8.5.25
Stacy Ramos	207		8.5.25
Jenna Porter	201		8.5.25
Dennis Hill	301		8/5/25
Khaalid Vann	305		8/5/25
Amber Hurdett	308		8/5/25
Ronny Umeda	302		8/5/25
Channa Ramos	207		8/5/25
Elianya Aiwohi	104		8/5/25
Taylor Sakimara	104		8/5/25

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL 53 (2025)

My name is Michele Luke. I am a long-time owner and resident at Ka Hale Mo`i, located at the base of Pūowaina, in the Punchbowl Special District.

Bill 7 (affordable rental housing) was initially adopted on May 19, 2019, codified as Chapter 32, ROH, which eliminated application of certain zoning and building code standards (including certain life safety components) and provided extensive financial incentives to developers, with the intent of streamlining the construction of "affordable" housing. Bill 7 intentionally eliminated the community's right to prior notice of a construction project and the opportunity to comment. As originally adopted, Bill 7 did not apply to special districts, for which additional design guidelines applied, including restrictions on height of construction and obstruction of view planes. Bill 7 was later amended to remove all protections in special districts and to extend its special allowances from May 24, 2024 to May 21, 2030.

Since adoption of Bill 7, the Department of Planning and Permitting ("DPP"), has treated any project labeled by a developer as a Bill 7 project, to be "build, as a matter of right," meaning "without review or consideration as to whether the proposed project is consistent with Honolulu's Primary Urban Center ("PUC") Development Plan; whether the project as designed actually satisfies the ultimate intent of Bill 7; or whether the project adversely impacts the surrounding community's character and value.

Because of this "build as a matter of right" mentality, many Bill 7 projects have utterly failed. A perfect example is the 1427 Ernest Street Project in Makiki. a 3-story walk-up with 24 studio apartments and 2 one-bedroom units, with no parking and advertised monthly rent of approx. $1,800 for a 425 sq. ft. studio apartment, and $2,000 for a 463 sq. ft. one-bedroom unit. The building, which opened in late 2023 has not attracted its targeted market of middle-class workers (teachers, nurses, etc.), and has effectively reverted to low-income housing for which taxpayers provide additional subsidies. Unfortunately, the project has also introduced a criminal element to the neighboring community, as evidenced by over 300 police calls in the course of less than a year. In addition, the management of the rental apartment building has been severely absent. The goal of providing "affordable" housing has not been met, and the community has suffered. The only beneficiary has been the developer.

In early 2024, my neighbors and I became aware of a Bill 7 project, planned by the same developer, to be constructed near Ka Hale Mo`i, and along a short, dead-end street already servicing three condo/apartment building structures. The developer had purchased two adjoining parcels (on which 3 rental homes were situated), with the stated intent of constructing a six-story apartment building with 53 (353 sq. ft.), one-bedroom units, and just eight parking stalls. The project was not reported to our neighborhood board and was not disclosed to our community for comment. After obtaining a conditional use permit ("CUP") to combine these two parcels, the developer then began the permitting process at DPP, which is ongoing. We have since engaged with DPP on a number of occasions to raise life safety and other concerns pertaining to the project, as currently planned, but have essentially been met with the "build as a matter of right" mentality. In its most recent iteration, the developer's plans have been modified (contrary to CUP conditions) to eliminate all parking. On-street parking is already severely overburdened in this area, and cannot accommodate additional vehicles. Moreover, the project is unlikely to attract its targeted market.

In September, 2024, our Neighborhood Board adopted a Resolution, attached, opposing the 1617 Alapa`i project. In so doing, the Board recognized valid concerns being

expressed by homeowners and residents living near the proposed project; the absence of fair opportunity for the community to have these concerns addressed; and the need for greater oversight of this project, and other Bill 7 projects. The Board subsequently invited the developer, on a number of occasions, to attend a Neighborhood Board meeting and to engage with the community. The developer has not responded.

Bill 53 is an important and necessary step towards addressing major shortcomings of Bill 7. In addition to the amendments being proposed, I strongly urge that Bill 53 also include a further provision, to again carve out special districts from Bill 7 entitlements.

With much aloha,

Michele-Lynn E. Luke

08/05/25

RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO THE 1617 ALAPAI STREET PROJECT
(TMK PARCELS 2-2-004:037 & 2-2-004:033; DPP PERMIT APPLICATION #A2024-03-0331)
AND TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY INPUT ON AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING PROJECTS

1. **WHEREAS**, the above-named parcels were purchased on June 29, 2022 by Pivot Development I LLC (controlled by Paul Lam) and Alapai Investment LLC (controlled by Eigo Evan Amakata), in 70% and 30% interests, respectively (collectively "Developer");

2. **WHEREAS,** at the time of purchase there were two single-family structures situated on TMK parcel 2-2-004:033 (702 Prospect Street), consisting of 1,076 square feet and 288 square feet, respectively; and two single-family structures situated on TMK parcel 2-2-004:037 (1617 Alapa`i Street), consisting of 1,820 and 640 square feet, respectively; all four of which were, and continue to be, used as rental housing;

3. **WHEREAS,** on March 11, 2022, Developer's architect, Brian K. Fujiwara (prior to closing of the purchase), submitted a sewer connection application, as to parcel 2-2-004:037, for the addition of 29 new sewer connections, in addition to 1 existing connection, based upon a proposed 30 (1-bedroom) unit, Ordinance 19-7 (Bill 7) rental housing project, which application appears to have resulted in a letter determining sufficient adequacy;

4. **WHEREAS,** on August 15, 2023, Developer submitted an application for a conditional use permit, minor ("CUP"), seeking approval for a joint development of TMK parcel 2-2-004:033 and TMK parcel 2-2-004:037, which are adjacent lots, to maximize affordable rental units under Ordinance 19-7 (Bill 7), and based upon a proposed 6-story, 53 (one bedroom) unit project with 8 open-air parking stalls (since reduced to 4);

5. **WHEREAS,** the City & County of Honolulu, Department of Planning & Permitting ("DPP"), Land Use Ordinance (86-96, and as amended), at Section 21-5.380, states that an applicant seeking to join adjacent lots as a single zoning lot for purposes of a joint development, must comply with development standards set forth in Section 21-2.90-2, which may not be modified;

6. **WHEREAS,** Section 21-2.90-1 mandates that an application for a CUP will not be accepted unless accompanied by a plan, drawn to scale, showing the actual dimensions and shape of the lot, the sizes and locations on the lot of existing and proposed structures, if any, and the existing and proposed uses of structures and open areas, which does not appear to have been done;

7. **WHEREAS,** Section 21-2.90-2 provides that the Director of DPP, where applicable, consider traffic flow and control; access to and circulation within the property; off-street parking and loading; sewerage; drainage and flooding; refuse and service areas; utilities; screening and

buffering; signs; setbacks; yards and other open spaces; lot dimensions; height, bulk and location of structures; location of all proposed uses; hours and manner of operation; and noise, lights, dust, odor and fumes;

8. **WHEREAS,** the factors enumerated in Section 21-2.90-2 militate strongly against approval of Developer's proposed project where the project is sought to be constructed along a short dead-end street (Alapa`i) which already services a 2-building condominium project and a separate apartment building; there is no available on-street parking to accommodate occupants of 53 new units; there is no public transportation available along this street or its cross streets (Prospect and I`olani); the placement of a six-story structure on its planned footprint with limited setbacks will unreasonably compromise safe distances of fire separation between surrounding structures, the addition of 53 units will greatly increase density along this short access road and unduly stress its already overburdened infrastructure;

9. **WHEREAS,** Section 21-2.90-2 also should consider the increase in traffic flow through the 5-way intersection at the base of Alapa`i and Prospect will further bottleneck the area during morning and evening travel;

10. **WHEREAS,** the construction of this building along the core of the Punchbowl (Pūowaina) Special District will irretrievably undermine the historic and cultural protections intended for Pūowaina, for reasons long-recognized and well-articulated in both the Land Use Ordinance and Special District Design Guidelines for Punchbowl;

11. **WHEREAS**, the Land Use Ordinance allows for review and comment by the Neighborhood Board in which the CUP is sought, but no notice of the proposed CUP was given to Neighborhood Board #10 and no opportunity to comment was provided to neighboring residents;

12. **WHEREAS,** the Neighborhood Board in which a CUP is sought, and which will clearly impact neighboring residents should be given notice of a pending CUP application, to then allow neighboring residents the opportunity to voice legitimate concerns and to otherwise comment, prior to approval of any CUP;

13. **WHEREAS,** the CUP application was approved by DPP, on October 23, 2023, without comment from any third party and without any evidence that the factors referenced in Section 21-2.90-2 were actually investigated, much less considered;

14. **WHEREAS,** the process by which the CUP was reviewed and approved appears to have been perfunctory, without substance and in contravention of Section 21-2.90-1 and Section 21-2.90-2;

15. **WHEREAS,** on March 8, 2024, Developer submitted a Building Permit Application to DPP (#A2024-03-0331) for the construction of a 6-story, 53 (one bedroom) unit rental housing project (Bill 7), otherwise identified as the 1617 Alapai project, which is currently under review by DPP;

16. **WHEREAS,** numerous neighboring residents to the proposed project have voiced legitimate concerns regarding the sustainability, viability, safety and desirability of the proposed 1617 Alapai project, which concerns have remained unaddressed and unanswered;

17. **WHEREAS,** plans submitted by the Developer to DPP, are inaccurate with respect to the placement of Alapa`i Street in relation to applicable setbacks/easements and the building's footprint, and given existing/recorded encroachments from Developer's property into Alapa`i Street and at other property boundaries;

18. **WHEREAS,** the proposed project, as designed, violates provisions of Honolulu's Fire Code and the National Fire Protection Action ("NFPA"), as adopted, with respect to accessibility and turn-around radius for fire equipment and personnel; as well as egress of occupants from the building; thereby creating life safety issues for fire personnel, building occupants and all neighboring projects, which would be situated in extremely close proximity to this building;

19. **WHEREAS,** since submitting Application #A2024-03-0331, Developer has never submitted a sewer capacity analysis application, based upon a 53 unit project, as noted in DPP's review notes;

20. **WHEREAS**, the proposed 53-unit construction will require a City sewer hook-up variance to increase the number of approved connections to 53, placing an extreme burden on the area's aging and overly burdened sewer system capacity;

21. **WHEREAS**, there are no crosswalks or sidewalks in the area (contrary to Developer's plans showing a sidewalk); no workplaces or stores; Alapa`i Street is a narrow dead-end residential street whose only access is from a very busy 5-way intersection which includes Prospect & I`olani Streets; Alapa`i Street is limited to 7 parking spaces on one side and there is no capacity to expand to accommodate what could be 100 new vehicles; and there is no nearby access to public transportation; and

22. **WHEREAS**, Alapa`i Street is the sole ingress and egress for approximately 130 vehicles using 4 driveways and serving three existing buildings; and the driveway access for now proposed 4 outdoor parking stalls of 1617 Alapai Street is perilously close to the Prospect/Alapa`i Street intersection, which already presents as a dangerous 5-way, unorthodox intersection;

23. **WHEREAS,** while the passage of City ordinances allowing for the relaxation of building code and other regulations in the construction of affordable rental housing are designed to

streamline the permitting and approval of such projects, they were never intended, and may not, operate to suspend, obviate, ignore, or otherwise quash the rights of citizens to preserve interests personal to them and to the community at large;

24. **WHEREAS,** the passage of City ordinances allowing for the relaxation of building code and other regulations does not and cannot mean that a developer may "build as a matter of right", in disregard to the interests of neighboring residents and the community;

25. **WHEREAS,** the passage of City ordinances allowing for the relaxation of building code and other regulations does not, and cannot mean that DPP will give presumptive approval to a project, simply because it has been submitted as an affordable rental housing project;

26. **WHEREAS,** independent of the foregoing, the 1617 Alapai project is contrary to the public's interest in developing affordable housing projects responsibly, as set forth below, taking into account the needs of those seeking affordable housing, sustainability, and community interests;

27. **WHEREAS,** the proposed project does not provide requisite (ADA) accommodations for an "access path" of ingress and egress between a dedicated stall and the building at a reduced grade; does not provide adequate fire safety features; and does not provide sufficient natural light or ventilation for occupants (due to reduced horizontal setbacks);

28. **WHEREAS,** Governor Josh Green has issued a Proclamation Relating to Housing (07-17-23); Proclamation Relating to Affordable Housing (09-15-23); Second Proclamation Relating to Affordable Housing (10-24-23); Third Proclamation Relating to Affordable Housing (12-22-23); Fourth Proclamation Relating to Affordable Housing (01-18-24); Fifth Proclamation Relating to Affordable Housing (04-20-24); Sixth Proclamation Relating to Affordable Housing (04-19-24); Seventh Proclamation Relating to Affordable Housing (06-18-24); and Eight Proclamation Relating to Affordable Housing (08-15-24); each of which recognizes the desire to speed up (not bypass) permitting processes; and to promote the development of affordable housing while maintaining health and safety; best practices; cultural concerns and other community interests.

29. **WHEREAS,** the Honolulu City Council adopted Ordinance 19-8 (Bill 7) on May 19, 2019, for affordable rental housing, codified as Chapter 32, ROH, and extended by Ordinance 23-12 (Bill 8), which calls for the relaxation of certain zoning and building code standards, and offers certain financial incentives to owners/developers;

30. **WHEREAS**, the site of the Proposed Project, is situated within the Punchbowl Special District (Pūowaina), specially created and maintained, since 1990, in recognition of Pūowainaʻs deeply rooted historic and cultural significance, and which is subject to Special District Design Guidelines to protect and enhance core areas around Punchbowl; and

31. **WHEREAS**, the City and County's zoning code and the Land Use Ordinance, include in their objectives: Preserving and enhancing Punchbowl's form and character as a significant landmark; preserving and enhancing the park-like character of the immediate slopes of Punchbowl and its major streets; preserving and enhancing significant public views to and from Punchbowl by modifying construction projects that would diminish those views; and providing landscaping and open space which will enhance views and the general character of the Punchbowl area; and

32. **WHEREAS,** the Honolulu City Council, by recent resolution (24-65), has recognized the import of balancing "the desire of existing residents to maintain the quiet enjoyment of their residential neighborhoods and of homeowners to protect the significant investment in their homes" while promoting the development of affordable housing; to consider the negative effects projects have on the "character of neighborhoods and on the availability of on-street parking, and their heavy impact on pubic sewer, water, and other infrastructure"; and to give "ample opportunity for community engagement and input";

33. **WHEREAS,** the Honolulu City Council, by recent resolution (24-65), and in the context of "monster homes" (fractional in scale to a 53-unit apartment building), has recognized that State and City regulatory changes which allow for increased density in residential neighborhoods, without ensuring consistency with existing/underlying Plans (inclusive of special districts), evade or reverse such long-established Plans; and

34. **WHEREAS,** similar to the foregoing, affordable rental housing projects which allow for relaxed/modified zoning and building code requirements, including greater density, smaller setbacks, higher structures, modification in quality of construction materials, design application and life safety features; without ensuring consistency to the purpose and intent of previously adopted codes and standards (still applicable to non-affordable housing construction), effective evades and reverses these long-standing codes and standards; now, therefore,

35. **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Makiki/Lower Punchbowl/Tantalus Neighborhood Board No. 10 recognizes the concerns as raised by neighboring homeowners and residents regarding the 1617 Alapai Project, to be valid and unresolved; and

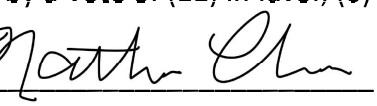
36. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Makiki/Lower Punchbowl/Tantalus Neighborhood Board No. 10, recognizes the absence of any existing mechanism through which homeowners, residents and the general public are given fair opportunity to address the impact of relaxed regulation for any proposed affordable housing project upon them and to otherwise seek preservation of interests personal to them and to their community; such that the City Counsel should establish such a mechanism; and

37. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Makiki/Lower Punchbowl/Tantalus Neighborhood Board No. 10 opposes the approval of the 1617 Alapai project (Application #A2024-03-0331), given the valid and unresolved concerns raised by neighboring homeowners and residents;

38. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Makiki/Lower Punchbowl/Tantalus Neighborhood Board No. 10, recognizes that, upon dissolution of the Governor's Build Beyond Barriers Work Group, first established by Emergency Proclamation on September 15, 2023, there is little to no governmental input or oversight of affordable rental housing projects, tasked with considering and assessing the adverse impacts of such projects upon homeowners, residents and the general public, such that the State and/or City Council should appoint specific agency oversight, such as BLNR, for this purpose; and

39. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor of the State of Hawaii, Mayor and Managing Director of the City and County of Honolulu, Director of the Department of Planning and Permitting, each member of the Honolulu City Council, the State Representatives for House Districts 26 and 27, State Senator for Senate District 11, and to Neighborhood Boards No. 9, 11, 12 & 13 (Waikiki, Ala Moana/Kakaako, Nuuanu/Punchbowl, and Downtown Chinatown, respectively).

ADOPTED by the Makiki/Lower Punchbowl/Tantalus Neighborhood Board No. 10 on Thursday, September 19, 2024 by a Vote of (11) in favor, (0) opposed and (1) abstention.

(Chair Signature) 

Nathaniel Char

TESTIMONY IN STRONG OPPOSITION TO Bill 53 (2025)

RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola and Members of the Honolulu City Council.

My name is Carol Wakayama and I wish to submit this testimony in STRONG OPPOSITION TO Bill 53 (2025)

Please see my concerns (within brackets below). As currently proposed, Bill 53 (2025) would require:

1. the construction of new affordable rental housing projects under ROH Chapter 32 to contain one parking stall for every two units within each project.

[Requiring parking stalls will add potentially high costs to the property's construction. Mandating parking spaces will raise prices for every renter - even for those who do not own a car.]

2. a resident manager unit and employment of a resident manager. Resident manager units may not be counted towards the affordable rental unit requirement.

[Having previously served as a Board member in my condo property (of more than 200 units), I know how expensive it is to have a resident manager. Administrative/employment-related costs keep rising and places a financial burden on unit owners and renters. Requiring that a resident manager be hired would significantly raise costs - paid by these renters - and, will threaten the 'alleged affordability' of the units.]

3. all project developers to make a presentation to the relevant neighborhood board.

[Although neighborhood boards serve a very important purpose and role, requiring developers to make presentations will add time to the entire process. Communities are already in desperate need for affordable housing. So, I respectfully request that burdensome and time-wasting procedures are removed from these projects.]

Although the food, utilities and other items add to Hawaii's crushing cost of living, I believe that - unaffordable housing remains the largest factor in pushing working families out of Hawaii. Thank you for this opportunity to submit my concerns.

C Wakayama
Prospect Street

Aloha Honolulu City Council Members:

I am Jameson Dahl, writing on behalf of Savio Asset Management LLC, our client has sought our feedback on the proposed Bill 53. Upon our cursory review of the bill, we respectfully oppose its passage as currently drafted. While we recognize the intent to refine affordable housing policies to achieve greater outcomes. Bill 53 appears to function as an incomplete amendment to Bill 7, potentially undermining efforts to address Hawaii's housing crisis effectively.

Our primary observations and suggestions are as follows:

1. **Financial Hardship Concerns**: The additional requirements outlined in Bill 53 may impose undue financial hardship on developers and stakeholders committed to creating affordable housing units. This aspect has not been adequately explored, particularly in balancing fiscal and business considerations to support lower-income housing initiatives. Without such safeguards, the bill risks deterring investment in much-needed affordable projects, which albeit already, in all likelihood, operate with under industry standard margins for development projects.
2. **Neighborhood Boards:** The neighborhood review portion of the bill does not provide enough clarity on the process, for it is known that for state run housing projects, this is a function where it must be approved by local neighborhood boards of that district. Though Bill 7 projects are not state ran “affordable housing projects”,, for they service a mix of tenants, ranging from full voucher, partial voucher and general market renters under 80% median income, at HUD dictated “affordable” market rates which Bill 7 was intended for, thus there may be an unintended consequence of impacting the very market that Bill 7 aims to help.

In light of these issues, we urge the Council to oppose the bill in its current form or, at a minimum, table it for further deliberation. This would allow time for a more inclusive dialogue, including input from business entities actively working to expand affordable housing options. Such collaboration could strengthen the policy and better serve our community's need.

We are available to discuss these concerns in greater detail and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to refining the legislation. Please feel free to contact us at rentals@savio.com, 808-946-3221. Or myself directly at 808-369-8566, jamesond@savio.com.

Mahalo.

Jameson Dahl

Jameson Dahl
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Audit trail

Details

FILE NAME	City Council Ltr on Bill 53 - 8/5/25, 11:50 AM
STATUS	Signed
STATUS TIMESTAMP	2025/08/05 21:51:41 UTC

Activity

SENT	jamesond@savio.com **sent** a signature request to: • Jameson Dahl (jamesond@savio.com)	2025/08/05 21:50:35 UTC
SIGNED	**Signed** by Jameson Dahl (jamesond@savio.com)	2025/08/05 21:51:41 UTC
COMPLETED	This document has been signed by all signers and is **complete**	2025/08/05 21:51:41 UTC

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