BILL053(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 411

*HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & PARKS (HHP)

***HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & PARKS (HHP) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Aug 19, 2025 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 20

Oppose: 23

I wish to comment: 3

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Rich Caz	808rcaz@gmail.com	96866
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Aug 13, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Testimony:

I agree parking and a resident manager should be a requirement for ALL Bill-7 projects as all other C&C residential buildings.

Also,

These Bill -7 Affordable Housing buildings should be Priced matched to rents in the neighborhoods they are built, not by Hawaii State rules (not sure what is used ??).

Example:

Currently, 1427 Ernest St Affordable Housing Building (Bill #7 Project) is charging $1,550 for a 233 SqFt Sub-standard studio, No Parking Units. It was vacant for a few months when it was finished. Instead of reducing the rent to a comparable cost to the neighborhood, owner Paul Lam started occupying the Building with C&C Sec. 8 and other low income programs for the same cost at $1,550 for these Sub-standard units (tax payers now pay).

This should be unacceptable, if these units were comparable to other Apartment units in the neighborhood, these Bill #7 Affordable Building would attract the Work-Force it was intended.

This 1427 Ernest St building was introduced to be focused on "Working Force" residents.

Several buildings in the neighborhood (1060 Green St, just across the street) are much cheaper - 1 BedRm w/ parking for $1350, (rent just went up recently) and other 1 BedRm w/ parking buildings in the neighborhood are under $1,500 for a 400+SqFt units.

If the state was serious about providing our Work Force with Affordable Housing, pricing these Affordable Housing buildings are essential, these buildings should be targeting our Work-Force with Affordable Pricing, not $1,550 for a 233SqFt Sub-standard unit w/ No parking - this should be a RedFlag and unacceptable. Tax payers should not be paying for these over priced Sub-standard units.

Please look at restructuring these Affordable Building to be affordable, look at the neighborhoods these buildings are being built and prices accordingly..

Mahalo,

Rich

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Marc Gamboa	marcanthonygamboa@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 13, 2025 @ 10:27 AM

Testimony:

Aloha City Council members,

While it may seem like a beneficial decision to impose mandates for parking stalls for new affordable housing developments, it would actually bring financial consequence to the renters of these units. I refer to an article published by Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, where they discussed the findings of the Ulupono Initiative in 2020. Important statistics involving costs passed on to these renters are included. A single person renting a studio would have could gave up to $410 a month added to their rent, even if they don't pen a vehicle. This is due to the $6.8 million avg cost in building these mandated parking structures. Instead of this mandate, please consider options that improve walkability, expand bicycle lanes, and public transit. I humbly ask that you vote no to Bill 53 to prevent additional costs being imposed on an already struggling class of renters.

Thank you for time,

Marc Gamboa

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Micah Munekata	mmunekata@ulupono.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Ulupono Initiative	I wish to comment	Aug 14, 2025 @ 01:46 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jacob Wiencek	Jacob.m.wiencek@pm.me	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 15, 2025 @ 04:56 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Committee Members,

Over the past several years, this Council has made steady progress in relieving the burdens our byzantine regulatory system imposes on working- and middle-class families. Onerous and complicated regulations and permitting processes drive up costs-of-living on those who can lead afford it. Unfortunately, Bill 53 threatens to reverse this important progress and instead reimpose old burdens with new ones on people.

Parking minimums are completely counterproductive to affordability. They waste precious space, increase traffic congestion and substantially add to construction costs. Instead, the Council should enhance progress already made on serious transit-oriented development and building in multi-modal transportation options for all. City Council eliminated parking minimums years ago and should not reverse that progress now.

As currently written, the Neighborhood Board presentation requirement might seem small, but it introduces another element of uncertainty and regulatory delay that imposes additional time and financial costs on construction. The

Committee should take this opportunity to rewrite this section to make it less burdensome.

I STRONGLY urge this Committee to REJECT the parking minimum requirements in Bill 53 and rewrite the Neighborhood Board presentation requirements.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Stephen Courtney	stephenc5ive@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 16, 2025 @ 07:03 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Anne Smoke	anne.smoke@gmail.com	96813-1932
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 17, 2025 @ 12:09 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
EDWARD KEMPER	edracers@aol.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 17, 2025 @ 01:18 PM

Testimony:

Aloha

I am concerned about a developer building an apartment complex on a small lot at the corner of Alapai and Prospect. The plans indicate a number apartments with little or no parking for the renters. Presently, there is very limited parking in the area near this proposed development. Also the lot only has three houses on it presently and so putting a building with so many apartments creates unnecessary crowding. Please do not allow this proposed apartment complex.

Edward Kemper Attorney at Law

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jason Takeuchi	jasontakeuchi@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 17, 2025 @ 03:09 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

My name is Jason Takeuchi. I am an architect and a lifelong resident of Pauoa and Pūowaina, and I am a strong proponent of affordable housing.

I previously submitted comments on Bill 53, and I continue to strongly support its intent to require Neighborhood Board

notice. I believe that community cohesion and transparency are essential for Bill 7 projects to be welcomed and successful.

On the parking amendment, I want to underscore that the original purpose of Bill 7 was to encourage projects near transit routes and in urban cores to support walkability. For projects that meet this intent, I support the current rules, as they reduce costs, conserve space, and lower carbon emissions.

However, not all Bill 7 projects align with this vision. For example, some projects in the Punchbowl Special District (Core Area) and along the upper slopes of Pūowaina are technically eligible but do not provide realistic access to transit, schools, parks, or groceries. These locations lack the community connectivity that Bill 7 was meant to support.

If the intent of Bill 53 is to improve upon Bill 7's shortcomings, I believe each project should be evaluated more closely to ensure it aligns with Bill 7's goals. For those that meet zoning but not walkability, measures should be considered—whether requiring a limited amount of parking or adjusting allowable areas—to keep Bill 7 consistent with its original intent.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment,
Jason Takeuchi, AIA

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Letitia Yee	uluyee@yahoo.com	96813
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Self	Support	Aug 17, 2025 @ 06:35 PM

Testimony:
I wholeheartedly support the proposed amendments of Bill 7 to Bill 53 for affordable housing.
Neighborhood boards and the public should be made aware of any proposed affordable housing and development projects in their neighborhoods. This would allow them to review and
provide their input for or against them.
Also parking is of great concern due to the density and limited access to safe street parking. Our working families and kupuna need to have safe parking in their housing units and apartments.
Please vote yes in support of Bill 7.
A concerned citizen.
Sincerely,
Letitia Yee

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Desda Kane	desdakane@gmai.com	96813
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**

Self	Support	Aug 17, 2025 @ 06:57 PM

Testimony:

Testimony for Bill 53.

I am highly in favor of Bill 53. I would help provide some needed parking for residents of the new buildings for affordable housing. When there is a building with no parking, it impacts the entire neighborhood. Everyone has to scramble for street parking where it may not even exist. It is a fallacy to think that people who live in affordable housing do not have cars. For the most part we do not have walkable neighborhoods.

Just imagine if one of these buildings was built in your neighborhood. Neighbor against neighbor trying to find a parking space the at end of the day. Then not wanting to leave because your parking space will be gone.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jennifer Courtney	jnwc000@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 17, 2025 @ 07:14 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Chuck Lee	success881@hawaiiantel.net	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 17, 2025 @ 09:46 PM

Testimony:

I am a 20+ year Makiki resident and I STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill because it addresses some of the flaws with the current Bill 7 projects.

While Bill 7 projects were designed to accelerate affordable housing in Honolulu, it also raises a deeper question - How do we BALANCE the urgent need for housing with the long term cultural , environmental and historical values that make Hawaii unique?

My concern is if developers dominate the conversation (as they currently are doing) "affordable housing " can/will become a blank check to build quickly - sometimes at the expense of historic & family oriented neighborhoods, cultural landmarks, environmental ingreity (water, sewage, transit, parks) or long-time residents who may be displaced in the process.

Just as projects undergo environmental review, Honolulu should require environmental and social assessments for Bill 7 projects BEFORE they are approved! This would ensure that the development /projects don't erase the imporant neighborhood character and dynamics (especially in older urban core areas like Kalihi, Palama, Makiki, Moilili) , cultural sites and family burial grounds.

I recommend we take a pause and revaluate the current Bill 7 bylaws and concessions and take into consideration all suggestions and concerns that are being brought up that are or could pose negative impacts on communities and it's residents.

MAHALO

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Chuck Lee	success881@hawaiiantel.net	96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 17, 2025 @ 10:34 PM

Testimony:

My name is Chuck Lee and I've been a resident of Makiki for over 20 years and I live on Pensacola Street.
I STRONGLY SUPPORT Bill 53 because it addresses some of the major negative impacts that our community faces with some of these Bill 7/Affordable Housing projects in our neighborhood : 1) community presentations by developers 2) one parking for every two units 3) resident manager on property.

I live on Pensacola Street and we have 3 Bill 7 projects (total of approx. 140 units) currently built or being built on Pensacola between Wilder Avenue and Lunalilo Street. As you can imagine, these projects will have some major impacts in regards to parking, infrastructure and changing the dynamics of our closely knit community.

I like this quote ""When affordable housing is weaponized...we shove people anywhere and let developers run the conversation....thus creating a new crisis". The "new crisis" refers to losing Hawaii's identity, heritage, and livability in the name of solving affordability,

I feel the City's challenge isn't whether to build more affordable housing - it's HOW! If done without care, Bill 7 could unintentionally erase community and cultural identity, damage the environment and local infrastructure and fuel displacement. But if pursued thoughtfully - community and cultural review/input, and comprehensive infrastructure planning - it can provide housing and preserve what makes Hawaii Hawaii.
Mahalo

Name: Holly Shea	Email: hollyshea808@gmail.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 17, 2025 @ 10:55 PM

Testimony:

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in support of this bill.

Affordable housing is vital, but it must be built responsibly. Bill 53 is a necessary step to correct the shortcomings of Bill 7 and restore oversight to ensure projects are livable and sustainable.

While Bill 7 was well-intentioned, but it has produced projects that highlight its flaws. By eliminating community input and waiving zoning and safety standards, it has allowed developers to build “as a matter of right,” often resulting in housing that does not meet the needs of working families. The Ernest Street project in Makiki illustrates this failure: $1,800 studios with no parking, poor management, and over 300 police calls in less than a year. Similarly, the proposed 1617 Alapa‘i project—53 small units with no parking on an already crowded dead-end street—shows the same disregard for

community input and livability. These examples demonstrate how Bill 7 has benefited developers at the expense of residents and neighborhoods.

By adopting Bill 53, the Council can ensure affordable housing is built in a way that benefits the people of Honolulu while respecting the character and safety of our communities. I also strongly urge reinstating protections for special districts to preserve important design standards and neighborhood integrity.

Thank you,

Holly Shea

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Bailey Matsuda	baileymatsuda@earthlink.net	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 18, 2025 @ 01:57 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Shelley Rae Chiya	shelleyrae.chiyapet@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 18, 2025 @ 05:14 AM

Testimony:

I believe that this bill would provide some relief to this very congested area of Honolulu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mackenzie Shribbs	Mshribbs@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 18, 2025 @ 07:13 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Evan Oue	eoue@imanaka-asato.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
NAIOP Hawaii Chapter	I wish to comment	Aug 18, 2025 @ 08:10 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Edward Kemper	edracers@aol.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 18, 2025 @ 08:51 AM

Testimony:

Aloha

I submitted testimony yesterday which was very concerned about parking in the Prospect St area (Punchbowl) with the

construction of an apartment complex without any meaningful parking. I do support Bill 53 which requires meaningful parking requirements for an apartment complex. I went to clarify my position, ,and I am sorry for the confusion.

Edward Kemper

Attorney at Law

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Perry Arrasmith	perry@hawaiisfuture.org	96797
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Housing Hawai'i's Future	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 08:58 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
William Heddaeus	bheddaeus@hawaii.rr.com	96813
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Self	Support	Aug 18, 2025 @ 09:25 AM

Testimony:

I reside at 670 Prospect St. Honolulu. I strongly support BILL053(25)
RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING because it supports the resident citizens of the neighborhood over the profit of the developer. Submitting development plans to the neighborhood board prior to permitting is an obvious requirement to ensure all issues, traffic, parking, safety during and after construction, preservation of quality of life and local knowledge is input. Imperative for any new development is a specific and enforceable requirement for at least one parking space for each residential unit. I have lived in my neighborhood for 50 years, developer profit must not take precedent over my quality of life.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ted Kefalas	tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	96813
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 10:11 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Diane Heddaeus	fraidycat@hawaii.rr.com	96813
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Self	Support	Aug 18, 2025 @ 10:15 AM

Testimony:

I strongly support Bill 53 to require Bill 7 affordable housing projects to include at least one parking space per two units. Preferably one space per unit would be more appropriate. I have lived in this neighborhood for years and I can attest to the lack of parking. A project to help “solve affordable housing” that doesn’t include adequate parking would create an undue strain on the quality of the lives of those in this community. People drive cars. This is not a walking neighborhood.

We have no sidewalks and public transit not convenient. It would behoove developers to take such facts into consideration not just profits.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Damien Waikoloa	damien.waikoloa@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawai'i YIMBY	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 10:42 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Eduardo Hernandez	eduardo@hbl.org	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawai'i Bicycling League	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 12:10 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lindsay Hingst	lhingst@ischawaii.com	96707
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 01:14 PM

Testimony:

To Whom It May Concern:

In response to Bill 053, I strongly oppose this measure for one simple reason: it will increase the cost of Affordable Housing Units for residents who are already experiencing economic hardship.

The cost of living in Hawaii is astronomical, and even "Affordable Housing Units" are still not affordable for some residents. These new requirements would increase the overall cost of constructing Bill 7 units, and that burden would fall on residents who are already struggling to make ends meet. Please reconsider this bill.

Mahalo,

Dr. Lindsay Hingst

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kyle Burchard	cyledahl@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 01:15 PM

Testimony:

I oppose Bill 53 because it would add new parking requirements that increase the cost of building affordable housing. Each parking stall can cost tens of thousands of dollars, costs that get passed directly to renters or make projects financially impossible. Cities across the country, as noted by the American Planning Association, have shown that reducing

parking mandates leads to more homes at lower prices. Honolulu should not move backward by making affordable housing harder and more expensive to build. Please defer this bill.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ian Castaneda	ianncastaneda@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 18, 2025 @ 02:00 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kaulana Gonsalves	danekaulana@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 03:41 PM

Testimony:
Mandating parking throws an additional burden upon developers and is not necessary to create a successful affordable living complex. The council instead should focus on bolstering mass/rapid transit and biking rather than cars.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Abbey Seitz	abbey@hiappleseed.org	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 04:02 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Landon Lee	thespiano725@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 04:29 PM

Testimony:
Chair, Vice Chair, and Members,

I am resubmitting my testimony in strong opposition to Bill 53 (2025). Since the committee has already heard my testimony on this, I'll keep it brief:

It is baffling that, with staff dedicated to researching policy ideas for council members, Nishimoto would advance a measure so thoroughly debunked in the literature. Study after study, including Ulupono Initiative's The Cost of Parking in Hawai'i shows how parking mandates drive up housing costs, discourage efficient land use, and worsen climate outcomes. Honolulu is considering doing the opposite of what peer cities across the country are doing by adding new mandates for affordable housing projects serving our most economically vulnerable residents. I urge you to reject Bill 53. Mahalo.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
James Meyers	hawaiipenthouse@gmx.com	96813

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 18, 2025 @ 06:07 PM

Testimony:

Living in the urban core of Honolulu for many years, it is imperative that new housing projects provide every unit with at least one parking unit. It is completely unrealistic to think that each unit will not have at least one car that they will need to park. Since street parking is very limited, requiring new housing projects to have a parking place for each unit will reduce the already overburdened streets, many built long before the multi-tenant projects existed. Public transit is not adequate for residents in the urban core and shopping for groceries requires a vehicle. So, most occupants of housing units have at least one car, if not more than one. Parking is already extremely limited in my neighborhood, and there is no nearby public transit bus stop that residents could realistically rely on instead of cars. This means most tenants will still own vehicles.

If enough parking is not provided within the project, spillover parking will overflow onto the streets and into surrounding condos. This not only creates daily frustration — it creates serious safety concern. If fire trucks, ambulances, or police vehicles cannot access my building or the new apartments because the streets are jammed with overflow parking, lives could be at risk. The overburdened street parking will also keep people from being able to visit their friends and family in the urban core since all street parking will be filled by residents of the community. Imagine how hard it will become for family to visit their elderly family members who live in the urban core when they can't even find parking in neighborhood.

By requiring one parking stall for every two units, Bill 53 will provide a small measure of relief for the already overburdened streets in the community. It recognizes that cars are still necessary for many households, especially in areas with limited public transit, while not overburdening developers with full one-to-one parking requirements.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Monica Meyers	4fl@gmx.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Aug 18, 2025 @ 07:00 PM

Testimony:

As a handicapped person I have found it extremely difficult to live in the city of Honolulu due to the limited parking, especially with the limited parking available due to the lack of parking spaces for tenants of multi-tenant housing units. Requiring new apartment buildings to have at least one parking space for every two units will at least be a start in solving the problem of extremely limited parking in Honolulu.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Geena Thielen	geena@ccs-hawaii.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Aug 18, 2025 @ 09:18 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Dalan Kam	dailybusphoto808@gmail.com	96821
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 18, 2025 @ 11:35 PM

Testimony:

I am opposed to this bill because it will make the construction of affordable housing more expensive, which will make housing more expensive. Furthermore, parking mandates like this will further incentivize car ownership, which is far more costly to the individual and the state than using public transit or active transit. This bill ultimately aims to cement the status quo and keep housing unaffordable for those who need it the most.

Name: Jared Tsuchiyama-Sando	Email: jaredtsuchiyama@gmail.com	Zip: 96818
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 19, 2025 @ 01:12 AM

Testimony:

While I support the idea of getting the neighborhood board notified through this bill I am seriously concerned about the parking mandates. If a council member is concerned that a project requires additional parking surely this is something that can be worked out on a project per project basis rather than issuing a blanket law that goes in the opposite direction of the housing policies many other cities in the United States are implementing. A project in Ewa or Mililani is not the same as a project in the urban core where we should not be encouraging more automobiles and inviting more traffic and congestion(all the cars in these garages are not going to stay parked). Is the council planning to increase housing subsidies to pay for this additional cost they are mandating going forward? Will this law be indefinite with no sunset and no exceptions even in areas we call 'transit-oriented'? These are things I worry about as this bill has moved forward.

Thank-you.

Name: Claire Santos	Email: cpsantos@bu.edu	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 19, 2025 @ 02:46 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Housing Committee Chair Tupola & Councilmembers,

I am out-of-state & will try to also testify in person.

We have a problem. We have a mayor & at least two City Councilmembers who've accepted campaign donations from a Bill 7 developer or his associate, and we have elected & appointed City employees who are effectively supporting developers instead of THE PEOPLE. While none of these things are technically "illegal," the overall ethical & moral optics are unacceptable and seem to be resulting in an override of the people's needs & desires — part of why Honolulu is seen by many as a "developer's dream" and a "crooked little town." At least one City Councilmember seems to be looking for ways to label his own constituents as NIMBY's. We see you.

Please remove from the Housing Committee any Councilmember who has accepted a campaign donation from a

developer or his associate, such as an architect or a contractor/builder. The conflict of interest is clear and must be stopped before it warps the Committee's thinking.

The Bill 53 amendment to Bill 7 is a much-needed step toward restoring government practice standards, transparency & public order while giving power back to the people where it belongs, at the same time creating a viable template for affordable housing options for those who need it.

The profit margins of developers cannot be the guiding point of reference, as much as Mr. Kevin Auger & others would have us believe. Developers are living just fine in places like , taking luxury vacations that they boast about on social media, & wouldn't stay in business if they were losing money. Throw that red herring in the trash where it belongs. The protection of Hawaii's land & culture must be the main guiding factor, so cries of "housing crisis" must stop being weaponized to force public compliance with substandard housing plans that benefit only the developers. Claims about "market forces" & "market adjustments" where people control the marketplace rental amounts is an intentional disuse of economic principles by the new Housing person brought over from Appleseed, who has an unrealistic view of how people working two jobs, with dismal credit reports or with police records, are somehow out casually shopping for lower rents. More often they are placed in housing units by social services personnel, sometimes because they were kicked out of their last place for breaking rules. Be real. We have no room for magical thinking or for gaslighting the public.

Parking: Developers can easily use the financial allowances & gifts from government to provide parking for tenants. Many people are working two & three jobs & need reliable transportation that cannot be accommodated by the bus system. There are only a limited number of street parking stalls, and parking wars among neighbors already happen; adding more fuel to that conflict & confrontation only ruins once peaceful neighborhoods. There's nothing stopping developers from charging a nominal fee for monthly or annual parking to recover some costs & save money for future maintenance & repairs. Just be sure it's nominal & not exorbitant.

Resident Managers: While these can be invaluable as a tenant resource & protector of the developers' investment, good RM's are hard to find & are sometimes part of the problem; please consider a stipulation that they be Accredited Resident Managers (ARM) so there is a minimum baseline of education, training & standard of practice, and to prevent developers from naming some random tenant or offsite service as the manager.

Special District Guidelines Restoration: These guidelines were put in place for good reason & there should be no allowance to openly disrespect the culture from which the designation arose, whether it be building height limits or architectural design or other factors. Please reinstate the Guidelines as they were written to protect Hawaiian historic areas like Punchbowl & Diamond Head.

Please stop letting the tail wag the dog as it does when you give carte blanche freedom for developers to do what they want. What they want is maximum profits and how they do it is by promising the world, taking our money, but instead building substandard microunit flophouses for our people whose rents are often being paid by our taxes. That is not affordable housing. It's public housing being quietly built in residential neighborhoods and it's fraud.

The icing on the cake is that the developers later get to sell the building at market value. They profit all around, from beginning to end. Disgusting.

Let's get back on the right track before Honolulu's housing becomes a train wreck. It's OK to admit you've made a mistake with both the Urban Core design & with housing options — if you fix it before it destroys everything about Hawaii.

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Jonathan Huynh	jhweather123@yahoo.com	96792
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 19, 2025 @ 07:10 AM

Testimony:

People, especially those who are less fortunate, should not be pressured to take on the high cost of owning a car or paying for car infrastructure. I am a big supporter of public transportation because it is equitable, affordable, and for the good use of the public. Driving requires paying a high sum of money to a private company for the expressly public need of transportation. It is for this reason that I oppose Bill 53.

Bill 53 mandates 1 off-street parking for every 2 units. This integrates car dependency into buildings. At a critical time in which cars are taking up more and more valuable space and killing more and more people, the last thing we should do is to encourage the private car as the primary means of transportation. That is why any proposal that requires parking minimums should be rejected.

Car ownership is inherently inequitable because of the high cost barrier to entry. It privatizes transportation, which is a public need as are food, water, and safety. Those who can afford to drive can enjoy transportation, while those who cannot still end up paying for the facilities and unable to access efficient transportion. It encourages driving at the expense of health, human lives, clean air, and public transit. Less fortunate people who require affordable housing would have to pay for the additional cost of a parking space that they may never use. If they end up using it, car ownership would take up a significant portion of their budget. Furthermore, the parking space could have been utilized for additional living units or shops for the residents, which would preclude the need to drive.

I strongly oppose Bill 53 and promote equitable solutions such as abolishing parking minimums and supporting public transit. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Name: S Pr	Email: greenieguy321@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 19, 2025 @ 07:45 AM

Testimony:

Unless you want to contribute to the further displacement of locals and native Hawaiian residents of the islands, I urge you not to pass this bill. It would only serve to make housing even less affordable to those who truly need it. We don’t need to build more parking lots, we need to provide more places for people to live. Not to mention how grossly expensive parking is in Hawai’i, anyways. Building another parking lot would only exacerbate the housing crisis we’re experiencing.

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Roseann Freitas	ssakamoto@imanaka-asato.com	96789
Representing: BIA Hawaii	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 19, 2025 @ 08:15 AM

Name: Christine Camp	Email: cc@avalonhi.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Avalon Group	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 19, 2025 @ 08:17 AM

Testimony:

As a builder of affordable housing in Hawaii, I urge you to opposed Bill 53.

The law that enacted Bill 7 does exactly what it supposed to do--that is to reduce the cost of developing units as well as to utilize smaller parcels in infill areas instead of going out to develop green fields. Rail is coming through downtown Honolulu and the number of bike paths are increasing. We need to allow the good intentions of Bill 7 be actualized. We need to allow more homes to be built at all levels. Allowing infill lots to have affordable housing also allows affordable units to be distributed in a diverse array of neighborhoods. Requiring additional layer of hearing only adds to the delays and only increases opportunities for the NYMBYs to oppose these projects.

We need more homes to be built. With the impact of inflation and tariffs, housing will cost more not less. Adding additional burdens only exacerbates the situation. Bill 53 does not help.

Christine Camp

Name: Julia Fink	Email: julia@aiahonolulu.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: The American Institute of Architects (AIA), Honolulu Chapter	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 19, 2025 @ 09:40 AM

Name: Justin Menina	Email: jmenina77@gmail.com	Zip: 96826
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 19, 2025 @ 09:59 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 Oʻahu 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-Mōʻiliʻili), 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:
Arjuna Heim	arjuna@hiappleseed.org	96816
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice	Oppose	Aug 19, 2025 @ 12:38 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Matt Prellberg	matt@holomuacollaborative.org	96813
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Holomua Collaborative	Oppose	Aug 19, 2025 @ 01:24 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Susan Le	susan@hihac.org	96816
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Hawaii Appleseed	Oppose	Aug 19, 2025 @ 02:00 PM

Email: communications@ulupono.com

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & PARKS
Tuesday, August 19, 2025 — 2:30 P.M.

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

Dear Chair Tupola 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 in Support of Bill 53 (2025)

Honolulu City Council
Re: Bill 53 (2025) – Relating to Affordable Rental Housing

Aloha Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks Chair Andria Tupola, Vice Chair Augie Tulba, and Councilmembers,

My name is Stephen Courtney, and I am the owner of a condominium unit located next to the site of a planned affordable rental apartment building. I am submitting testimony in **strong support of Bill 53 (2025)**, particularly the provisions requiring:

1. **A resident manager unit with an on-site resident manager**, and
2. **One parking space for every two units**.

Resident Manager Requirement

An on-site resident manager is essential for the long-term success of these projects. A manager can respond quickly to tenant issues, enforce rules, and ensure the property is well-maintained. For neighbors like myself, this means there will be accountability and a clear point of contact if problems arise. Without a resident manager, issues could spill over into the surrounding community unchecked.

Parking Requirement & Public Safety

Parking is already extremely limited in my neighborhood, and there is **no nearby public transit bus stop** that residents could realistically rely on instead of cars. This means most tenants will still own vehicles.

If enough parking is not provided within the project, spillover parking will overflow onto the streets and into surrounding condos. This not only creates daily frustration — it creates serious **safety concern**. If fire trucks, ambulances, or police vehicles cannot access my building or the new apartments because the streets are jammed with overflow parking, lives could be at risk.

By requiring **one parking stall for every two units**, Bill 53 provides a reasonable balance. It recognizes that cars are still necessary for many households, especially in areas with limited public transit, while not overburdening developers with full one-to-one parking requirements.

Conclusion

As a nearby property owner, I support the goals of affordable housing. But affordability should not come at the expense of **neighborhood safety** and **livability**.

Bill 53 takes a commonsense approach by requiring both an on-site resident manager and adequate parking. These requirements will make affordable housing developments more successful for tenants and more compatible with the surrounding community.

I respectfully urge you to pass Bill 53.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Stephen Courtney
Condominium Owner, Ka Hale Mo’i Condominium

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL 53 (2025)

My name is Anne Smoke. 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 middleclass 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, narrow, 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 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,
Anne Marie Smoke
08/17/25

Testimony in Support of Bill 53 (2025)

Honolulu City Council
Re: Bill 53 (2025) – Relating to Affordable Rental Housing

Aloha Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks Chair Andria Tupola, Vice Chair Augie Tulba, and Councilmembers,

My name is Jennifer Courtney, and I am the owner of a condominium unit located next to the site of a planned affordable rental apartment building. I am submitting testimony in **strong support of Bill 53 (2025)**, particularly the provisions requiring:

1. **A resident manager unit with an on-site resident manager**, and
2. **One parking space for every two units**.

Resident Manager Requirement

An on-site resident manager is essential for the long-term success of these projects. A manager can respond quickly to tenant issues, enforce rules, and ensure the property is well-maintained. For neighbors like myself, this means there will be accountability and a clear point of contact if problems arise. Without a resident manager, issues could spill over into the surrounding community unchecked.

Parking Requirement & Public Safety

Parking is already extremely limited in my neighborhood, and there is **no nearby public transit bus stop** that residents could realistically rely on instead of cars. This means most tenants will still own vehicles.

If enough parking is not provided within the project, spillover parking will overflow onto the streets and into surrounding condos. This not only creates daily frustration — it creates serious **safety concern**. If fire trucks, ambulances, or police vehicles cannot access my building or the new apartments because the streets are jammed with overflow parking, lives could be at risk.

By requiring **one parking stall for every two units**, Bill 53 provides a reasonable balance. It recognizes that cars are still necessary for many households, especially in areas with limited public transit, while not overburdening developers with full one-to-one parking requirements.

Conclusion

As a nearby property owner, I support the goals of affordable housing. But affordability should not come at the expense of **neighborhood safety** and **livability**.

Bill 53 takes a commonsense approach by requiring both an on-site resident manager and adequate parking. These requirements will make affordable housing developments more successful for tenants and more compatible with the surrounding community.

I respectfully urge you to pass Bill 53.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Jennifer Courtney
Condominium Owner, Ka Hale Mo'i Condominium

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola and Council Members,

I strongly support Bill 53.

Bringing a Bill 7 project before the public increases oversight of the project and increases accountability on the part of the developer. Neither is an impediment to the progress of the development or an economic hardship IF the developer and the development is pono. All of the people in my neighborhood in the Punchbowl Special District support low-income housing on our street IF it is done the right way.

There is ample evidence from Bill 7 projects like 1427 Ernest Street that the absence of any guardrails can lead to severe harm to the neighborhood and its community. There is also ample evidence from projects that are properly placed near easy access to public transportation and easy access to agencies that support low-income renters of great success of Bill 7 projects.

Surely the principle that making money is the only factor worthy of consideration, no matter the "margin," and the neighborhood be damned, is not a moral, ethical, policy or governing principle that will preserve community or neighborhood. Without these considerations, and the foundations of aloha that define us as a people, the future will find us in hardened opposition to each other. Policy and governance by your vote will determine this future.

On the matter of parking, and the obsessive opposition to Bill 53 as if parking is the reason for our housing problems, again, let common sense prevail. If the Bill 7 project is on a bus line with many route options and close, easy access, and if bike lanes are in place adjacent to the project, of course it makes sense to remove the requirement for parking. These locations not only exist, in the flatter areas of the city, they were the original target for the original Bill 7's intentions.

On the other hand, for projects that are away from bus lines, in a Special District location up against a crater, how do the no-parking advocates expect a mother with two small children to navigate getting to school and market? By bicycle, up steep hills with no sidewalks on streets that are already overcrowded with parking in neighborhoods that cannot support more traffic?

Again, I urge Council members to walk in the shoes of the people who are meant to live in these projects, and to speak to the constituents who are going to have to bear the burden of improper applications of Bill 7. Casting this discussion purely in the arena of "harm" to a developer without any input from the people affected by the development is inadequate governance to say the very least.

Finally, if Bill 7 projects are going to be shoe-horned into places where they do not belong, and funding requirements, including funding, in part, by your constituents' taxes, result in a population with special needs that has no access to support services or law enforcement, then the requirement to have on-site management becomes a matter of public safety and well-being. 1427 Ernest Street has all the evidence Council members need to understand this.

There is so much more to discuss, and so much more to consider. I will attach a document for your consideration. In the meantime, I stand in very strong support of Bill 53.

Mahalo,



Bailey Matsuda

Pūowaina



The Hawaiian name for this venerable crater is Pū-o-Waina and it has a cultural and historical significance.

The original form, from which the modern spelling is abbreviated, was Puʻu O waiho ana, literally the hill of offering or sacrifice.

The Hawaiian people were governed by a system of Kapu that once ruled all Hawaiʻi. The penalty for the most egregious of the violations of its intricate regulations was death. Pū-o-waina was one of the places near Honolulu where the bodies of the offenders were ceremoniously burned (the penalty for any violation of kapu.)

Eventually, Pūowaina would also come to be known as “Punchbowl.”

From page 8 of the PUC_DP, “Care for Island Heritage” under “Guiding Principle” (page 6,) this mandate is written: “Respect Native Hawaiian culture and knowledge and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the PUC. Build upon the unique history, landmarks, and natural environment of the PUC and preserve it for future generations.”

The 2023 Primary Urban Center Development Plan states: “New developments are encouraged to design for all age groups and users, and a mix of household sizes. The quality and safety of pedestrian and bicycle networks continue to be a primary focus, and mobility choices continue to evolve. The Primary Urban Center has a beautiful natural setting including landmarks such as Diamond Head and Punchbowl, as well as many quality parks, open spaces, and natural areas.”

The first statement from its “Vision Through 2035” is: “Protect and enhance Honolulu's natural, cultural, and scenic resources.”



The City and County’s Zoning Code and 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.”

In the 2024 PUC_DP Update, Alapaʻi Street mauka of Prospect Street is in the Core Punchbowl Special District. It falls under Land Use Designations Residential and Mixed; Town Neighborhood Low Density. Further, its Transit-Supportive Housing Development Area calls for “Multi-unit housing such as duplexes, fourplexes, +mansion apartments no bigger than a large house, integrated into a single-family context, generating density to support trasit and local commercial amenities.”

Under Urban Design: “Balance view preservation with infill development. Based on viewshed analysis and the intent of the Punchbowl Special District Design Guidelines, apply simplified height restrictions in Makiki that maintain adequate preservation of the Punchbowl to Diamond Head view corridor. Maintain views of mountain and ocean by reducing maximum façade length parallel to the coastline to 90 feet or less.”

Unfortunately, though it was not intended to be implemented in the way that it is, currently, Bill 7 projects currently under review for permitting at the DPP seem not only to be unconstrained by these aforementioned and imminently supportable guidelines, but in fact are in direct opposition to them in too many ways to describe for this testimony.

The site of the proposed 1617 Alapaʻi Project is situated within the Punchbowl Special District, 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.

The 1617 Alapaʻi Street (Tax Map Key Nos. 2-2-004:037 & 033) "affordable housing project" as currently proposed, exceeds the 40-foot height limit established for the site located within the "core area" of the Punchbowl Special District, enacted by the City and County of Honolulu as part of the Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 21, Article 9, Section 21-9.50-4 and Exhibits 21-9.6 and 21-9.8. To be clear, the 40-foot height is measured from Prospect Street and not from the project’s location on Alapaʻi, which is some 20 feet higher in elevation than Prospect Street. Taking into account the 68-foot structure that is planned, the Project’s height of 88-feet above Prospect Street far exceeds the 40 feet as proscribed in the Punchbowl Special District.

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.

Bill 24 seems vague about the oversight of this project and those like it. From § 24-2.4 Existing zoning and subdivision ordinances, approvals, and applications.

(a) All existing subdivisions and zoning approved prior to the effective date of this ordinance for projects, including but not limited to those subject to unilateral agreements, continue to remain in effect following the enactment of this ordinance.

There is an absence of government oversight and community input in the current implementation of Bill 7 projects to the extent that projects like 1617 Alapaʻi not only are severely non-compliant with the PUC-DP, the Special Punchbowl District Guidelines and the relevant Ordinances, they severely damage the intent and implementation of the Plan now and into the future. Projects like 1617 Alapaʻi should never have made it to permitting in the first place.

We look to Bill 24 to support the vigilant protection and enforcement of the building height limits consistent with the specific objectives of the Punchbowl Special District, including to "preserve and enhance significant public views to and from Punchbowl, especially those from the Punchbowl lookouts and long-range views of Punchbowl, by modifying construction projects that would diminish those views" (Land Use Ordinance Section 21-9.50-1(c))

Respectfully submitted on this 23rd day of September 2024,



Bailey Matsuda
670 Prospect Street #810
Honolulu, HI 96813

Testimony in Support of Bill 53 (2025)

Honolulu City Council
Re: Bill 53 (2025) – Relating to Affordable Rental Housing

Aloha Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks Chair Andria Tupola, Vice Chair Augie Tulba, and Councilmembers,

My name is Mackenzie Shribb, and I am the owner of a condominium unit located next to the site of a planned affordable rental apartment building. I am submitting testimony in **strong support of Bill 53 (2025)**, particularly the provisions requiring:

1. **A resident manager unit with an on-site resident manager**, and
2. **One parking space for every two units**.

Resident Manager Requirement

An on-site resident manager is essential for the long-term success of these projects. A manager can respond quickly to tenant issues, enforce rules, and ensure the property is well-maintained. For neighbors like myself, this means there will be accountability and a clear point of contact if problems arise. Without a resident manager, issues could spill over into the surrounding community unchecked.

Parking Requirement & Public Safety

Parking is already extremely limited in my neighborhood, and there is **no nearby public transit bus stop** that residents could realistically rely on instead of cars. This means most tenants will still own vehicles.

If enough parking is not provided within the project, spillover parking will overflow onto the streets and into surrounding condos. This not only creates daily frustration — it creates serious **safety concern**. If fire trucks, ambulances, or police vehicles cannot access my building or the new apartments because the streets are jammed with overflow parking, lives could be at risk.

By requiring **one parking stall for every two units**, Bill 53 provides a reasonable balance. It recognizes that cars are still necessary for many households, especially in areas with limited public transit, while not overburdening developers with full one-to-one parking requirements.

Conclusion

As a nearby property owner, I support the goals of affordable housing. But affordability should not come at the expense of **neighborhood safety** and **livability**.

Bill 53 takes a commonsense approach by requiring both an on-site resident manager and adequate parking. These requirements will make affordable housing developments more successful for tenants and more compatible with the surrounding community.

I respectfully urge you to pass Bill 53.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Mackenzie Shribbs
Condominium Owner, Ka Hale Mo'i Condominium

NAIOP
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
HAWAII CHAPTER

August 19, 2025

Councilmember Andria Tupola, Chair
Councilmember Augie Tulba, Chair
Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks

RE: **Bill 53- RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
Hearing date: August 19, 2025, at 2:30 PM

Aloha Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba 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 7 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 7 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 langauge creates an additional step in the development of Bill 7 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 to produce 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

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

August 19, 2025

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

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a youth-lead movement 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 53 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 that is accessible to young residents. 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.

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. This results in an average added cost of **$26,061.22** per tenant for a 36-unit building, raising rents for residents on O'ahu.

GRASSROOT INSTITUTE OF HAWAII

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

Removing barriers to Hawaii's prosperity

Aug. 19, 2025, 2:30 p.m.
Honolulu Hale

To: Honolulu City Council Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks
Andria Tupola, Chair
Augie Tulba, Vice Chair

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

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

Aloha Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba and other members of the Committee,

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 homebuilders 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.

The Honolulu Construction Cost Index for highrise buildings shows that 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.

Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
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August 19, 2025

Honolulu City Council - Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks
530 South King St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

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

Aloha Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing to express **our 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
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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. **We urge you to defer this bill.**

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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BikeEd Hawaii

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bicycle@hbl.org

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks
Tuesday, August 19, 2025 - 10:00am
Opposition for Bill 53

Aloha Chair Tupola and Members of the Committee,

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.

Honolulu has been prioritizing automobiles in transportation and land-use policy for decades. This has resulted in increasing circumstances of traffic gridlock, loss of productivity due to so much time spent alone in a car, and staggering costs for individuals and families, even if you don't own a car. In turn, these costs increase the risks of homelessness, especially for the many individuals and families who must spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

Instead of adding automobile parking requirements for affordable housing development, the focus should be on expanding multimodal options like Hui and Biki, encouraging developers to create secure off-street bike parking, and considering adding incentives for landscaping that help to expand tree canopy that would make walking and biking more comfortable. These measures offer a much 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

Testimony in Support of Bill 53 (2025)

Honolulu City Council

Re: Bill 53 (2025) – Relating to Affordable Rental Housing

Aloha Members of the Committee,

My name is Ian Castaneda, and I am the owner of a condominium unit located next to the site of a planned affordable rental apartment building at 1617 Alapai St. I am submitting testimony in strong support of Bill 53 (2025), particularly the provisions requiring:

1. A resident manager unit with an on-site resident manager, and
2. One parking space for every two units.

Resident Manager Requirement

An on-site resident manager is essential for the long-term success of these projects. A manager can respond quickly to tenant issues, enforce rules, and ensure the property is well-maintained. For neighbors like myself, this means there will be accountability and a clear point of contact if problems arise. Without a resident manager, issues could spill over into the surrounding community unchecked.

Parking Requirement & Public Safety

Parking is already extremely limited in my neighborhood, and there is no nearby public

transit bus stop that residents could realistically rely on instead of cars. This means most tenants will still own vehicles.

If enough parking is not provided within the project, spillover parking will overflow onto the streets and into surrounding condos which is already causing issues along Alapai St. This not only creates daily frustration — it creates serious safety concern. If fire trucks, ambulances, or police vehicles cannot access our building or the new apartments because the streets are jammed with overflow parking, lives could be at risk.

By requiring one parking stall for every two units, Bill 53 provides a reasonable balance. It recognizes that cars are still necessary for many households, especially in areas with limited public transit, while not overburdening developers with full one-to-one parking requirements.

Conclusion

As a nearby property owner, I support the goals of affordable housing. But affordability should not come at the expense of neighborhood safety and livability.

Bill 53 takes a commonsense approach by requiring both an on-site resident manager and adequate parking. These requirements will make affordable housing developments more successful for tenants and more compatible with the surrounding community.

I respectfully urge you to pass Bill 53.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Ian Castaneda

Condominium Owner, Ka Hale Mo'i Condominium

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
Tuesday, August 19th at 2:30PM

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. A 2020 study from the Ulupono Initiative found that the cost to build parking in high-rise buildings (with podium-style parking) for affordable and mixed-income rentals in Honolulu's urban core costs up to $55,000 per unit.[1] Adjusted for inflation, this cost now exceeds $68,000 per unit. 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. According to the 2020 study from Ulupono Initiative, for a single person renting a small studio in urban Honolulu, parking could add up $410 per month to their rent – even if they don't own a vehicle.[2] 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.[3] In 2020, the Honolulu City Council removed parking minimums for new housing and commercial development in the urban core through Ordinance 20-41. That measure built on progress made by Ordinance 19-8, which waived parking mandates for affordable rental housing. Bill 53 undermines that progress by reinstating one-size-fits-all mandates that discourage the development of smaller, more affordable housing types.

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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] Ibid.
[3] Parking Reform Network, "Parking Mandates Map," January 6, 2025. https://parkingreform.org/resources/mandates-map/

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.[4] Moreover, mandating more parking means reducing the number of affordable homes that can be built on a given parcel due to land and cost constraints. For example, imagine that a high-rise building of 200 mixed-income rental units was being planned in Honolulu. If one parking stall was built for every two units (as would be required under Bill 53), in today's dollars, this would add a whopping $6.8 million to the cost of the project.

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 the 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

[4] 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/.

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Honolulu City Council
Committee on Housing Homelessness & Parks
City Council Chamber
Tuesday August 19, 2025
2:30 PM

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

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
HONOLULU HALE
2:30 pm

AUGUST 19, 2025

Subject: BILL 53 - RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, 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.

AIA Honolulu

Tuesday, August 19, 2025

Andria Tupola, Chair
Augie Tulba, Vice Chair
Honorable Council Members
Committee on Housing, Homelessness, and Parks Council

Subject: Bill 53 2025
Relating to Affordable Housing

Dear Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, and honorable Council members,

The changes proposed in Bill 53—reintroducing mandatory parking requirements and neighborhood board approval—could halt future Bill 7 projects entirely, particularly in areas where flexibility around parking is key to feasibility.

We recognize that some communities have experienced challenges with Bill 7 projects in locations lacking walkability. However, the solution is not a blanket parking mandate. A more effective approach would be for the City to improve access by adding more transit points—such as Biki stations or bus stops—so residents can reliably live car-light or car-free in these neighborhoods. Strengthening transit options supports neighborhood livability while also reinforcing the City's broader commitment to reducing traffic congestion, lowering carbon emissions, and creating more complete communities.

Licensed architects are well equipped to guide their clients on when parking is needed, especially in walkable neighborhoods near job centers and transit. Imposing one-size-fits-all requirements undermines this professional judgment and 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 drafted would nullify Bill 7's critical tools for addressing O'ahu's affordable housing crisis. We urge the Council instead to preserve the flexibility that makes Bill 7 projects viable, while simultaneously investing in and expanding transit access to better serve residents and reduce the need for costly parking mandates.

Thank you for considering our comments. We remain available to assist in refining Bill 53 to better balance neighborhood responsiveness with the urgent need for affordable housing.

Sincerely,

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

HAWAIʻI APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony for Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Opposition for Bill 53
Honolulu City Council – Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks
Tuesday, August 19th at 2:30PM

Aloha Chair Tupola and Vice Chair Tulba,

Mahalo for the opportunity to express **OPPOSITION for Bill 53**, which proposes to fundamentally alter the permitting process for Bill 7 projects. At a time when Honolulu is already struggling to produce housing, Bill 53 would move Bill 7 from a ministerial process—where approval is based on meeting clear standards—to a discretionary one, where approvals can be delayed or derailed[1]. This is a step backward that will slow down housing production, add costs, and reduce the number of homes we desperately need.

The current process isn't working fast enough. Bill 7 projects, which were supposed to be approved in 90 days, are in reality taking nearly a year to permit[2]. Adding new layers of review or discretionary approvals will only lengthen that timeline and add more expense; every month of delay increases project costs, discourages developers, and pushes urgently needed homes further out of reach for local families.

We have seen what happens when housing is subject to discretionary politics. In Kailua, neighborhood opposition has regularly stalled projects, with concerns framed around "community character" or traffic but in practice serving to block new homes altogether[3]. In Mānoa, even housing proposed for seniors has faced years of pushback from homeowners who fear change, invoking historic preservation or environmental arguments to prevent multi-family housing[4]. These examples show how easily needed housing can be derailed when approvals are not ministerial, even when projects meet all legal standards.

Bill 53 also adds unnecessary burdens that make projects harder to pencil out. Parking mandates and requirements for on-site resident managers may sound reasonable, but in practice, they add millions of dollars in costs and consume space that could otherwise be used for housing. These kinds of mandates make it less likely that projects will move forward at all.

It's also important to remember who these homes are for. Bill 7 targets households earning 80–100% of the Area Median Income. For a single person, that's around $80,000 a year. This is not deeply subsidized housing—it's gap housing for teachers, nurses, service workers, and others who earn too much to qualify

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[1] https://www.its.ucla.edu/publication/does-discretion-delay-development/
[2] https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/06/honolulu-effort-to-fast-track-affordable-housing-projects-hasnt-worked/
[3] https://www.civilbeat.org/beat/developer-withdraws-application-for-embattled-affordable-housing-project-in-kailua/
[4] https://www.civilbeat.org/2022/03/a-plan-for-affordable-housing-in-manoa-runs-into-opposition-from-residents/

for traditional affordable housing but too little to afford to purchase a home. These are exactly the kinds of infill projects Honolulu needs in walkable, transit-connected neighborhoods.

Bill 53 undermines the purpose of Bill 7 by making it slower, costlier, and riskier to produce these units. At a time when Honolulu is experiencing one of the worst housing shortages in the nation, we cannot afford to add barriers to housing that serves our working families.

In summary, we urge the Council to reject Bill 53. Instead of turning ministerial approvals into discretionary ones and layering on new costs, we should focus on making it easier, faster, and more feasible to produce the middle-income housing our residents desperately need.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Arjuna Heim
Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Director of Housing Policy

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OUR MISSION
To support and advance public policies that make Hawai‘i affordable for all working families.

OUR VISION
Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai‘i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai‘i can thrive.

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HolomuaCollaborative.org

Committee: **Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks**
Bill Number: **Bill 53, Relating to Affordable Housing**
Hearing Date and Time: **August 19, 2025, 2:30pm**
Re: **Testimony of Holomua Collaborative – Oppose**

Aloha Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, and Members of the Council:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony **in opposition** to Bill 53, Relating to Affordable Housing. This bill would require new construction of affordable rental housing projects under Bill 7 to: (1) contain one parking stall for every two units within each project; (2) include a resident manager unit and employment of a resident member; and (3) have the project developer make a presentation to the relevant neighborhood board.

Hawai‘i remains in a housing crisis. Skyrocketing home prices leave many local families struggling to secure safe, attainable places to live. The median home price on O‘ahu exceeds $1,100,000—an impossible amount for most residents. And those who cannot afford to own struggle to find rental units for reasonable prices. The median rent in the state has been reported as $1,938, and we have recently dropped from first to having the second highest rents in the nation.[1] As a result, many local families are being forced to leave in search of affordable living options elsewhere. Between July 2022 and July 2023 alone, an average of twelve people left Hawai‘i *every day*.[2] More Native Hawaiians now live outside Hawai‘i than within it. This is a loss of our culture, traditions, and the essence of what makes Hawai‘i home.

In October 2024, a survey[3] gathering information about the day-to-day financial experience of local workers was released and it suggests this growing crisis has the potential to reach staggering levels. When nearly 1,500 local workers were asked if they may need to move to a less expensive state, only thirty-one percent answered a definitive “no,” while sixty-nine percent said “yes” or “unsure.” And nearly two-thirds of the respondents said the cost of housing was the primary impact on their cost of living in Hawai‘i. Each local worker and family we lose to the continent contributes to a loss of our economy, our culture, and our family.

Given these realities, it is prudent to ensure that even the most well-intentioned policy decisions do not have the unintended consequence of raising the cost of housing. Holomua appreciates the efforts of the Council to increase affordable housing in the

[1] The Hawai‘i Housing Factbook 2025, University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization, https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/HawaiiHousingFactbook2025.pdf.
[2] U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Estimates, released on March 14, 2024; and calculations by the Hawai‘i State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, Hawai‘i State Data Center. https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/census/popestimate/2023/county-pop/2023_daily_est_counties.pdf
[3] https://holomuacollective.org/survey/

holomua
COLLABORATIVE

City and County of Honolulu and address neighborhood concerns through Bill 53, but the unintended consequences of passing this bill would be costly and ultimately could price out those most in need of affordable housing. The statistics provided by Ulupono Initiative highlight the negative impacts the implementation of Bill 53 would have on housing development costs. According to its analysis, Ulupono Initiative finds that parking construction costs $22,500 per surface parking space and up to $42,000 for structured podium parking.[4] For a single person renting a small studio in Urban Honolulu, this could add to $410 per month to their rent.[5]

We need to continue to drop from having one of the highest median rents in the nation, and passing this measure will impede the progress we are making.

Holomua is dedicated to giving local working families hope that they can afford to stay in Hawai‘i. The unintended consequences of Bill 53 will give some of our most in need families the last push they need to move to the continent. We respectfully request that you defer Bill 53.

Sincerely,

Matt Prellberg
Policy and Communications Director

[4] The Cost of Parking in Hawai‘i, August 2020. https://ulupono.com/media/ivcfs2pu/the-cost-of-parking-in-hawaii-report-2020-08.pdf.
[5] *Id.*

HAWAIʻI APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony for Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Opposition for Bill 53
Honolulu City Council – Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks
Tuesday, August 19th at 2:30PM

Aloha Chair Tupola and Vice Chair Tulba,

Mahalo for the opportunity to express **OPPOSITION for Bill 53**, which proposes to fundamentally alter the permitting process for Bill 7 projects. At a time when Honolulu is already struggling to produce housing, Bill 53 would move Bill 7 from a ministerial process—where approval is based on meeting clear standards—to a discretionary one, where approvals can be delayed or derailed[1]. This is a step backward that will slow down housing production, add costs, and reduce the number of homes we desperately need.

The current process isn't working fast enough. Bill 7 projects, which were supposed to be approved in 90 days, are in reality taking nearly a year to permit[2]. Adding new layers of review or discretionary approvals will only lengthen that timeline and add more expense; every month of delay increases project costs, discourages developers, and pushes urgently needed homes further out of reach for local families.

We have seen what happens when housing is subject to discretionary politics. In Kailua, neighborhood opposition has regularly stalled projects, with concerns framed around "community character" or traffic but in practice serving to block new homes altogether[3]. In Mānoa, even housing proposed for seniors has faced years of pushback from homeowners who fear change, invoking historic preservation or environmental arguments to prevent multi-family housing[4]. These examples show how easily needed housing can be derailed when approvals are not ministerial, even when projects meet all legal standards.

Bill 53 also adds unnecessary burdens that make projects harder to pencil out. Parking mandates and requirements for on-site resident managers may sound reasonable, but in practice, they add millions of dollars in costs and consume space that could otherwise be used for housing. These kinds of mandates make it less likely that projects will move forward at all.

It's also important to remember who these homes are for. Bill 7 targets households earning 80–100% of the Area Median Income. For a single person, that's around $80,000 a year. This is not deeply subsidized housing—it's gap housing for teachers, nurses, service workers, and others who earn too much to qualify

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[1] https://www.its.ucla.edu/publication/does-discretion-delay-development/
[2] https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/06/honolulu-effort-to-fast-track-affordable-housing-projects-hasnt-worked/
[3] https://www.civilbeat.org/beat/developer-withdraws-application-for-embattled-affordable-housing-project-in-kailua/
[4] https://www.civilbeat.org/2022/03/a-plan-for-affordable-housing-in-manoa-runs-into-opposition-from-residents/

for traditional affordable housing but too little to afford to purchase a home. These are exactly the kinds of infill projects Honolulu needs in walkable, transit-connected neighborhoods.

Bill 53 undermines the purpose of Bill 7 by making it slower, costlier, and riskier to produce these units. At a time when Honolulu is experiencing one of the worst housing shortages in the nation, we cannot afford to add barriers to housing that serves our working families.

In summary, we urge the Council to reject Bill 53. Instead of turning ministerial approvals into discretionary ones and layering on new costs, we should focus on making it easier, faster, and more feasible to produce the middle-income housing our residents desperately need.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Arjuna Heim
Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Director of Housing Policy