

BILL054(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 426

*BUDGET (BUD)

***BUDGET (BUD) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Aug 19, 2025 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 2

Name: Donald Sakamoto	Email: cylonone@aol.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 18, 2025 @ 09:19 AM
Testimony: Oral testimony via video conference only.		
Name: Micah Munekata	Email: mmunekata@ulupono.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Ulupono Initiative	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Aug 18, 2025 @ 12:31 PM
Name: Jonathan Huynh	Email: Jhweather123@yahoo.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Aug 19, 2025 @ 07:33 AM
Testimony: As someone who commutes to work everyday using the bus and the rail, I am writing to express my firm disapproval with this bill. In Honolulu, where the less wealthy are often the ones using public transit because they cannot afford to or are unable to drive, increasing fares should be the last thing to consider. I oppose any increase to the fare, and I hope that you will do the same. Budget deficits should be addressed through revenue from those who can afford it, such as those who can afford to drive a car. And in today's society where cars are taking up more and more space, creating more and more traffic, and killing more and more people, efforts should be made to discourage driving and encourage the use of public transit. This bill would do the opposite by hurting ridership while forcing more people to drive because the car is often made to be the only way to get around on this island. Public transit users enjoy increased health due to a more active lifestyle from walking, actively reduce traffic by not driving, and as a result, contribute to less pollution and wear and tear on the road, not to mention road fatalities which are almost always caused by a private motor vehicle. If we are to keep the transportation lifeline for the less wealthy and keep the public transit system healthy, then you should oppose the bill and propose an alternate way to address the budget deficit. This can take the form of cost increases for driving, then using that money to expand the public transit system. Such a proposal would undoubtedly spark intense pushback, but those voices may be louder because there are so many drivers here. The true solution is to reduce the number of drivers through the expansion of the public transit system. An equitable society ensures that the most basic needs of the public are met for everyone, such as safety and in this case, reliable, affordable transportation. Raising fares is equivalent to a regressive tax on the poor. Please reject this bill and put		

forward one that brings about a more equitable outcome. Mahalo.



Email: communications@uluPono.com

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON BUDGET
Tuesday, August 19, 2025 — 9:00 A.M.

UluPono Initiative offers comments on Bill 54 (25), Relating to Public Transit

Dear Chair Okimoto and Members of the Committee:

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 54(25), which updates and amends certain sections of Chapter 15B, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021, as they pertain to the fare structure of O'ahu's Multimodal Municipal Transportation System.

UluPono respectfully requests the Committee to reconsider the proposed fare increases for public transit services. Increasing fares may likely offset ridership gains forthcoming from the opening of Phase 2 of Skyline (both new stations and expanded hours) and increased bus service.

Past reports suggest for every 10% increase in fare, The Bus generally sees [a 3% decline in ridership](#).¹ Absent updated analysis, we remain concerned that, although this aims to simplify the fare structure (one fare policy goal) and address rising costs, it may not support another important fare policy goal of increasing ridership. This could undermine both revenue goals and the broader objectives of expanded public transportation access. It is possible that some of these issues have been explored more recently since the Rate Commission's deliberations, but it is unclear if those have been shared more broadly or could be addressed during this bill's deliberation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,
Micah Munekata
Director, Government Affairs

¹<https://www.civilbeat.org/2022/02/honolulus-plan-to-raise-bus-fares-will-hurt-riders/>