BILL039(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 473

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Sep 3, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 2

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Geena Thielen	geena@ccs-hawaii.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Sep 2, 2025 @ 02:52 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Perry Arrasmith	perry@hawaiisfuture.org	96797
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Housing Hawai'i's Future	Support	Sep 2, 2025 @ 07:37 PM

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Honolulu City Council
City Council Chamber
Tuesday August 19, 2025
10:00 AM

RE: Bill 39 Relating to Affordable Housing

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

I am writing in **Support** to Bill 39 Relating to Affordable Housing. This bill specifically affects Bill 7 (Ordinance 19-8) affordable housing projects. The bill is intended to correct what we believe to be an oversite affecting construction methodology of Bill 7 projects. Section 2.(c) of the ordinance is a list of less restrictive conditions applied to Bill 7 projects

The amendment proposed in Bill 39 does not seek to provide a less restrictive path to compliance. Instead we are asking to be allowed to follow ROH Chapter 20 Fire Code of the City and County of Honolulu. Specifically the issue we have encountered is that the Fire Code allows for the use of combustible fire sprinkler piping in fire rated enclosures such as walls and floors. Until recently DPP allowed this practice under the existing Fire Code until it was discovered that the language in Bill 7 did not allow it.

To put this into terms of actual cost, we have just recently received a proposal for our 53 unit Bill 7 project for an upgrade to all non-combustible pipe that is costing $120,000.00. This works out to $2,264.15 per unit. This is a significant expense on these projects and it is for a condition that exceeds current Fire Code standards. For these reasons I am asking for your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Geena Thielen
President/RME

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

September 3, 2025

TO: Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council

RE: Bill 39, Relating to the Bill 7 Affordable Rental Housing Program

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a movement led by young residents fighting to create opportunities for Hawai'i's next generations by ending the workforce housing shortage.

We support Bill 39, a measure to strengthen the 'Bill 7' (Ordinance 19-8) affordable rental housing program by amending fire-resistance rated construction and requirements for projects to conform with the City Fire Code.

At first glance, the measure is seemingly minor and technical. However, it carries real-world consequences for contemporary Bill 7 projects. One developer estimates that the failure to permit Bill 7 projects to fall under the rules of the Fire Code results in an added cost of **over $2,000 per unit**.

The Mayor's 2025-2028 Strategic Housing Plan finds that the "high costs of construction labor, materials, and land make it difficult to build new housing that is affordable to middle-income households."[1] While many lower-income housing projects rely on the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) administered by the State of Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC), many Bill 7 projects do not. This is why such minor and technical fixes like Bill 39 are critical to bring the cost of Bill 7 projects under control for potential renters–and residents.

Let's lower housing costs for residents, strengthen the Bill 7 program, and advance **Bill 39**.

Aloha,

Lee Wang
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Director of Policy
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[1] See P. 16, https://www.honolulu.gov/dhlm/housing-plan/