BILL054(25)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 6

*BUDGET (BUD)

***BUDGET (BUD) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Jan 13, 2026 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 15

I wish to comment: 3

Name:	Email:	Zip:
lynne matusow	lynnehi@aol.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 9, 2026 @ 05:21 PM

Testimony:

New York City is rose fares on Jan.1, 2026. It serves many more riders than the bus and choo choo (aka skyline). It goes many more miles than the bus and choo choo. Why will New York City fares cost less than the proposed fares in Honolulu when it serves more people and goes much further? Subway, bus and Access-A-Ride fares in New York City roaw 10 cents to $3. Reduced fares rose from $1.45 to 1.50. Your plan is a rip off of all transit riders in Honolulu. Do not raise fares.

Meanwhile, there is no coordination between fares and the loss of bus routes that affect a good number of people.Thousands who live in the downtown area, especially on the mauka side, now have no way to reach Dole Cannery and the Regal Cinemas. The 20 ran down Beretania to River Street to Iwilei Road.Many of these residents are seniors, who cannot walk far. They also have a hard time getting to Costco, as Dillingham construction has moved bus stops and the route is dangerous. Uneven sidewalks, obstructions, etc. DTS doesn’t seem to care. Until bus routes are restored to go where the people are and want to go, there should not be any fare increases. They don’t have to restore the 20. All they need is a circulator bus running every half hour for the affected residents.

Iowa City made its buses free. That is what you should be doing instead of raising fares. Traffic cleared and so did the air. Since the fare-free program began, people in Iowa City have driven 1.8 million fewer miles and emissions have fallen by 24,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide a year, the same as taking 5,200 vehicles off the roads.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Anthony Zhong	its.anthonyzhong@gmail.com	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Jan 11, 2026 @ 12:48 PM

Testimony:

To the Honolulu City Council:

I am writing to offer a "split" position on Bill 54. While I support the fiscal logic of specific premium fares, I strongly oppose the cash surcharge that penalizes our most vulnerable residents.

1. SUPPORT: Special Event & Airport Fares (Section 15B-2.1 a/b)

 Events: It is fair to charge a premium (e.g., $6.25) for non-scheduled shuttle service to concerts or sports. If a rider can afford a ticket to a special event, they can afford a premium for the convenience of a door-to-door transit route that reduces city-wide traffic.

 Airport: The airport surcharge is reasonable. Workers who commute daily already use HOLO cards to keep costs low. For tourists and occasional local travelers, the bus remains the most affordable "next best choice" compared to a $40 Uber or a family member's time.

2. OPPOSE: The $0.25 Cash Surcharge. I oppose the $0.25 premium intended to "incentivize" HOLO card use. As a former IT Help Desk Assistant, I can confirm: you cannot "nudge" people into tech-savviness through financial penalties. The Barrier is Capability, Not Cost: Thousands of riders live at or near poverty levels and face significant language or socioeconomic barriers. They are not using cash because they are lazy; they are using cash because they cannot navigate the system.

 Administrative Hurdles: Expecting a senior or a low-income worker to navigate AlohaQ for an appointment, travel to Middle Street or a Satellite City Hall, and provide various documents for eligibility is unrealistic for many.

 The Outcome: This surcharge will not move the needle on HOLO adoption for the hardest-to-reach residents. Instead, it will simply be "soaked up" by those who can least afford it, and potentially forcing them to fall behind on other bills.

A Better Path Forward: If the goal is truly to increase HOLO adoption, the City should focus on Widespread Document Signups and mobile outreach at food banks, health clinics, and community centers. A surcharge is an antithesis to serving for the people, including those who need public transit the most.

Mahalo for your time,
Anthony Zhong

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Donald Sakamoto	cylonone@aol.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Jan 12, 2026 @ 02:32 PM
Testimony:		
Oral testimony via video conference only.		

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kayla rash	kaylamarierash@gmail.com	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 12, 2026 @ 05:11 PM
Testimony:		
I strongly oppose raising transit fairs.		

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jonathan Huynh	jhweather123@yahoo.com	96792

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 12, 2026 @ 05:34 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

I categorically oppose this bill, and I urge you to vote no. By raising prices on public transit fares:

- You raise the cost of living for the most vulnerable.
- You make public transit less desirable and reinforce car dependency. Car dependency disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable.

Low-income families already subsidize car infrastructure through taxes which pay for highways, interchanges, and wide roads that they will never use. Don't make them also pay more for their only means of transportation. Public transit should be most heavily subsidized by those who can afford to drive, not the other way around.

Vote no on Bill 54.

Mahalo for your time,

Jonathan Huynh

Nanakuli resident

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Dalan Kam	dailybusphoto808@gmail.com	96821

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 12, 2026 @ 06:15 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Council,

This Bill includes some changes that are reasonable, like the $5 yearly pass increase for kupuna or the special airport fare, at the cost of a lot of unreasonable changes.

While I support the streamlining and simplification of our fare system, I object to many parts of this bill that raise the bus fare. Affordability is top of mind to most on Oahu and transit riders tend to be those that are the hardest affected by even the smallest increases to the cost of living.

To those who value their privacy or have limited access or understanding of technology, cash may be the only way they're comfortable or are able to pay for the bus this should not be punished with an extra 25 cents on top of the nation's highest bus fare. The state should invest in educating people on how to use a HOLO card and get them familiar with it rather than punishing them for not using it. Promoting the HOLO card over cash is an understandable goal, and there are

already enough incentives to get one.

Raising the price of the monthly and yearly adult fare chips away at these benefits however. While these rate increases may keep with inflation, people's wages have more or less not. Nearly one thousand dollars for a yearly transit pass is insane, especially for individuals who may not be able to foot that bill all at once.

Seeking out reduced fares for the low income, kupuna, and disabled individuals may be especially difficult if they don't know where to look, given as the first place they'd think to check (thebus.org) lacks any resources on it. Therefore while this bill highlights and reaffirms the reduced fare system, it will be for naught if it's hard, tedious, or inconvenient to get in the first place.

Mahalo for considering my testimony

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Nani T	Nalanitava@gmail.com	96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 12, 2026 @ 06:17 PM

Testimony:
No to increased fares for public transportation. Bus Service has gotten worse for bus riders who don't need to use the Rail. Bus routes & stops were eliminated or changed & causing long waits & extra walking time to get to another bus stop making it hard for people. Not right to raise Bus fares for no rail riders.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Noah Hull	noahhull01@gmail.com	96797-5073
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 12, 2026 @ 06:34 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Alexandre Ly	Ahly@hawaii.edu	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 12, 2026 @ 07:02 PM

Testimony:
TheBus is a integral part of life for countless riders across Oahu. Raising these fares comes at a challenging time for the people of Hawaii as goods and services are higher than ever and show no signs of slowing down. Raising bus fares prices out individuals from riding and prevents them from easily getting to where they need to be. Perhaps if the city and county stopped giving HART as much as they do for poor results and failure to deliver they wouldn't need to raise bus fares and make it more inconvenient for Oahu residents to use the only decent mode of public transportation avaliabe. Also, advertisements on the side of the buses shouldn't be an option either, Hawaii shouldn't need to sell out to corporations to fund its public transit.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Tanya Baker	daughteroftheking936@gmail.com	96782
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 12, 2026 @ 08:07 PM

Testimony:

Hello,

I oppose this measure. An increase in busfare would put an undue burden on local families and increase the cost of living for the working class. The city council should look for other ways to raise revenue.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Andre Johnson	qksdre@gmail.com	96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 12, 2026 @ 08:56 PM

Testimony:

As a daily TheBus and Skyline rider I feel that the fares are already high enough and should not be raised even more. While I am a transit rider by choice I understand there are people who arent as fortunate and simply can only afford to take Transit. Its people like this that im concerned would have to make the difficult decision to skip meals, go out less, and not be able to get important medications and stuff like that. And for the people who choose to take Transit even though they have access to a car like myself im worried that if fares are increased they would just decide to stop using it and drive everywhere they go. All in all we should be making Public Transportation more accessible not less.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Khayla Rol	khayla.r@gmail.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 12, 2026 @ 11:46 PM

Testimony:

Date Monday, Jan. 12

To City And county of Honolulu Council members.

Opposition to Bill 54

My name is Khayla Rol and i was have lied on Oahu for 31 years. I am writing today to urge you to VOTE NO on bill 54, which would increase bus fares for our community.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jesse Cameron	jessecam@hawaii.edu	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 13, 2026 @ 12:00 AM

Testimony:

Date: January 12 2026

To: Honolulu City and County Council Members

I am Opposed to bill 54, which would increase bus fares.

My name is Jesse Cameron and I was born and raised on oahu and have lived here for 32 years. I am writing today to stongly urge you to vote NO on bill 54.

Currently i do not own a car (for financial reasons) and rely on the bus and my bicycle to get me everywhere i need to. I am a University of Hawaii student and also a full time service worker in waikiki. I am on either the bus's A-line and route 13 nearly every single day.

This bill will not only effect me but also the many kupuna and keiki that use the bus as their ONLY and main form of transportation. I see the faces of people that this bill will negatively affect. When was the last time any of you took the bus? This bill will cost the people who are most vulnerable. It may seem like not a lot to you, but keep in mind, most people who use the bus are on the fringes, young, old poor, etc. This will mean A LOT to them.

Thank you for your time and for considering the impact of this bill on the daily lives of Honolulu's residents.

Mahalo,

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jacob Johnson	doublejstr78@gmail.com	96826
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Self	Oppose	Jan 13, 2026 @ 12:58 AM

Testimony:

I oppose an increase to the current public transit fare.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Joseph Olanda	joseph.olanda@icloud.com	96814
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Self	Oppose	Jan 13, 2026 @ 01:37 AM

Testimony:

To whom it may concern,

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I am writing this testimony in hope that it will help of why I am opposing to this bill.

My reason is In the year of 2025, we have had multiple car death accidents and e-bike accidents. Increasing this bill will only promote students to drive e-bike to school (specially high school students), young adults (with no license), and

elderly(with medical issues) to drive.

How will this bill promote people to drive? 3.25$ cash back and forth is about 6.50$ and that is only one way. If they have to transfer to a different bus and they are paying cash. That is about 13$ a day.

If that is the case, I will consider to drive a moped which will only cost about 10$ gas from Ewa beach to Waikiki back and forth for a whole week.

Will that be safe? Maybe, maybe not. We will never know. But will that save me money? Yes.

A 110$ monthly for adult bus pass is a lot. That is about 1,320$ a year. A public transportation should not cost that much.

Average people makes about 600$ a week and that is about 2,400$ a month.
With family, Rent takes about 1,800$ a month for 2 bedroom apartment. Not to mention children school and food 500$ a month, necessities 400$, food 500$, electricity 200, phone bills for 3 people is about 375, water bill is about 200$ and etc.

People in Hawaii are already struggling, adding another bill will not help the community.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Joseph Olanda

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Samantha Lara	slara@hawaii.edu	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jan 13, 2026 @ 08:13 AM

Testimony:
Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

I strongly oppose Bill 52 and the proposed increase to bus fares for O‘ahu residents.

I come before you as a member of a family of bus riders. Public transit is not optional for us—it is how we access work, school, healthcare, and daily life. Increasing fares would directly burden families who already rely on TheBus and are already choosing a safer, more sustainable way to move around our island.

If the City’s goal is to increase ridership, reduce congestion, and shift travel behavior, raising fares for everyday riders undermines that goal. Transit ridership grows when service is affordable, simple, and welcoming—not when cost becomes

another barrier.

O‘ahu is also facing an epidemic of traffic fatalities. Too many lives are being lost on our roads. Supporting public transit is a proven safety strategy: fewer cars on the road means fewer crashes, fewer deaths, and safer streets for everyone—drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and bus riders alike.

At the same time, Honolulu has made serious climate commitments, including long-term emissions reduction goals. Public transit must be treated as essential climate infrastructure. Making transit more expensive for residents sends the wrong message at a moment when we should be encouraging people to drive less, not more.

If the concern driving this bill is the need to generate fare revenue, there are better, more equitable ways to do that without penalizing O‘ahu residents.

Many global cities—including London—successfully charge higher transit fares to visitors while keeping access affordable for residents through easy-to-use fare systems like the Oyster card. Honolulu should explore a similar approach:

Higher fares for tourists and short-term visitors, who often use transit as a convenience rather than a necessity

Affordable, resident-focused fares for people who live, work, and raise families here

Making it extremely easy to obtain and reload a HOLO card, including at the airport, hotels, neighborhood retailers, and online, so cost and access are never barriers

This approach recognizes the reality of our visitor economy while protecting local families and encouraging long-term behavior change. It supports ridership, safety, and climate goals while still addressing revenue needs.

Raising fares across the board gives the wrong signal: that choosing public transit is something people should pay more for, rather than something the City actively supports and values.

I respectfully urge the Council to reject Bill 52 as written and instead pursue fare strategies that prioritize residents, support transit as a viable and desirable option, and reflect the values of a safe, climate-responsible Honolulu.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Name: Erin Yoshioka	Email: erintaeko@yahoo.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 13, 2026 @ 08:40 AM

Testimony:

I feel that the price increase for the bus will severely impact those who cannot afford it. Making things even harder for the less fortunate on the island. Majority of the people who are riding the bus, do so, not by choice, but because of lack of funds to own a car. You will be putting them in financial crisis by raising the bus prices. Many seniors are on my bus rides and have a fixed income and to raise them 40% is cruel.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Angela Young	Alohadivinedesign@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
CARES | Community Advocacy Research Education Services	I wish to comment	Jan 13, 2026 @ 08:55 AM

Testimony:

Wishing to provide comments.

Aloha Distinguished Councilmembers-
Please vote **No** on Bill 54 relating to public transit.
Abstract:

- Works contrary to City and County of Honolulu's goals (CCH) of Carbon Neutrality by 2045
- Decreases Access for CCH's most vulnerable communities
- Creates a confusing pay structure riders
- Would damage the already tarnished reputation of CCH's Public Transit System

Distinguished councilmembers - I urge you to vote **No** on Bill 54 in its current form for the following reasons. My testimony is below:

Works contrary to City and County of Honolulu's goals (CCH) of Carbon Neutrality by 2045:

The City and County of Honolulu aims to have Carbon Neutrality by 2045. One of the key hallmarks of this goal is creating a public transit system that is accessible and prioritized by more people. Increasing the fare would be not only unpopular with constituents and riders, it would add to the growing negative perception around Hawaii's Public Transit system in general. This negative perception has been caused in part by the following in the past:

- Perceived Mismangement of Skyline Construction
- Perceived Low Ridership of Skyline and Mismangement of Skyline Operations
- Past Increases to Bus Fares being perceived negatively by constituents
- Incidents on board TheBus and relating to the Bus

Looking over the sourcing that I shared (Mainly from local journalism), the move to increase fare prices would work contrary to CCH's goals of Carbon Neutrality in that it would add controversy to a major system that is meant to help CCH achieve this goal. The last time bus fares were increased, it was met with disdain from riders who depend on TheBus and Skyline for daily commuting, as it made their commute less financially affordable. Part of the goal of 'One Oahu' is that Oahu can unite under shared resources. This move would further divide this system.

Decreases Access for CCH's most vulnerable communities

An effective Public Transportation system provides access to vulnerable communities, including but not limited to:

- Impoverished and low-income communities
- Elderly
- Disabled
- Those unable to drive

CCH is not immune from serving these communities. Route 40 and C serves the low income neighborhoods of the Leeward Coast. Route 1,2,51,40, and 42, all serve Kalihi. The Handi-van services those who are unable to drive with paratransit. All of these help keep Oahu's most vulnerable communities on the move. With the price of many items going up due to inflation, and access to food and resources becoming harder for many families, it is important that vital

resources such as TheBus and Skyline do not become harder to attain

Additionally, Bill 54 proposes a fare increase for Cash Fare. This also is an obstacle to access in that many people have troubles understanding the Holo Card, and while DTS and MPO have done an excellent job explaining this system, the technological barrier still remains for many impoverished communities who depend on Cash for their card.

Creates a confusing pay structure for riders

Bill 54 authorizes the Director of DTS who authorize one time pay increases for events, as well as for trips to Daniel K. Inouye International Airport (HNL). This pay structure creates further confusion for riders, and a further barrier to access. The policy fails to outline a system in which this policy is communicated to constituents. This fact alone also detracts from the goal of using mass transit to go to events in that it fails to understand that discounted costs are part of the draw. While lack of parking at events does do this, charging more takes away from this goal of having people use mass transit to go to events such as this.

Additionally, increasing cash fares but not Holo Card fares, while incentivizing the Holo Card in the long run, creates confusion among riders as there are already so many different items that riders have to look at. See my statements concerning the technological barrier to Holo Cards and this situation will do more to create controversy then solve funding issues.

Would damage the already tarnished reputation of CCH's Public Transit System

As mentioned in previous points, CCH's Public Transit Systems have already faced much controversy. This new policy would only add to this. An alternative solution is highly advised.

I urge you to vote **No** on Bill 54 for these reasons, as we try to build a better Oahu for all involved.