

BILL017(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 26

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Jan 28, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 4

Oppose: 24

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Jacob Wiencek	Email: jacob.m.wiencek@pm.me	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 22, 2026 @ 09:47 PM
Testimony: Aloha Councilmembers, This bill will simply take us in the wrong direction when it comes to tackling the challenge of housing affordability. If enacted, this proposal would handicap affordable housing construction. It would directly and negatively impact the economic struggles being faced by working- and middle-class families. It would obviate the hard work this council has made over the years. I strongly urge the Council to REJECT this proposal!		
Name: Damien Waikoloa	Email: damien.waikoloa@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Hawai'i YIMBY	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 12:56 PM
Name: Ted Kefalas	Email: tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 26, 2026 @ 12:58 PM
Name: Julia Fink	Email: julia@aiahonolulu.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: The American Institute of Architects (AIA), Honolulu Chapter	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 07:54 AM
Name: Lee Wang	Email: lee@hawaiiisfuture.org	Zip: 96822
Representing: Housing Hawai'i's Future	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 10:00 AM
Name: Brian Fujiwara	Email: brian808@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 10:51 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:

Arjuna Heim	arjuna@hiappleseed.org	96813
Representing: Hawaii Appleseed	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 11:06 AM
Name: Derek Lock	Email: dlock@hnldev.com	Zip: 96828
Representing: HNL Development LLC	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 11:49 AM
Name: Cheyenne Martinez-Boyette	Email: cmartinezboyette@asbhawaii.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 02:29 PM
Name: Brian Schatz	Email: Brian_Schatz@schatz.senate.gov	Zip: 96850
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 03:43 PM
Testimony: O'ahu residents face an acute and worsening housing crisis, and people need all the help they can get from their government. That's why I'm writing to express my deep concern regarding bills which would make it harder to build housing and make our existing housing crisis even worse. Living in a beautiful or isolated place doesn't explain away the awful reality. We all know people who cannot afford to make it here anymore, and we owe them every effort to alleviate this challenge. The problem didn't happen on its own – it's a product of decades of policies that has led to a more than 25,000 unit shortfall on O'ahu by next year. The government helped create this problem, and we have a responsibility to fix it. In 2019, when the City Council adopted Ordinance 19-8, it provided some reason for optimism, and that's why I think it is so essential that this law remains. I remain committed to this issue and look forward to finding a constructive path forward. I urge you to reconsider your position with respect to Bill 17, and other recently-introduced housing bills, and work with the growing coalition of citizens and organizations who are dedicated to fixing this crisis.		
Name: Stacey Snell	Email: staceynsnell@gmail.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 05:14 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:

Randy Perreira	cope@hawaflcio.org	96813
Representing: Hawaii State AFL-CIO	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 05:18 PM
Testimony: Dear Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and members of the Council: The Hawaii State AFL-CIO opposes Bill 17 because it would make it more difficult to build housing at a time when our community continues to face a significant housing shortage. Policies that reduce development capacity or increase uncertainty in the housing approval process slow housing production and contribute to higher costs. Housing availability has a direct impact on working families, affecting housing costs, commute times, and economic stability. When housing supply does not keep pace with demand, residents face rising rents and longer commutes to their jobs. Additionally, measures that limit housing production reduce construction and related job opportunities that support local employment and small businesses. For these reasons, we urge the Council to oppose this measure. Respectfully submitted, Randy Perreira President		
Name: Geena Thielen	Email: geena@ccs-hawaii.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 05:54 PM
Name: Stefanie Sakamoto	Email: ssakamoto@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: BIA Hawaii	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 07:44 PM
Name: Kauanui Sabas	Email: Ksabas@hgea.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA)	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 08:06 PM
Name: Dalan Kam	Email: dailybusphoto808@gmail.com	Zip: 96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Oppose	Jan 27, 2026 @ 08:25 PM
Testimony: Aloha Council, I am writing in opposition to this bill. We need to build more housing, especially affordable housing. Removing financial incentives to build affordable housing achieves the opposite of that. I highly urge the council to reject Bill 17.		
Name: Erica Guerrero-Castillo	Email: egcastle29@gmail.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 09:52 PM
Testimony: I oppose bill 17. I support the growth and construction of affordable housing in Hawaii.		
Name: Keali'i Lopez	Email: klopez@aarp.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: AARP Hawai'i	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 10:12 PM
Name: Dale VanderBrink	Email: sandmandfgh@gmail.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 10:52 PM
Testimony: Aloha Council Members, I am writing in strong opposition to Bill 17. To put it simply, this bill rolls back the effective and common tools that help encourage affordable home construction. I will keep this short and not repeat the many other pieces of testimony that provide the details on why this bill is bad for affordable home construction, and I ask you to vote against bill 17.		
Name: Bill Hicks	Email: billhickskn@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Kailua Neighborhood Board	Position: Support	Submitted: Jan 27, 2026 @ 11:09 PM
Name: Justin Menina	Email: jmenina77@gmail.com	Zip: 96826
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 03:42 AM

Testimony:

O'ahu is currently grappling with an acute and worsening housing crisis that demands urgent, proactive intervention from our government rather than the introduction of restrictive legislation like Bill 17. This crisis is not an inevitable byproduct of our geography, but rather the result of decades of policy decisions that have led to a projected shortfall of over 25,000 units by next year. We owe it to the many residents who can no longer afford to live here to protect essential tools like Ordinance 19-8, which offered a rare glimmer of optimism when it was adopted. I urge the City Council to reconsider any bills that would further stifle housing production and instead partner with the growing coalition of citizens dedicated to fixing this man-made disaster and finding a constructive path forward for our community.

Name: Shelby Pikachu Billionaire	Email: presidentbillionaire@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Ohana Unity Party	Position: Support	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 06:16 AM

Testimony:

Honorable Chair Tommy Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

I am writing in strong support of Bill 17 (2026), introduced by Councilmember Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, which amends the repeal date of Revised Ordinances of Honolulu Chapter 32 to July 1, 2027. This legislation extends critical incentives—including pre-construction subsidies, post-construction grants, and property tax exemptions—designed to encourage the development and preservation of affordable rental housing units for households earning 80% or less of the area median income.

O'ahu continues to face a severe housing affordability crisis, with thousands of families struggling to secure safe, stable, and reasonably priced rental homes. The incentives provided under Chapter 32 have played an important role in stimulating private-sector investment in affordable housing, helping to increase the supply of units and alleviate pressure on low- and moderate-income residents. Extending these tools for an additional year provides developers and stakeholders with the certainty needed to plan and advance projects, while giving the Council and community time to evaluate the program's effectiveness and consider any necessary refinements before a permanent decision on its future.

This modest extension carries no new fiscal commitments and aligns with the City's broader housing goals outlined in the Consolidated Plan 2026–2030. It represents a responsible, interim step toward addressing one of our most pressing community challenges—ensuring that every family has access to dignified housing—without imposing additional burdens on the city budget.

I respectfully urge the Council to advance Bill 17 (2026) promptly and to continue prioritizing collaborative solutions that protect and uplift all members of our ohana.

Thank you for your dedicated service and for considering this important measure.

Sincerely,
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM
Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.
Chairman, Ohana Unity Party

****Contact Information****

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YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@theXXXfiles>
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BTC Wallet: 1sRfKDphW18hojoyTQVy9qQVSUtQgahYwj

Mahalo nui loa for your leadership in building a more equitable and prosperous future for Honolulu.

Name: Lance Berringer	Email: ldberringer@gmail.com	Zip: 96826
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 06:22 AM

Testimony:

As the construction superintendent that has built numerous of these Bill seven projects and has seen the fact that it has on the people that get to move into these buildings, the smiles the sense of family. We cannot stop. This. These buildings are getting occupied. As soon as I can get them built these are healing, our community and a positive force for Hawaii.

Name: Nicholas Castillo	Email: nick.j.castillo15@gmail.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 06:50 AM

Testimony:

I believe that this bill will eventually help evict most families living in low income housing, progressively spreading to all other normal domiciles. First and foremost how is \$2000 a month for a 350 sqft studio, no washer/dryer, no parking, no

lanai/patio in lower Makiki considered low income housing? Insanity. The streets of lower Makiki, and the greater Ala Moana area are saturated with homelessness and drugs. The average age of the islands homeless population is quickly getting younger. These kids were taught that they had a fair shot at making a good life here on the island. That is no longer a reality. If you don't see this already, you're not walking around outside with your eyes open or you don't care. Kanaka Maoli is being pushed off the homeland slowly and methodically. If Kanaka doesn't leave and we choose to numb the pain with drugs and become invisible on the street. These issues are all connected. This bill will contribute to vagrancy along with crime and drug related violence.

If this isn't realized and compassionately mitigated, the homelessness crisis will become your day to day crisis. Yes, all the rich folks! Coming to a town near you! Beautiful Hawaii Kai, Kahala, Portlock, Diamond Head, and all the mega mansions in our sacred mountains. Now every time you go outside, you're welcomed by a lost meth addict asking for money and a pair of socks. As you walk to check your mailbox, you notice an older woman who's going through violent withdrawals looking for lipstick while resting against your driveway curb. Then you notice that a barefoot young girl with dirt from head to toe is going through your neighbors trash looking for plastic bottles, cans, and breakfast. As you walk back to your house, you notice a tent that is wedged between your house and your neighbors, dirty laundry sprawled all over the grass. You've now noticed your entire neighborhood smells like a urine filled garbage dump. You absolutely must remove your shoes before going inside your house because you forgot you stepped on several open syringes, broken glass, and human feces outside your front door. Before you enter your sanctuary home, you turn around and face the neighborhood again. Your stomach turns and you start sweating profusely. You realize that strife is real and your heart is heavy now. The frequency of human struggle is dominant and it's at your doorstep. Wake up!!!! This is happening now!!!! This is my family's reality everyday in lower Makiki. Every single example I provided is a small window into what my family and I have witnessed with our own eyes. My daughter is only 10 years old and she could describe this reality vividly, because she sees it every single day. In closing, bills like these will bankrupt locals as a result of penalizing super wealthy foreign investors. If this bill passes more like it will follow giving way to the island becoming a mecca of homelessness, drugs and crime. I pray for our children's future on this island.

Name: Lance Berringer	Email: ldberringer@gmail.com	Zip: 96826
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 07:03 AM

Testimony:

As the construction superintendent that has built numerous of these Bill seven projects and has seen the fact that it has on the people that get to move into these buildings, the smiles the sense of family. We cannot stop. This. These buildings are getting occupied. As soon as I can get them built these are healing, our community and a positive force for Hawaii.

Name: Evan Oue	Email: eoue@imanaka-asato.com	Zip: 96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

NAIOP Hawaii Chapter	Oppose	Jan 28, 2026 @ 07:34 AM
Name: Trevor Nagamine	Email: tnagamine.nb25@gmail.com	Zip: 96789
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 08:07 AM
Name: Timothy Lyons	Email: Timothy.Lyons@hpmhawaii.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jan 28, 2026 @ 08:54 AM



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

January 28, 2026

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

RE: OPPOSE BILL 17 (2026) - RELATING TO AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

Aloha Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Council Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we submit testimony in **opposition to Bill 17 (2026)**.

At its core, this bill rolls back some of the most common and effective tools widely used to encourage affordable home construction, particularly height and density allowances tied to affordability requirements. **If the county's goal is truly to increase the number of affordable homes in Honolulu, this approach is counterproductive.**

Affordable homes cost nearly the same to build as market-rate homes, but they bring in less rent. That basic reality is why zoning incentives and financial incentives exist in the first place. Height and density bonuses increase what a project can earn. Fee waivers and similar incentives reduce what a project costs. Together, these tools help close the financial gap that makes affordable housing hard to build.

Getting the right balance of incentives is not easy. Incentives that are too weak will not work. Incentives that are poorly targeted can create frustration. But completely gutting incentives will produce the same or worse outcome: fewer homes get built. That result should surprise no one.

Research shows that incentives work best when they are paired, calibrated, and tied to real affordability requirements. The Urban Institute's Metropolitan Housing and



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Communities Policy Center has documented how zoning incentives, such as added height or density, are widely used across the country to offset the cost of providing affordable homes. Their research shows these tools are most effective when combined with other incentives that reduce cost and risk for home builders.¹ Rolling these tools back does not fix affordability. It undermines it.

Austin, Texas' *Affordability Unlocked* program offers regulatory relief, such as waivers of height limits, density restrictions, and other development rules, in exchange for deep and long-term affordability commitments.² When tied to clear affordability standards, those incentives have helped produce thousands of affordable homes without relying solely on public subsidies. The lesson is not that incentives are perfect, but that they can work when designed carefully.

Bill 17 moves in the opposite direction. It assumes that reducing height allowances and eliminating incentives will somehow lead to better housing outcomes. That assumption is flawed.

The bill also suggests that community concern about building height is the main obstacle to affordable housing in Honolulu. That is flat out wrong. Height concerns are not what prevent affordable homes from being built. Cost, land scarcity, financing challenges, and regulatory barriers are.

Entertaining the sensitive feelings of incumbent, well-established, and selfish community members who oppose change is extremely short-sighted. It has no basis in addressing Honolulu's long-term housing availability and affordability crisis. These voices are often the loudest, but they do not represent the majority of current or future residents who are struggling to find a place to live.

¹ Mark Treskon, Jorge González-Hermoso, Noah McDaniel, and Dennis Su, Local and State Policies to Improve Access to Affordable Housing: An Examination and Assessment of Eight Policies Supported by Habitat for Humanity's Cost of Home Campaign (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, August 2023), <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Local%20and%20State%20Policies%20to%20Improve%20Access%20to%20Affordable%20Housing.pdf>

² Audrey McGlinchy, "Austin Policy Lets Builders Forgo Red Tape. The Result? More Affordable Housing, Less Public Input," *KUT.org*, September 25, 2023, <https://www.kut.org/austin/2023-09-25/austin-policy-lets-builders-forgo-red-tape-the-result-more-affordable-housing-less-public-input>



Hawai'i YIMBY

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Every time we prioritize discomfort over outcomes, we make it harder for local families, workers, and young people to stay in Hawai'i. We push housing farther out of reach, lengthen commutes, and deepen inequality. Protecting views and perceived neighborhood “character” at the expense of housing supply does nothing to solve the crisis we are facing.

No one is arguing that height and density bonuses should be unlimited or unchecked. It is reasonable and responsible to debate where they apply, how large they should be, and what affordability standards they require. But eliminating or sharply restricting these incentives altogether guarantees failure. **You cannot reduce the tools used to build affordable homes and expect more homes to be built.**

If the county truly wants to help the people who live here now, and those who hope to live here in the future, it should focus on legislation that expands housing opportunities, not shrinks them. That means refining incentives, not gutting them. It means tying bonuses to strong affordability requirements, not abandoning the approach entirely.

We urge you to reject Bill 17 (2026) and instead pursue policies that actually help produce affordable homes at scale. Pass legislation that serves the many, not the selfish few.

Mahalo,

Damien Waikoloa

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY



Jan. 28, 2026, 10 a.m.

Honolulu Hale

To: Honolulu City Council

Tommy Waters, Chair

Andria Tupola, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: Bill 17 (2026) — RELATING TO AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

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

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **opposes** [Bill 17 \(2026\)](#), which would move up the sunset date for the Bill 7 affordable housing program from June 1, 2030, to July 1, 2027. It would also require Bill 7 projects to meet the height limit of the underlying zoning district if that district specifies a height limit of less than 60 feet.

The Bill 7 program has been an important tool for city homebuilders trying to produce affordable housing. Adding additional restrictions and terminating the program earlier than currently planned would be a step backward in city efforts to reduce the housing shortage.

A 2024 update to the Hawaii housing planning study estimated that Honolulu needs 27,710 new units built between 2023 and 2027 to keep up with demand.¹ This bill is likely to severely limit the number of affordable units that get built.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas

Director of Strategic Campaigns

Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

¹ "[Hawaii Housing Planning Study 2024](#)," prepared by SMS Research and Marketing Services, Inc., FSR Consulting LLC and Ward Research, Inc. for the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Table 39A, p. 124.

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

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

Subject: Bill 17 2026
Relating to Affordable Rental Housing

Dear Chair Waters and Honorable Members of the Council,

AIA Honolulu is concerned that Bill 17 (2026), would effectively eliminate the viability of Bill 7 affordable rental housing projects authorized under ROH Chapter 32 by removing the exemptions that these projects currently rely upon. These exemptions are not incidental – they are fundamental to making affordable housing feasible in Honolulu's high-cost construction environment.

Based on our members' direct experience, many completed and currently in-progress Bill 7 projects would not have been able to pencil out or move forward without the design flexibility, alteration of parking and loading requirements, and tax exemption structures currently allowed. Removing them retroactively undermines the framework that has enabled delivery of affordable rental housing and introduces uncertainty that will discourage future projects.

While AIA Honolulu strongly supports the goal of increasing affordable housing, policies that remove proven incentives risk producing the opposite outcome: fewer projects, longer timelines, and reduced housing supply. Design professionals, developers, and housing providers need predictable and workable regulations to successfully deliver affordable housing at scale.

For these reasons, AIA Honolulu opposes Bill 17 and urges the Council to carefully consider the real-world impacts of these changes.
Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Lance Hirai, AIA
2026 President, American Institute of Architects, Honolulu

January 28, 2025

TO: Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council

RE: Bill 17, Relating to Affordable Rental Housing

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

We respectfully oppose Bill 17, a measure to effectively end the 'Bill 7' housing program. As presently crafted, Bill 17 makes significant changes to the City and County of Honolulu's Affordable Rental Housing Program. These changes will either restrict, reduce, or terminate existing policy 'carrots' for prospective home builders.

If something is imperfect, you strive to make it more perfect. O'ahu presently experiences a shortage of 25,710 housing units. The present shortage, to borrow a phrase from 1932, calls for "bold, persistent experimentation." We need to expand the scope and reach of programs like Bill 7. "It is common sense to take a method and try it: If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something."

Bill 7 is an experiment borne by a recognition that the speed of housing production is too slow to meet the demands of O'ahu's struggling residents, especially its young residents. It is a chronic, wicked problem caused by systemic barriers. At the situation stands, the rate of housing production is still too slow.

Instead of failing to try, let's try something. Let's halt **Bill 17**.

Aloha,



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



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

January 28, 2026

TO: Office of the City Clerk
Information Section
530 South King Street, Room 100
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: BILL 17 (2026) – RELATING TO AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

SUBJECT: **Opposition to Bill 17 (2026)**

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

I am writing to express my strong **OPPOSITION** to Bill 17 (2026) Relating to Affordable Rental Housing. As an Architect involved in many projects especially Bill 7 affordable housing, I have first-hand experience on these projects that have major impacts to families needing a place to live. Nothing is more gratifying than witnessing a vacant parcel become a structure that helps the community with affordable housing.

Bill 17 will significantly slow or even stop development of Bill 7 projects if the 60 feet height limit is implemented.

I appreciate your service to our community and thank you for considering my input. I humbly request your opposition to Bill 17 (2026).

Sincerely,

Brian Fujiwara, AIA
BKF & Associates, LLC



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Opposition to Bill 17 – Relating to Affordable Rental Housing
Honolulu City & County Council Meeting
Tuesday, January 28, 2026 at 10:00AM

Aloha Chair Waters and Council Members;

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong opposition to Bill 17**, which would significantly weaken Honolulu's Affordable Rental Housing Program under ROH Chapter 32, a program that was deliberately crafted—through Bill 7—to overcome the real, documented infeasibility of apartment construction in Honolulu.

1. The Feasibility Record is Clear: Apartments DO NOT Pencil Without Incentives

In 2016 the Council commissioned Strategic Economics to look into the financial feasibility of affordable housing requirements, titled "Affordable Housing Requirement Financial Analysis". The purpose of the study was to test whether the Affordable Housing Requirements (AHR) could be levied against apartments and condos across O‘ahu. Strategic Economics looked at feasibility analysis of condominium and apartment prototypes across O‘ahu, evaluating returns with and without affordability requirements. The findings are unequivocal, per the report itself:

“Because none of the apartment prototypes are currently feasible without subsidy, none are able to support the AHR, with or without financial incentives” (Strategic Economics, 2016, pg. 12)

Figure 15: Return-on-cost for Condominium Prototypes, assuming an 18 Percent Threshold for Financial Feasibility

Financial Incentives	Low-rise, Kapolei	Low-rise, Pearlridge	Mid-rise, Kapalama	Mid-rise + CB Bonus, Kapalama	High-rise, Ala Moana	High-rise + CB Bonus, Ala Moana
Baseline - No Affordable Housing Requirement						
Before Incentives	-13%	12%	-7%	5%	1%	25%
On-Site Affordable Housing Requirement						
Before Incentives	-16%	7%	-11%	0%	0%	20%
With Incentives	-15%	9%	-9%	2%	3%	24%
Off-Site Affordable Housing Requirement						
Before Incentives	-16%	7%	-11%	0%	0%	20%
With Incentives	-15%	9%	-9%	2%	3%	24%
In-lieu Fee						
Before Incentives	-20%	2%	-13%	-4%	-4%	15%
With Incentives	-20%	2%	-13%	-4%	-4%	15%

Figure 16: Return on Yield for Apartment Prototypes, assuming a 7.5 Percent Threshold for Financial Feasibility

Financial Incentives	Low-rise, Kapolei	Low-rise, Pearlridge	Mid-rise, Kapalama	Mid-rise + CB Bonus, Kapalama	High-rise, Ala Moana	High-rise + CB Bonus, Ala Moana
Baseline						
Before Incentives	5.7%	6.2%	4.6%	5.3%	not analyzed	
On-Site Affordable Housing Requirement						
Before Incentives	5.4%	5.8%	4.3%	4.8%	not analyzed	
With Incentives	5.5%	5.9%	4.3%	4.9%		
Off-Site Affordable Housing Requirement						
Before Incentives	5.4%	5.9%	4.3%	4.9%	not analyzed	
With Incentives	5.5%	5.9%	4.4%	4.9%		
In-lieu Fee						
Before Incentives	5.2%	5.6%	4.3%	4.8%	not analyzed	
With Incentives	5.2%	5.6%	4.3%	4.8%		

Source: Strategic Economics, 2016



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Opposition to Bill 17 – Relating to Affordable Rental Housing
Honolulu City & County Council Meeting
Tuesday, January 28, 2026 at 10:00AM

- Apartment development was found infeasible across the board under affordability requirements when evaluated against a 7.5% minimum return threshold.
- Even before affordability requirements, apartment returns hovered well below feasibility in most cases.
- Adding affordability requirements without strong incentives pushed returns further below feasibility, rendering projects non-viable.

The private market will not deliver affordable rental housing at scale without targeted regulatory relief and financial tools.

Bill 7 (ROH Chapter 32) was the City’s smart response to this reality. It identified a narrow “sweet spot” where apartments could be made to pencil-through height flexibility, development standard relief, and cost certainty. Bill 17 dismantles that solution.

2. Bill 17 Directly Undermines Housing Supply by Restricting High Flexibility

ROH Chapter 32 was designed to accelerate affordable rental housing by decoupling height from restrictive underlying zoning, allowing projects to reach up to 60 feet where appropriate. Bill 17 reverses this by tying height back to underlying zoning and special district limits; and imposing tighter caps on buildings under 60 ft.

This change will dramatically reduce the number of sites where projects can pencil, particularly in neighborhoods where zoning has not kept pace with housing demand. Height flexibility is not a giveaway—it is the mechanism that makes affordability feasible. Reducing it means fewer projects, fewer units, and slower delivery.¹

3. Bill 17 Creates New Uncertainty for Mid-Rise Affordable Housing

Bill 17 introduces ambiguity around what qualifies as “mid-rise” development and appears to lower what affordable rental projects can build. Uncertainty is a cost itself. For affordable housing developers operating on thin margins and unclear standards uncertainty increases financial risk; delays approvals; and pushes projects out of feasibility entirely.

1

<https://www4.honolulu.gov/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-347776/2025-2028%20Strategic%20Housing%20Plan.pdf>



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

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At a time when speed and predictability are essential, Bill 17 injects friction into a system that was intentionally designed to streamline the process.

4. Bill 17 Removes Critical Property Tax Exemption Pathway

Bill 17 amends ROH § 8-10.33 to eliminate property tax exemption eligibility for Chapter 32 projects. This is a fatal change, property tax exemptions are a cornerstone of affordable rental feasibility. Removing them raises long term operating costs; undermines underwriting assumptions; jeopardizes financing; and overall prevents projects from moving forward.

This withdrawal of real property tax exemptions for affordable housing is magnified by Bill 14 and would be a critical mistake, knowingly increasing the costs in a system already proven to be financially fragile.

5. Bill 17 Moves Honolulu Backwards

O'ahu faces a shortage of over 25,000 housing units.² Bill 7 is the most promising way that Honolulu can address the dearth of income restricted rental housing by acknowledging the feasibility constraints and addressing them directly.

Bill 17 moves us backwards. It restricts incentives, removes financial tools, and slows production without offering an alternative strategy to address some of the systemic problems of Honolulu's zoning code that make building apartments infeasible.

Rather than improving the system, Bill 17 will make it more difficult to build apartments, reduce affordable rental options, and increase housing costs for residents.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Council to reject Bill 17.

Mahalo for your consideration.

² <https://www.wardresearch.com/2024-hawaii-housing-planning-study>

HNL Development
PO Box 11142
Honolulu HI 96828

January 27, 2026

Councilmember Tommy Waters
Chair, Honolulu City Council
City and County of Honolulu
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Bill 17 (2026) – Relating to Affordable Housing Incentives

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Bill 17 (2026).

My name is Derek Lock, Partner with HNL Development LLC, developer and consultant for seven affordable rental projects—totaling 200 units under Chapter 32 (Bill 7)—all targeted to households earning below 80% AMI.

Chapter 32 is a privately financed affordable housing program, and we have completed two buildings under this program that now house essential workers such as restaurant employees, construction workers, and state civic workers — the people who keep Honolulu running but struggle to live here. Two more projects are scheduled to be completed in the coming months. None of the neighborhoods where we have built have raised complaints about these projects either during construction or the leasing period.

Developing under Bill 7 has shown both the promise and the challenges of creating affordable housing. Costs, financing risks, and permitting delays push many small local developers to their limits. If programs like Chapter 32 are weakened or lost, we will see higher housing costs, an even tighter housing market, and more essential workers leaving the state.

Bill 17 (2026) will immensely slow the production of much-needed affordable rental housing, stopping the city from achieving smart growth by limiting what can be built on apartment-zoned urban infill lots. At a time when housing demand far outweighs supply, Honolulu needs policies that accelerate rather than restrict attainable housing opportunities.

Mahalo,

Derek Lock
Partner, HNL Development LLC

January 27, 2026

Re: Strong Opposition to Bill 17

Chair Tommy Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council:

My name is Cheyenne Martinez-Boyette, and I respectfully submit this testimony in strong **opposition** to Bill 17 (2026).

I have worked in real estate lending and affordable housing for over 20 years, with a focus on commercial real estate finance since 2015. As a commercial real estate relationship manager at a local bank, I regularly underwrite Bill 7 (Ordinance 19-8) projects, assess feasibility from a lender's perspective, and have financed some of the few completed Bill 7 developments.

Bill 17 undermines the purpose of Bill 7 and will result in significantly fewer rental housing units at a time when O'ahu faces a severe housing shortage.

Bill 7 was designed to overcome persistent barriers to producing small- and mid-scale apartment buildings in Hawai'i, including restrictive density, a burdensome permitting process, high construction costs, and rising operating expenses. Rather than refining this proven tool, Bill 17 removes key financial incentives, reintroduces administrative hurdles, and rolls back modest height allowances that directly affect feasibility—without addressing any demonstrated issue.

From a lender's standpoint, feasibility depends on both construction costs and operating expenses. The real property tax (RPT) waiver is a critical component of Bill 7. Reducing the waiver period would increase operating expenses by approximately 15–20% of gross rental income in the early years, reducing loan proceeds by millions of dollars per project and rendering many developments infeasible.

Bill 7 projects are being delivered primarily by local, small-scale developers—not national firms—who are taking on substantial risk in one of the most expensive construction markets in the country. Reduced loan proceeds force these developers to contribute more equity than is often feasible or limit their ability to pursue additional projects, resulting in fewer rental units overall.

Bill 7 does not provide zoning exemptions. Projects are limited to zones where apartments are already permitted. A 60-foot height allowance is appropriate in these areas, and the additional 10 feet often enables approximately six more units per project—units that materially improve feasibility and support financing.

As proposed, Bill 17 reverses recent progress and works against the goal of increasing rental housing supply. If the Council is serious about addressing O'ahu's housing crisis, legislation must reflect development economics and be informed by those who have successfully delivered Bill 7 projects. Otherwise, these amendments risk worsening—not solving—the housing shortage.

Respectfully,



Cheyenne Martinez-Boyette
Commercial Real Estate Relationship Manager
Honolulu, Hawai'i

January 27, 2026

Chair Tommy Waters,

I strongly oppose Bill 17, which would repeal Bill 7.

I live in an affordable housing project on Kinau Street. There are 25 families living here, and we all get along very well. We are like a family. If it were not for this project, some of us would be homeless.

It is very hard to find affordable rental housing in Hawaii—almost impossible. This project has taken good care of us, and there are thousands of other people who need housing like this.

Please do not take away a program that helps people stay housed and safe.

Thank you for listening.

Stacey Snell



January 28, 2026

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

Re: Bill 17 Relating to affordable rental housing

Dear Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola and Members of the Council,

I am testifying in opposition to Bill 17. Of all the bills I have provided testimony on today, this is by far the most impactful and not in a good way. Most significantly this bill would accelerate the sunset date of Bill 7 by about 3 years to July 1, 2027. From a project planning and development perspective, that is an immediate suspension. In the midst of a housing crisis, ending an affordable housing plan that has proven results is the poorest sort of policy imaginable. If anything, this Council should be expanding, extending and supporting this program.

While there are other issues with this bill, most notably the height limits, the biggest problem with this bill is it's very existence. This sends a clear message of hostile intent to everyone that is working to solve this housing crisis. It sends a clear message that the City and County of Honolulu will not honor it's commitments and is a poor place to invest the capital so desperately needed to fund these projects. The very existence of this bill is a giant "CLOSED FOR BUSINESS" sign.

I know that it is unusual to defer or not advance a bill at first reading. If there were ever a time for that type of statement, this bill is it. For these reasons I stand today in opposition to Bill 17 and would ask all of you to do the same.

Sincerely,

Geena Thielen
President/RME



**HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
HONOLULU HALE
10:00 AM**

January 28, 2026

Subject: Bill 17 - Relating to Affordable Rental Housing

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

My name is Roseann Freitas, CEO of the Building Industry Association of Hawaii (BIA-Hawaii). Chartered in 1955, the Building Industry Association of Hawaii is a professional trade organization affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders, representing the building industry and its associates. BIA-Hawaii takes a leadership role in unifying and promoting the interests of the industry to enhance the quality of life for the people of Hawaii. Our members build the communities we all call home.

BIA-Hawaii is in opposition to Bill 17 (2026), which amends the repeal date of ROH Chapter 32, the City's primary framework supporting the development of affordable rental housing.

While we understand the Council's desire to periodically review and refine housing programs, establishing a firm repeal date for Chapter 32 — and advancing the sunset of these provisions — sends a concerning signal at a time when Honolulu can least afford policies that may slow or discourage housing production. BIA- Hawaii supports ongoing evaluation and improvement of affordable housing policies. However, that work can and should occur without setting a firm repeal date that risks disrupting projects in progress or discouraging new proposals.

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



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City and County of Honolulu
Honolulu City Council

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

January 28, 2026

Bill 17 — RELATING TO AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO opposes the intent of Bill 17 (2026), which amends the repeal date of ROH Chapter 32, relating to affordable rental housing, to July 1, 2027, and effective July 1, 2027, repeals related provisions to reflect the proposed July 1, 2027 repeal date for ROH Chapter 32.

We are concerned that this measure would discourage affordable housing homebuilders from building more affordable rental housing, especially at a time when our community faces a significant housing shortage. We urge the council to defer this measure and explore alternatives that would increase our housing supply so public servants, and working families in general, can remain on Oahu.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Bill 17 (2026).

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



1001 Bishop Street #625 | Honolulu, HI 96813
866-295-7282 | aarp.org/hi | hiaarp@aarp.org |
[Twitter.com/aarphawaii](https://twitter.com/aarphawaii) | facebook.com/aarphawaii

**Honolulu City Council Meeting
January 28, 2026
10:00 a.m.**

**TO: Honolulu City Council
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, AARP State Director
RE: Bill 17-Relating to Affordable Rental Housing – Strong Opposition**

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council:

I am Keali'i Lopez, State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social impact organization dedicated to empowering people fifty and older to choose how they live as they age. We advocate for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families. On behalf of our 135,000 members, thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony.

AARP Hawai'i opposes Bill 17, which would significantly weaken Honolulu's Affordable Rental Housing Program under ROH Chapter 32. Though the bill attempts to improve predictability and community compatibility, it risks undermining long-term affordable housing supply and cost stability—key priorities for older adults—unless paired with strong replacement policies.

AARP's housing policy emphasizes the importance of increasing the availability of affordable housing options for all residents, particularly older adults. Chapter 32 contributes to the creation of affordable housing units in Honolulu, thereby helping to meet the growing demand for such housing. Having affordable housing enables working families to stay together and help support older adults to age in place. This stability is essential for the well-being of our aging population. Most older adults want to age in place (at home). This is difficult to achieve without a place.

Additionally, as our young working families leave due to housing instability, the critical family infrastructure needed to care for our aging kūpuna is diminished. Who will care for our aging parents and grandparents if our sons, daughters, and grandchildren leave Hawai'i because of decreased affordable housing development?

Stable and affordable housing is a cornerstone of vibrant and resilient communities. This measure, though attempting to foster long-term community stability, does not prevent displacement caused by rising housing costs. By eliminating incentives in Chapter 32, this bill undermines development of affordable housing stock, which benefits all residents.

Hawaii's excessive cost of housing is making it increasingly unaffordable for many Honolulu residents, but especially for those at low or fixed income. These residents are more vulnerable of becoming dependent on other family members for shelter, or face homelessness. AARP/Statista analysis predicts 1,080 Honolulu residents will experience evictions. Older adults (age 65+) represent 20% of these Honolulu residents. Additionally, critical workforce residents (18-54) represent 66% of those experiencing eviction in Honolulu. This same analysis predicts 3,278 Honolulu residents will experience homelessness with the same percentage of age group representations of those experiencing evictions.

Affordable housing is not only a social good but also an economic one. Ensuring a supply of affordable housing can attract and retain a diverse workforce, support local businesses, and contribute to the overall economic health of Honolulu. Rather than decreasing incentives, more incentives are needed to accelerate the development of affordable housing in Honolulu.

AARP respectfully asks that Bill 17 be held by the Honolulu City Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong opposition to Bill 17.



KAILUA NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 31

WILLIAM M. HICKS, CHAIRMAN • 923 AKUMU STREET • KAILUA, HAWAII, 96734-4004
PHONE (808) 230-2293 • E-MAIL billhicksknb@gmail.com

January 27, 2026

Councilmember Tommy Waters
Chairman, Honolulu City Council
tommy.waters@honolulu.gov

Subject: Kailua Neighborhood Board Testimony on Bill 17 (2026) -- Relating to Affordable Rental Housing

Aloha Chair Waters,

Bill 17 (2026) states "The Council further finds that ROH Chapter 32 currently provides for a maximum height of 60 feet for affordable rental housing projects, which has been the subject of community opposition when the project site's underlying zoning district specifies a maximum height that is less than 60 feet, or when the project is located within a special district that provides for specific height limits". The bill would amend allowable building height to the "Lesser of the maximum height for the underlying zoning district or special district, or 60 feet."

Bill 17 (2026) is consistent with positions previously established by the Kailua Neighborhood Board (KNB) with regard to building height.

At the March 7, 2019 KNB Regular Meeting, the KNB adopted the following motion: "The Kailua Neighborhood Board opposes City Council Bill 7 (2019) Affordable Rental Housing, which changes the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) to reduce current restrictions and permit affordable housing in apartment, apartment mixed use, business, and business mixed use zoning districts and all other zoning districts in which public elementary, intermediate and high schools are permitted in Kailua."

The KNB letter to the City Council discussing the rationale stated "It was emphasized by many board members that the KNB is not opposed to Affordable Rental Housing in Kailua, and would welcome more. The opposition is strictly focused on the Land Use Ordinance relaxations that are not compatible with the character of Kailua, such as allowing a building height of 60' when other buildings in Kailua are limited to 40' and not requiring off-street parking to be provided with the housing units when parking availability is already limited in Kailua."

On May 4, 2023, the KNB unanimously approved the following resolution: "The Kailua Neighborhood Board opposes the 60 feet height proposed for the development at 330 Ku'ulei Road because it violates the 40 feet height limit for commercial zones in the Ko'olaupoko Sustainable Communities Plan."

The KNB letter to the City Council discussing the rationale stated "Oahu's several different Development and Sustainable Communities Plans are tailored for each part of Oahu. Each Development and Sustainable Communities Plan has been passed by the City Council as an approved ordinance and become law. Specifically, the Ko'olaupoko Sustainable Communities Plan was passed by the City Council in 2017 as Ordinance 17-42 and became law. The nearby Meridian East condominiums at 14 Aulike Street in Kailua built in 1967 were a large part of the impetus for the 40 feet height limit for commercial zones in the Ko'olaupoko Sustainable Communities Plan. Section 3.6.2.3 addressing Regional Town Centers (Kailua and Kāne'ohe) on page 3-53 states "Architectural Character and Building Massing. Limit building heights to 40 feet, as is currently established, with height setback transitions from street frontages, the shoreline, and adjacent residential areas." The Kailua Neighborhood Board contends that applicants must follow the laws articulated in the Ko'olaupoko Sustainable Communities Plan. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of a Sustainable Communities Plan ordinance for a particular region of Oahu (such as 17-42) and a general island-wide ordinance (such as 19-8), as it pertains to the particular conflict (such as building height), the law specified in the more localized region should take precedence. It must be noted that the Kailua Neighborhood Board does not oppose affordable housing units at 330 Ku'ulei Road in Kailua. It is a very appropriate location for apartments. The concern is over the building height."

During City Council deliberations in 2023, former Councilmember Calvin Say noted the dilemma when one law enacted by the City Council (Sustainable Communities Plan ordinance for a particular region of Oahu such as 17-42, 40 feet height limit) conflicts with another law enacted by the City Council (19-8, 60 feet height limit).

Bill 17 (2026) would resolve that conflict.

Mahalo for your consideration!

Aloha,

William M. Hicks

William M. Hicks

Chairman, Kailua Neighborhood Board

Copy to:

Councilmember Andrea Tupola

atupola@honolulu.gov

Councilmember Matt Weyer

mweyer@honolulu.gov

Councilmember Esther Kia'aina

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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

HAWAII CHAPTER

January 28, 2026

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

RE: **Bill 17- RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**
Hearing date: January 28, 2026, at 10:00 AM

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of NAIOP Hawaii with **Opposition on Bill 17- 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 17 effectively repeals Bill 7 projects by amending the repeal date of ROH Chapter 32. NAIOP Hawaii is gravely concerned with the repeal of a housing development tool during the City's housing crisis.

The Bill 7 program has been in place since 2019 and has already resulted in the creation of nearly 1,000 income-restricted rental apartments on O'ahu. It represents one of the City's most successful tools for producing affordable rental housing without direct public subsidy. Bill 17 would systematically dismantle this program by:

- Repealing the Bill 7 framework and all associated incentives;
- Reducing allowable height limits in certain areas based on underlying zoning;
- Establishing a maximum building area of 80% of the property;
- Repealing real property tax exemptions; and
- Reinstating previously waived fees, including permit and wastewater fees.

In practical effect, any Bill 7 project not already far along in planning would be prohibited by the proposed 2027 repeal date. Even before taking effect, the introduction of this bill undermines public confidence in the Bill 7 program by signaling instability and uncertainty in the City's housing policy environment.

It took nearly ten years of careful policy development and stakeholder engagement to create and implement Bill 7. Repealing it now would abandon one of the few proven pathways for producing affordable rental housing at scale. At a time when Honolulu is experiencing a severe housing shortage and escalating rents, this proposal sends the wrong message. Rather than eliminating a successful housing tool, the City should be building upon it, refining it where necessary, and ensuring its continued effectiveness.

This proposal reflects opposition to housing growth rather than a data-driven housing strategy. Yielding to “not-in-my-backyard” pressures will predictably result in reduced housing supply, higher rental costs, and greater displacement of local residents.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Council to reject Bill 17 and preserve the Bill 7 program as a viable and stable pathway for producing affordable rental housing. NAIOP Hawaii appreciates the City’s commitment to collaborating on this issue and looks forward to working together.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ken K. Hayashida". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ken" and the last name "Hayashida" clearly legible.

Ken Hayashida, President
NAIOP Hawaii

January 28, 2026

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

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

RE: Bill 17 (2026) — Relating to Affordable Rental Housing

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the City Council,

My name is Trevor Nagamine, and I am a resident of Mililani. I am also a member of Neighborhood Board No. 25 (Mililani/Waipio/Melemanu); however, I am submitting this testimony as an individual, and this testimony does not reflect an official position of Neighborhood Board No. 25. I am writing today to oppose Bill 17.

Bill 17 would make it more difficult to construct affordable housing on O'ahu. Given the extreme shortage of housing in general, this bill would force more families to move away from Hawai'i for want of a home.

I respectfully ask that the City Council defer Bill 17. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Mahalo,

Trevor Nagamine



Chair Tommy Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council
Re: Strong Opposition to Bill 17

My name is Timothy Lyons, and I strongly oppose Bill 17.

I have been selling building materials to construction companies here in Hawai'i for over 40 years. During most of that time, we did not see new affordable housing rental projects being built for lower-income residents on O'ahu. Overregulation and bad legislative policies repeatedly stopped these projects from moving forward. I have watched this happen again and again over decades.

Bill 7 finally changed that. For the first time in many years, we are seeing brand-new affordable rental housing being built for lower AMI residents. These projects are starting to rise throughout Honolulu, and they are making a real difference.

Poor people suffer when housing policies fail. Bill 17 would take us backward and slow or stop the progress we are finally seeing.

I respectfully ask the Council to oppose Bill 17 and allow more of these affordable housing projects to move forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.


Timothy Lyons