

BILL022(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 111

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Mar 25, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Emily Perry	Email: emily.perry@tpl.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Trust for Public Land	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 23, 2026 @ 11:10 AM



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1164 Bishop St., Ste. 1512
Honolulu, HI 96813
tpl.org

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March 23, 2026

City and County of Honolulu - City Council
Budget Committee

530 S King St.
Honolulu Hale, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

SUBMITTED VIA ONLINE TESTIMONY

Subject: Letter of Support for Bill 22(26) Relating to the Executive Operating Budget and Program for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 To June 30, 2027

Dear Budget Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Budget Committee members,

The Trust for Public Land strongly supports the City and County of Honolulu's (City) Bill 22(26) Relating to the Executive Operating Budget and Program for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 To June 30, 2027, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Budget ([D-0176\(26\)](#)). A community's quality of life and health is in large part determined by the built and natural environment in which the community lives.

DPR has 403 properties with a wide range of roles and responsibilities including to maintain and operate parks and recreational facilities under City jurisdiction; develop and implement programming; plant, prune, and maintain shade trees in city streets, parks and recreational facilities; maintain and operate the City's botanical and community gardens; and support private tree planting through its community forestry program.

Established in 1972, Trust for Public Land's (TPL's) mission is to create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. TPL has been working in Hawaii since the 1970s and has completed 56 projects across the state, protecting over 79,000 acres of land, establishing over \$350 million for land conservation in Hawaii, and building capacity of local land trusts and nonprofits to own and steward land. In late 2020, TPL launched our national Parks for People program here in Hawaii with a pilot project at 'A'ala Park and has been working with DPR to implement a grass-roots community-based park improvements for a shared vision for 'A'ala Park.

High quality, close-to-home parks and green spaces are vital to community health, resilience, and social cohesion. TPL created the ParkScore index as a national comparison of park systems across the 100 most populated cities in the United States. In 2025, the City and County of Honolulu ranked 38th ([source](#)), scoring well on acreage, access, and equity factors, but falling short of the national median on financial investment. For investment, the City scored 39 out of 100 points, with a total of \$131 per capita is spent each year on publicly accessible parks and recreation. Comparatively, the top ten cities had a median spending of \$312 per capita. Parks and green spaces are highly effective in promoting physical, mental, environmental, and improving social cohesion and resiliency. Yet park departments often struggle to secure sufficient funding to create, maintain, and program these spaces.

DPR's FY27 budget focuses on retaining the level of diverse services that allow community to connect with people and place. It also addresses much-needed facility

maintenance concerns that are essential to providing safe, usable, and aesthetically pleasing areas for residents and visitors. The budget additionally proposes a systematized approach to tracking and evaluating park assets allowing for long-term management and strategic planning.

We extend our full support to the Department of Parks and Recreation's FY2027 budget to support the maintenance and care of O'ahu's public parks and facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Perry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Emily" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Perry".

Emily Perry
Parks for People Program Manager
Trust for Public Land