BILL030(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 125

*HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & PARKS (HHP)

***HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & PARKS (HHP) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Mar 31, 2026 @ 01:00 PM

Support: 3

Oppose: 2

I wish to comment: 1

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Carey Johnson	quarkcsj@hotmail.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Custom Island Tours, LLC	I wish to comment	Mar 25, 2026 @ 09:11 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

Concerning the rules against tour companies and commercial activities. I believe that they have created unintended consequences. Since tour companies are now banned from practically all of the beaches and beach parks, more tourists are taking Rental Cars or Turo Cars to get to these beaches. Rental cars usually have between 2 to 4 people in them, so an average of 3 people per rental car. Each 15 passenger tour van could take up to 5 rental cars off of the roads. Even more for 25 and 60 passenger buses. But as the tourists learn that that tour companies can't take them to the beaches that they want to go to, they opt to go by rental car instead. Tour companies usually have an agenda they're trying to stick to, the circle island route is about 120 miles, and they're trying to do that, with about 15 stops, in 8 hours, so they don't stay in any one place for very long. However tourists in a rental car are gonna pack a lunch and lay out a towel and stay on the beach for a couple of hours, meanwhile taking up parking spaces for a car that had an average of 3 people in it.

In February of this year, there was a day when I was driving and the traffic was backed up from Laniakea all the way to the traffic light by Hale'iwa, thru that light, and all the way to the next light at the bottom of the hill from Dole; and February isn't even a peak month for tourism.

Since the passing of these laws, especially the ones that included the beaches on the North Shore that went into effect in 2022, my business has shrunk from 7 tour vans and 11 employees, to 3 tour vans and 3 employees. Our reviews are still 5-Stars on Google and TripAdvisor, but our business has decreased more than 50%. In 2023, we paid $20,204.28 to the City in GET tax, so it's ironic that we're not even allowed to stop at most beach parks. Obviously, we're paying less in GET now that our business has decrease by over half.

After Bill 38 (2021) was passed, I emailed the Parks Director, and Council Member Waters, asking for a list of the beach parks that we Are allowed to go to. It took 10 months and 1 day to get a response back, and it was a list of 36 City Beach Parks, most of them undesirable, without even a sand beach or a place to swim.

However, even if we wanted to go to some of those beach parks, the new Parks Rules that was passed in 2020, makes it not worth the effort of even applying for permits because it is so restrictive. They divided the island into 5 districts, one of which doesn't even have a beach park, so 4 districts where you can only apply for a Commercial Stop permit for only 1 district on the island, and we can't have more than 1 vehicle have a permit for any of each of the 4 districts. So only 1 vehicle per district is allowed to stop, and that vehicle can't have a capacity of more than 15 people. And we have to re-apply each month, with the Whole stack of documents each time, for each permit. Prior to the 2020 rules, you would apply for 1 permit that was good for all of your vehicles, for all of the beach parks (except for the ones that were banned). The permit just made sure that you had commercial insurance, vehicle registrations, etc…

In addition to the City & County beach parks that tour companies are banned from, which includes 10 miles of the east coast, from Makau'u to Castle Point in Kailua, and 8 miles of the North Shore from Sunset Point to Kaiaka Point in Waialua, tour companies are also banned from all State Parks, which includes, Ka'iwi State Wayside (Makapu'u lighthouse trail), La'ie Point Wayside, Malaekana State Park, Kahana Bay State Park, Ka'ena Point State Park (both on the North and West sides),

Pu'u Ualaka State Park (Tantalus lookout), etc...

Basically, the only places that we are allowed to go to now are businesses like Dole, and Tropical Farms that have their own private property parking lots.

They've raised the price we have to pay at the Pali Lookout to $15 for a 7-passenger van, and a 15 passenger is $30, and we now have to pay to go to the commercial lot at Hanauma Bay were we are by law limited to 15 minutes, but we have to pay $10 for a 7-passenger van, and $20 for a 15 passenger van. And Diamond Head is ridiculous.

The big problem that started all of this is the lack of enforcement. Even in the 10 years that I was actually applying for the Commercial Stops permit every month, not once has there been anyone at any of these parks to even ask if I had a permit.

So then you get people breaking the rules like one company bringing Five 25 passenger buses at the same time to Kokololio, plus a couple of 60 passenger buses at the same time and on a Sunday, as you saw in the video that was submitted as testimony when they banned Tour Companies specifically, from Kokololio Beach Park. Btw, that company that had the 25 passenger buses, became so successful from breaking the rules, that they upgraded to 60 passenger buses.

At the City Council meeting for Bill 19 (2023) where the Parks Director put forward a plan to allow tour companies back in to some of the places that they were banned from, but under a strict permitting process, she said that if we keep banning them little by little, eventually they will be banned from everywhere. The group of people that showed up to testify against this, shouted, Yes, Let's do that, Let's ban them from Everywhere.

I saw an article that the City has a plan to spend several millions of taxpayer dollars, to build a parking lot in Hale'iwa and force the rental cars to park there, and then the only way to get to the beaches on the North Shore is to take their trolley that they plan to create. This huge parking lot smacks in the face the mantra of Keep The Country Country. What's ironic is that this would be doing the same service that tour companies used to do, at no expense to the tax payers; in fact tour companies were paying taxes to provide this service, that is, before they were banned from doing so.

During Covid, I kept hearing the HTA and others saying that they want to change the way we do tourism, and that they want to Immerse the tourists in the Hawaiian Culture. I find this harder to do now that we are banned from most of the places where I used to tell the stories, history, and legends of Hawaii.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Alex Wilson	info@oahuphotographytours.com	96815
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Oahu Photo Tours	Oppose	Mar 26, 2026 @ 03:34 PM

Testimony:

We do not support additional regulation that creates more barriers for local tour operators who are already licensed, insured, and heavily taxed.

However, if the City moves forward with this bill, it is critical that the system is designed in a way that reflects how legitimate tour businesses actually operate.

From our experience, the current permitting structure does not align with real world tour operations. In many cases,

permits are effectively limited to one vehicle per park, which does not work for companies running structured tours with multiple vehicles and consistent daily schedules.

This creates a situation where compliant businesses are restricted, while unpermitted operators continue to operate without consequence.

If regulation is going to be implemented, it needs to be done correctly.

Not all commercial activity has the same impact. A small group of two to four people does not have the same footprint as a structured tour operation, and they should not be treated the same under a single system.

We strongly encourage the City to consider a tiered approach based on group size and operational scale. This would allow for more appropriate regulation while still supporting legitimate businesses.

Additionally, the City should consider:

- Allowing permits that cover multiple vehicles under one licensed operator
- Creating designated commercial loading and parking areas within parks
- Verifying that operators are properly licensed, insured, and authorized to operate
- Focusing enforcement on illegal operators rather than restricting compliant businesses

Most tour companies operate in a small number of consistent locations. The system should allow for structured, repeatable access rather than limiting operations in a way that does not reflect how tours actually run.

We all share the goal of protecting our parks and managing visitor impact. The solution is not to restrict responsible operators, but to create a system that supports safe, legal, and well managed commercial use.

Name: Ted Kefalas	Email: tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 30, 2026 @ 08:46 AM
Name: Sherry Menor	Email: jkiyabu@cochawaii.org	Zip: 96744
Representing: Chamber of Commerce Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Mar 30, 2026 @ 04:24 PM
Name: Kimeona Kane	Email: Kimeonakane@gmail.com	Zip: 96795
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Oppose	Mar 30, 2026 @ 10:34 PM

Testimony:

Aloha kākou,

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my thoughts on this item. While I absolutely support and want to see continued elevating of farmers markets across many communities, I fear that this may pose a problem for a very important stance that Waimānalo has taken against commercial business in our parks. If this is allowed, it may open up a review of the current law that supports our community position, which could weaken the efforts that has spanded years. There could be potential for this to serve other communities, and I encourage them to seeks these opportunities, however I do believe that other options can and do exist, where Farmers Markets may take place.

Mahalo nui,

Kimeona Kane

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kathleen Pahinui	pahinuik001@hawaii.rr.com	96791
Representing:	**Position:**	**Submitted:**
Self	Support	Mar 31, 2026 @ 11:29 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Committee Chair Tupola and Committee Members -

I strongly support Bill 30 to allow farmers markets in under-utilized parks. I also support the proposed amendments submitted by DPR Director Thielen.

Mahalo,

Kathleen

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Removing barriers to Hawaii's prosperity

March 31, 2026, 1 p.m.
Honolulu Hale

To: Honolulu City Council Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks
Andria Tupola, Chair
Augie Tulba, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: Bill 30 (2026) — RELATING TO PUBLIC PARKS

Aloha Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** Bill 30 (2026), which would allow farmers markets to operate in city parks with a permit from the Honolulu Department of Parks and Recreation.

Farmers markets and most other commercial activities are not currently allowed within city parks. Certain recreational activities, such as camping and sports leagues, can use park facilities with a permit, and this legislation would add farmers markets to the list.

Selling food or homemade wares at a farmers market is a low-cost, low-risk way for people to turn an idea into a business. This measure would give more Oahu residents the opportunity to start up small businesses and participate in the tourism industry.

Grassroot welcomes this and other legislation that would lower barriers to entrepreneurship.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Testimony to the Honolulu City Council Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks
Councilmember Andria Tupola, Chair
Councilmember Augie Tulba, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 1:00PM

RE: Bill 030(26) Relating to Public Parks

Aloha e Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, and Members of the Council:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports Bill 030(26) which amends provisions relating to the use of City parks for farmers' markets.

Bill 030(26) aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for 21st Century Agriculture. This pillar prioritizes supporting the economic viability of agriculture careers and reducing operating expenses. This ordinance directly supports small, local farmers and value-added producers by clarifying that farmers' markets are recognized permissible uses of public parks under the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu. By removing ambiguity in park permitting and incorporating farmers' markets into the definition of allowable activities, the City will increase market access for producers, allowing them to reach local consumers directly and lower operating costs derived from transportation.

As cost pressures continue to mount in Hawaii, Honolulu's food and economic security have never been more important. This ordinance advances both economic resilience and community health. Increasing market access improves the viability of operating an agricultural business. This encourages farmers to become more productive, further reducing the City's reliance on imported goods and creating more jobs. Secondly, by increasing the community's access to these fresh local goods, the Council can encourage healthier diets and improve utilization of other park equipment. Parks play an important role in Honolulu's community by advancing public health, and thus, the health of the local workforce---the most basic component of the economy. This ordinance is well-aligned with the character of parks as community health infrastructure. Allowing farmers markets to be permitted within parks only contributes to this strengthening and diversification of this intent.

For these reasons we respectfully ask to pass Bill 030(26). Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030

Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.