BILL022(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 142

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Apr 15, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 4

Oppose: 3

I wish to comment: 5

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Judith Stilgenbauer	judith.stilgenbauer@gmail.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 10, 2026 @ 10:31 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jonathan Frye	jfrye@shopohawaii.org	96782
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers	Support	Apr 14, 2026 @ 09:20 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ted Kefalas	tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	I wish to comment	Apr 14, 2026 @ 09:36 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Edward Fujioka	puunui@msn.com	96818-2792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 14, 2026 @ 11:12 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kristine Pagano	bryan.mick@doh.hawaii.gov	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Disability and Communication Access Board	Support	Apr 14, 2026 @ 02:40 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Selena Costa	leatherandlei@gmail.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 14, 2026 @ 06:35 PM

Testimony:

Aloha!

My name is Selena Costa, and I am a new small business owner and the President & CEO of Leather & Lei. I wanted to share my experience and why programs like the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) truly matter.

Last year, I was part of the Idea2Biz cohort, and honestly, if it wasn't for that program, I don't think I would have been able to move forward with opening my business the way I did. Starting a business can feel overwhelming, especially when you don't have the right guidance, resources, or connections. That program gave me real support and direction when I needed it the most.

What really stood out to me was how supportive the program was. It wasn't just general information—they brought in guest speakers who were actually experienced and successful in their fields. We had people come in and teach us about things like trademarking, marketing, and other important parts of building a real business. These were things I didn't fully understand before, and having access to that kind of knowledge made a huge difference for me.

They also connected us with the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce and gave us a free membership, which opened the door to networking and being part of a business community. That kind of access is not something everyone can easily get, and it really helped me build relationships and feel supported as a new business owner.

Programs like this don't just give information—they build confidence, provide real tools, and create opportunities for people who are trying to better themselves, especially here in Hawai'i. It helped me take my idea and turn it into something real—something I can call my own, build generational wealth from, and to make an impact in my community. It shows that everyday people like me can turn their dreams into reality.

Taking away funding from OER would mean fewer opportunities for people who are trying to start and grow something of their own. I am truly grateful I had that opportunity, and I hope others can continue to have that same chance.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I am living proof that programs like OER work, and I strongly urge you to continue investing in them
Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Selena Costa
President & CEO, Leather & Lei

Name: Edward Fujioka	Email: puunui@msn.com	Zip: 96818-2792
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 14, 2026 @ 07:41 PM

Name: Eliza Talbot	Email: eliza8482@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 14, 2026 @ 10:07 PM

Testimony:
Aloha Council Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Eliza Talbot, and I am the current Chair of the Economic Revitalization Commission and a resident of Honolulu

District 3. I wish to provide comments regarding the Council's proposal to reduce funding to the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) in the executive operating budget, Bill 22 (2026).

I have spent much of my professional and personal life supporting local businesses and economic resilience within the state of Hawai'i. I know first-hand the important work this office, and economic development offices throughout the state, contribute to support our local business communities.

OER is critical to maintaining O'ahu's economic stability during these volatile times, thus I urge the Council work with the Administration and Commission to build and enhance OER.

Why OER Matters to O'ahu

(1) Statewide, our small businesses and our workforce benefit and rely upon strong county-level economic development support.

Hawai'i Island, Maui, and Kaua'i County each have well-funded and fully staffed offices of Economic Development AND strong economic development board entities. Like our OER office, these entities provide critical support for their local economies by procuring grant funding, supporting workforce development, providing technical business assistance, and hosting invaluable networking and partnership opportunities.

O'ahu is the economic center of our state, and without a strong county OER office, the only government entity navigating economic development policy for O'ahu would be the State Dept. of Business and Economic Development (DBEDT). The State does great work from a macro-level to support economic policy changes, but it cannot and should not be leaned upon to understand and address the micro-level challenges and opportunities of each unique county and island community.

Since its inception, OER has served as a critical bridge between Honolulu Hale and the diverse economic sectors and cultural groups that keep O'ahu running. OER effectively serves as one of the City's main ambassadors by directly matching community members with tangible city support and economic relief. For many "mom-and-pop" shops, OER is the only accessible, local point of contact that can help small businesses navigate complex government bureaucracy. Frankly, in some instances, interactions with OER staff may be the best interactions local businesses have with government.

Examples of OER's effective local programs include the O'ahu Business Recovery Grant program, the rental and utility relief program, the agriculture grant program, the Idea2Biz entrepreneur program, and the OER outreach team, which visits hundreds of local businesses each year throughout every part of the island.

(2) By design, OER is the best suited City agency to effectively support small businesses during Disasters and

Emergencies.

OER, and similar county offices, are the most nimble and effective at offering business relief and resources when disasters impact our business communities. These offices are typically aligned with the Mayor's or Managing director's office with appointed employees that can respond in an instant to an emergency. For example, after our recent Kona Low Storms, OER staff were some of the first city employees on-the-ground with recovery efforts. Additionally, as seen during the pandemic, OER serves as one of the City's main coordinators for recovery services and relief. This is especially relevant now that the state's federal disaster declaration was approved. Small Business Administration (SBA) funds will soon be available to our businesses and OER is ready to assist our community find and apply for these funds. OER is already providing multilingual resources to our community to ensure relief efforts are equitably accessible. OER supports city community assistance centers and mobile clinics and will distribute direct funding to impacted farmers with the new Emergency Farmer Relief Program.

OER is also in the best position to build business resilience before disasters strike. The Lahaina fires and Kona Low Storms show us that we need to prepare for WHEN these crises happen, not IF they will happen. OER works directly with organizations like the SBA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to increase access to businesses resiliency funds to prepare businesses BEFORE crises occur. Without a strong OER, the city loses its proactive arm for economic strategy and recovery. Shifting back to a reactive stance is a dangerous move in a volatile global economy.

(3) OER has been instrumental in navigating federal grants and local resources.

In 2023, the Commission identified a significant underutilization of federal grant opportunities by the city. Nationwide, most large cities have dedicated grant writing staff to support infrastructure and programming gaps in municipal budgets. Honolulu's size and scope warrant greater access to federal funding so OER took steps to address this by contracting a dedicated team to assist OER in identifying, pursuing, and securing federal grants.

The OER now has grant support staff – increasing grant opportunities for the entire City administration. OER also successfully paired with the State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, to support Hawai'i's Economic Development District (EDD) application in 2024. This unlocked federal funds for economic and disaster recovery projects, of which 80% typically go only to designated EDDs. Hawai'i received its EDD designation and in 2025, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded $199,999 to OER to enhance disaster preparedness and recovery efforts for O'ahu's small businesses. Recent grant awards, supported by OER, have also made it possible for Honolulu to hire federal liaison staff, thereby increasing exposure to additional federal funding opportunities. Now that this infrastructure is in place, grant procurement can become one of OER's most important roles.

Oahu's Businesses and Workforce will Feel the Impact of a Reduced OER

I respectfully ask the Council to work with us to build and enhance OER. The alternative could diminish Honolulu's

standing and eligibility for state and federal funding and important partnerships. The burden of economic coordination will likely fall on overextended departments and overburdened employees. This could lead to reduced capacity to apply for grant funding, fragmented communication between the City and the business community, reduced responsiveness and services for local businesses, and gaps in innovation and equitable access to city, state and federal resources.

I urge the Council to maintain full funding for OER to ensure a prosperous, diversified, and resilient future for all Honolulu residents.
Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Eliza Talbot
Chair, Economic Revitalization Commission, City and County of Honolulu

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kiran Polk	kiranpolk@gmail.com	96707
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Kapolei Chamber of Commerce	Oppose	Apr 15, 2026 @ 12:08 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Shavone Lave	s.lave@thewedc.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Wai'anae Economic Development Council	I wish to comment	Apr 15, 2026 @ 08:31 AM

Testimony:
Aloha e Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Shavone Lave, and I am a resident of District 1 in Honolulu County and a Program Administrator for a 501(c)(3), Wai'anae Economic Development Council. I am writing in strong support of continued and sustained funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER).

Through my work in Waiʻanae, I see every day what it means for families to navigate the realities of living in Honolulu. Many of the individuals we serve are working multiple jobs, supporting extended ʻohana, and still finding it difficult to keep up with the rising cost of living. These are not people who lack work ethic or vision—they are people who need access, opportunity, and systems that meet them where they are.

That is where OER plays a critical role.

OER ensures that resources are not just available, but accessible to the communities who need them most. It creates

pathways for residents to move from survival to stability, and from stability toward self-determination. Without this office, many of our communities, especially those that have been historically underserved, would continue to face barriers to participating in economic opportunities that are often out of reach.

One of the clearest reflections of this impact is the Idea2Biz cohort. What may seem like a small business program is, in reality, a lifeline for many of our residents. Participants are not just exploring entrepreneurship, they are building additional income streams that help them pay for rent, food, childcare, and everyday needs.

In a place like Honolulu, where the cost of living continues to rise, having the ability to generate even a few hundred dollars more a month can make a meaningful difference for a family. For some, this is the difference between staying afloat and falling behind.

Beyond income, programs like Idea2Biz restore something deeper—confidence, agency, and the belief that it is possible to build something of your own. We see participants shift from uncertainty to ownership, from informal work to structured businesses, and from isolation to connection within a broader network of support.

This is what economic revitalization truly looks like. It is not just about large-scale development—it is about investing in people, in their ideas, and in their ability to care for their families and communities.

At WEDC, we often speak about kuleana, our shared responsibility to ensure that our communities are not only surviving, but thriving in ways that are grounded in who we are. OER reflects that same commitment. It is an investment in people, in place, and in long-term resilience.

Reducing funding to OER would not just impact programs; it would impact real people who are working hard to create better futures for themselves and their ʻohana.

I respectfully urge the Council to continue supporting and strengthening the Office of Economic Revitalization, so that it may continue to serve as a bridge between opportunity and access for our communities.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Shavone Lave
Program Administrator
Wai'anae Economic Development Council

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lei Riedel	l.riedel@pakiniloanfund.org	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Pakini Loan Fund	Oppose	Apr 15, 2026 @ 08:53 AM
Name: Josiah Medal	Email: jmedcaln@gmail.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 15, 2026 @ 09:38 AM

The Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair
and Presiding Officers and Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Suite 202
Honolulu, HI, 96813

April 6, 2026

Testimony re: Bill 22 (2026), CD1 – Executive Operating Budget and Program for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Dear Chair Waters and Councilmembers:

My name is Judith Stilgenbauer. I am a Professor and Director of the Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) program at UH Mānoa and a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). I am testifying in my personal capacity and as a member of the Board of Parks and Recreation ("Board").

In my role on the Board, I have observed firsthand the Department of Parks and Recreation's (DPR) commitment to improving our public parks and their facilities in resilient and sustainable ways—benefitting the community.

I am writing in strong support of DPR's proposed FY2027 Operating Budget. The proposed budget initiatives, that were presented by Director Laura Thielen, will support critical priorities, including repairing important park components and facilities, such as roofs and pathways, and more efficiently managing assets. These efforts will address community concerns about facility conditions and deferred maintenance.

I continue to support DPR's goals and strategic priorities, which are essential to preserving the access and safety of park facilities and creating resilient and sustainable public open spaces. The requested funding will help ensure that DPR can effectively carry out its responsibilities and meet the needs of residents across O'ahu.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration and full funding of DPR's FY2027 Operating Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

J. Stilgenbauer

Judith Stilgenbauer
Board Member
Board of Parks and Recreation

April 15, 2026

Honolulu City Council
Support for Bill 22 (2026), Relating to the Executive Operating Budget and Program for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

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

The **State of Hawai'i Organization of Police Officers (SHOPO) supports Bill 22, CD1.** We strongly support amendment which were made to increase police officer retention and reduce vacancies by implementing recommendations of the Honolulu Police Department Retention and Vacancy Task Force.

The Task Force's findings make clear that the current staffing challenges facing the department are both real and persistent. After reviewing data from 2021 through 2025 on uniformed and civilian personnel, hiring and separation trends, and overall operating conditions, the Task Force identified two primary and interrelated drivers of the shortage: recruitment and retention. Together, these factors significantly affect the department's ability to maintain adequate staffing levels and ensure consistent, reliable public safety services.

Importantly, the Task Force emphasized that recruitment and retention are not isolated issues. They directly influence one another. Challenges in attracting new officers are compounded when experienced personnel leave the department, creating a cycle that is difficult to reverse without targeted intervention. This dynamic underscores the need for a comprehensive approach that strengthens both the pipeline of incoming officers and the department's ability to retain those already serving.

To address these concerns, the Task Force outlined a series of potential actions aimed at reducing vacancies and improving retention outcomes. These recommendations are grounded in proven strategies, many of which have been successfully implemented in other jurisdictions or build upon existing efforts already underway within the department. Collectively, they represent a practical and achievable roadmap to stabilize and strengthen the workforce.

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan Frye – Vice President
State of Hawai'i Organization of Police Officers (SHOPO)

GRASSROOT INSTITUTE OF HAWAII

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Honolulu, HI 96813
808-864-1776
info@grassrootinstitute.org

Removing barriers to Hawaii's prosperity

April 15, 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 22 (2026), CD1 — RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OPERATING BUDGET AND PROGRAM FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2026, TO JUNE 30, 2027

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

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **offers comments** on Bill 22 (2026), CD1, which would allocate and appropriate funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Grassroot appreciates the fiscal prudence that the proposed budget represents overall and encourages the Council to identify additional areas in which city operations can be slimmed down or made more efficient.

The original draft of the bill called for $3.803 billion in non-federal funds, and the current draft would allocate $3.809 billion in non-federal funds — a roughly $6 million increase. The enacted fiscal 2025-2026 budget contained $3.766 billion in non-federal dollars, which would make the current draft of the bill a 1.13% increase over the enacted 2025-2026 budget.

This increase is slightly below the inflation rate over the past year. Since March 2025, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Hawaii increased by 3.7%, driven partially by surging energy prices.[1] Meanwhile, the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism estimates real personal income growth was 2.1% in 2025 and is expected to be 1.9% in 2026.[2]

[1] "Consumer Price Index, Honolulu Area — March 2026," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 10, 2026.
[2] "DBEDT Projects 1.7 Percent Growth for 2026," Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, March 12, 2026.

However, DBEDT also anticipates the state's economy to remain sluggish in 2026 and 2027, with a gross domestic product growth rate of just 1.7% and 1.8%, respectively.[3]

Grassroot also commends the Council for seeking to pare back duplicative services and slim down government operations. Defunding some of the city's more than 2,000 vacant positions is a great start,[4] as is reducing funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization, which a recent city audit pointed out has not met its Charter-mandated goals.[5]

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

[3] Ibid.
[4] "Lapsed Funds and Vacancy Reports," Memo from Tommy Waters to Kiana Pascal, March 9, 2026.
[5] "Audit of the Office of Economic Revitalization," Honolulu City Auditor, Report No. 26-01, January 2026.

April 14, 2026

Testimony of Eddie Fujioka

HESD Budget

Testimony – BILL 22 (26) FY27 Budget

Subject: Please Add Dedicated Funding for Mandatory First Responder MentalHealth & Wellness Program

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

My name is Eddie Fujioka, I am a retired EMS District Chief and former paramedic. I am submitting testimony today because I am deeply concerned that, once again, the FY27 budget contains **no dedicated funding** for a standardized, mandatory mentalhealth and wellness program for our first responders.

Earlier this month, I watched your budget hearing and appreciated the question raised to Directors Ireland and Santee about this missing line item. Unfortunately, the response was the same one we have heard for years: that HESD relies on EAP and peer support. As someone who helped build the early peerreview system and who has spoken with national experts, I can say clearly that **peer support and EAP are not substitutes for a professional mentalhealth evaluation**. They are brief checkins, not a structured roadmap for longterm wellness.

It has now been almost **three years** since this Council passed a resolution urging the Mayor and HESD to create a robust, standardized wellness program. In that time, other cities and states have moved forward with **mandatory annual mentalhealth interviews** conducted by trained professionals. Their philosophy is simple: **"If the Chief says you go, you go."** If a responder refuses, they are placed on desk duty until they are cleared. This protects the responders, their family, their coworkers, and the public.

Honolulu already requires annual physicals for all fullduty responders. Adding a **10minute mentalhealth check** during that appointment is practical, affordable, and consistent with national best practices. It is also overdue.

Recently, while at a Kalihi clinic, a nurse shared with me that her family member — a police officer — has "changed a lot" since being first on scene for a pediatric cardiac arrest. He performed CPR until EMS and Fire arrived, but the emotional impact lingered. Friends now drive to his home just to check in and remind him he is loved and that he did everything he could. This is not an isolated story. Many responders experience delayed emotional reactions — days, weeks, or months after a traumatic event. It is human nature to put up a defense mechanism in the moment, only for the weight to surface later.

And consider what our responders have faced recently: the Salt Lake/Aliamanu fireworks explosions, the Kona low flooding and high winds, the tragic loss of a firefighter, and the loss of a lifeguard. These events take a toll that cannot be ignored.

It is also hard to overlook the contrast: the city invests heavily in CORE to support the mental and physical wellbeing of our homeless population — which is important — yet we still do not provide the same level of care for the men and women who protect our residents and visitors every day.

A mandatory annual mentalhealth and wellness program is not a luxury. It is a **basic responsibility** we owe to our first responders. It will improve longevity, reduce burnout, strengthen families, and ultimately save the city money by retaining experienced personnel.

I respectfully urge the Council to **amend the FY27 budget** to include a dedicated line item establishing a **mandatory, standardized mentalhealth and wellness program** for all first responders under HESD.

Mental health is health. Mahalo for your time and for your continued commitment to the safety of our community.

Aloha, **Eddie Fujioka** Retired EMS District Chief

DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

Ka ʻOihana Hoʻokaʻaʻike no ka Poʻe Kīnānā

1010 Richards Street, Rm. 118 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129 • (808) 204-2466 (VP)

April 15, 2026

The Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair
and Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Room 203
Honolulu, HI 96813

Regarding: Bill 22 – Relating to the Executive Operating Budget and Program for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Dear Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council:

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Relating to the Executive Operating Budget and Program for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. DCAB expresses its support for the Department of Customer Services' budget request, as the proposed funding will enable the department to effectively carry out the key activities outlined in its budget presentation.

DCAB currently has a Memorandum of Agreement with the Division of Motor Vehicles and Licensing, Department of Customer Services (CSD) to issue certain types of disability parking permits (placards), first time parking placards and the replacement of lost, stolen, or mutilated placards.

First time applicants and applicants who need a replacement of their lost, stolen, mutilated placards encounter two (2) issues, use of express windows and making an online appointment.

Regarding the first issue, in November 2023, CSD discontinued accepting walk-in applications for disability parking permits at their express windows and began to require applicants to make an appointment via the AlohaQ website. As a result, individuals with disabilities—who previously received their placards immediately after their medical appointment with proof of certification—now often wait days or even weeks for an available appointment at their designated issuing site.

As of April 14, 2026, the wait time at CSD locations is as follows:

Downtown, Kapalama, Pearlridge, Waianae – 1 day

Hawaii Kai – 2 days

Ala Moana, Windward – 7 days

Wahiawa – 8 days

Kapolei – 15 days

Secondly, in 2025, CSD ended its practice of assisting individuals who do not have internet access or who have difficulty navigating AlohaQ, with scheduling appointments by phone.

The current practice is to refer applicants to use public computers at libraries or visit City sites equipped with AlohaQ kiosks. This creates significant barriers for individuals with mobility disabilities because of transportation issues. Without a placard, individuals with disabilities are also unable to utilize accessible parking spaces to use a public computer or AlohaQ kiosk and make an appointment. In the interim, DCAB staff are making online appointments on behalf of callers who cannot use AlohaQ.

The proposed fiscal year 2027 Executive Operating Budget will allow CSD to fill 26 existing vacancies, move their call center in house, and add existing positions to staff the call center. DCAB hopes that these activities will allow CSD to revert to its prior policies of (1) processing parking permit applications at Express Windows and (2) assisting people over the phone with scheduling appointments.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Pagano

KRISTINE PAGANO
Acting Executive Director

April 14, 2026

Testimony of Edward Fujioka

Bill 22 (26)

Department of Emergency Management

In support with Recommendations/Amendments

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Council,

My name is Eddie Fujioka, and I'm testifying in support of increasing the FY27 budget for the Honolulu Department of Emergency Management with amendments. The upgrades under consideration are not "nice to have" — they are overdue investments that bring Honolulu in line with national standards for readiness, resilience, and continuity of operations.

Honolulu faces a unique risk profile: hurricanes, tsunamis, wildfires, flooding, cyber threats, and the constant possibility of masscasualty incidents. Yet our Emergency Operations Center is operating with staffing, technology, and redundancy levels that fall behind cities with similar or even lower risk.

There are three upgrades that must be funded this cycle:

1) A Fully Staffed 24/7 EOC Operations Floor

Most major U.S. cities — Los Angeles, Houston, Seattle, New York — maintain roundtheclock situational awareness. Honolulu does not. We rely heavily on the State Warning Point and surge staffing during incidents. That leaves gaps in realtime monitoring, intelligence fusion, and rapid activation. A 24/7 operations floor is not a luxury; it is the minimum standard for a city of our size and risk.

2. Modern DataFusion and Common Operating Picture Technology

During recent emergencies — from wildfires to severe weather — responders have had to piece together information from multiple systems. National best practice is a unified, realtime common operating picture that integrates:

weather and hazard data

traffic and evacuation modeling

sensor networks

public alerting

field responder inputs

integration of video cameras

radio communication – consoles

CAD software that tracks all requests, maps responders and crew

Quarterly exercises on all hazards with reviews and improvements. This exercise should include more than one event but additional hazards

Training all staff train and pass ICS 100, 200, 300, 400. Attend FEMA/SWIC training. Radio systems (Federal Must Carry Channels), Satellites, COW (Cell On Wheels)

This technology exists, and other cities use it daily. Honolulu should not be operating with fragmented or outdated systems when lives depend on minutes and clarity.

3. A Fully Functional Alternate EOC

Right now, Honolulu lacks a true, readytoactivate alternate Emergency Operations Center. National leaders maintain at least one hardened, redundant site capable of taking over instantly if the primary EOC is compromised. In a city built with limited ingress and egress, redundancy is not optional. It is essential for continuity of government and emergency response. A secondary facility is mandatory for Honolulu.

Why These Investments Matter

Every one of these upgrades directly affects:

response times

coordination between agencies

public safety

disaster recovery speed

federal reimbursement and compliance

Underfunding emergency management is always more expensive in the long run. The cost of preparedness is a fraction of the cost of failure.

Closing

Honolulu deserves an emergency management system that matches the risks we face and the expectations of our residents. These upgrades are not aspirational — they are foundational. I respectfully urge the Council to fully fund the proposed enhancements to the Emergency Management budget for FY27 and urge the Mayor, tis Council and Director to plan and budget the elements I am testifying to today.

Thank you for your time and for prioritizing the safety and resilience of our island community.

Eddie Fujioka

Honolulu City Council
830 S. King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 10:00am
City Council Chamber & via videoconference

KAPOLEI CHAMBER of COMMERCE
Working for West Oahu

RE: Bill 22 (2026), CD1 – Proposed Reduction in Funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER)

Dear Chair Waters, Vice Chair Tupola, and Councilmembers:

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director & CEO of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce. The Kapolei Chamber represents businesses throughout the Kapolei region, including Waipahu, Kapolei, ʻEwa Beach, Nānakūli, Waiʻanae, and Mākaha. We advocate on behalf of our members and the broader business community to support economic vitality and ensure West Oʻahu continues to thrive.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce strongly opposes any proposed reduction in funding for the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Economic Revitalization (OER), which provides critical support, resources, and programming to Oʻahu's small business community.

OER has been an essential partner in supporting small businesses, particularly in West Oʻahu, during one of the most challenging economic periods in recent history. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, OER's programming provided meaningful and timely assistance to entrepreneurs and small business owners navigating recovery and growth. Through its collaborations with the State Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), OER has ensured that local businesses have access to critical training, technical assistance, and resources.

One of the most impactful initiatives has been OER's Idea2Biz small business incubator program in West Oʻahu. This innovative 13-week cohort-based program was specifically designed to take early-stage ideas and transform them into viable, operating businesses through structured training, mentorship, and access to resources.
The program focused on entrepreneurs from the Waiʻanae Coast, many of whom were previously operating informal or early-stage businesses, and provided the following:

- Weekly training in entrepreneurship fundamentals, financial planning, marketing, and business development
- Personalized mentorship from experienced business professionals
- Access to a network of resource partners and business support services
- Guidance on formalizing businesses, including registration and banking relationships
- **Early-stage funding support upon completion to help launch or grow their businesses**

Importantly, **Idea2Biz accepted a limited cohort of just 20 participants, selected from a much larger pool of applicants, demonstrating both the demand for and the competitiveness of this program.**
The Kapolei Chamber has worked closely with OER on this effort, and we have seen firsthand the results. Many graduates of this program are now active Chamber members, and their businesses are not only operational but thriving. These entrepreneurs represent the future of West Oʻahu's economy, creating jobs, contributing to the tax base, and strengthening our local communities. **This is exactly the type of targeted, place based economic development that delivers real, measurable impact.**

OER has also demonstrated leadership in advancing policies that support local businesses, including championing efforts aligned with procurement opportunities that help Hawai‘i based companies compete more effectively for government contracts.

At a time when our economic climate remains uncertain and federal funding opportunities for small businesses are increasingly limited, local support systems like OER are more important than ever. The City and County of Honolulu must continue to invest in programs that directly assist our small business community, rather than reduce them.
Additionally, recent events such as the devastating flooding on the North Shore highlight the ongoing need for responsive, locally grounded economic support. OER is uniquely positioned to provide outreach, resources, and recovery assistance to affected businesses in real time.

It is also important to recognize that O‘ahu, as the state’s most populous county and economic hub, requires a strong, centralized economic development entity. Neighbor island counties benefit from well supported economic development boards and organizations that actively drive business support and growth initiatives. **O‘ahu should not fall behind in this regard, especially given the scale and complexity of our business community.**

Defunding or reducing support for OER would significantly weaken the City’s ability to serve its small businesses at a time when they need it most. These are the very businesses that drive our local economy, provide jobs for our residents, and contribute to the vibrancy of our communities.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to **maintain, if not strengthen, funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Kiran Polk
Executive Director & CEO

1001 Kamokila Boulevard, Campbell Building Suite 250, Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

Pakini
Loan Fund

Aloha Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

On behalf of the Pakini Loan Fund, I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to Bill 22, Relating to the Executive Operating Budget and Program for Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

The Pakini Loan Fund, a nonprofit 501(c)3 emerging Native Community Development Financial Institution (N-CDFI), is dedicated to supporting small businesses and underserved entrepreneurs across O‘ahu by providing access to capital, technical assistance, and pathways to long-term economic stability. Our work is closely aligned with the City’s broader goals of economic diversification, resilience, and inclusive growth.

We are deeply concerned about the proposed reduction of $1.6 million in funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER). This cut represents a significant step backward at a time when many local businesses are still recovering from economic disruptions like the Kona Lows and facing ongoing challenges, including rising costs, workforce shortages, and limited access to financing.

The Office of Economic Revitalization plays a critical role in supporting programs that directly benefit small businesses and local entrepreneurs, many of whom rely on partnerships with organizations like ours. A reduction of this magnitude will inevitably constrain OER’s ability to deliver essential services, invest in community-based initiatives, and foster equitable economic opportunities.

For the clients we serve, majority Native Hawaiian and low-to-moderate income entrepreneurs, these programs are not optional; they are foundational. Reduced capacity at OER will translate into fewer resources, diminished outreach, and ultimately, fewer opportunities for local businesses to start, grow, and sustain themselves.

At a time when Honolulu should be strengthening its commitment to economic resilience and community-based development, this proposed cut sends the wrong signal. We urge the Council to reconsider this reduction and instead maintain or restore full funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization to ensure continued support for the small business ecosystem.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter. We appreciate your time and consideration.

Me ka malama pono,
Lei Riedel
Executive Director
Pakini Loan Fund

Josiah N. Medal
April 14, 2026
Weyer‘s ‘26 Operating Fiscal Budget

Bill 22 “CC052(26)”; Revisal of Fiscal Budget, July 6, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Aloha, my name is Josiah Medal and I am currently an active member in community activities within District 4 where I preside. This testimony pertains to Weyer‘s fiscal operating budget in District 2. I am writing this with intent to act on allowance of salary funding to the Wahiawa Convenience Center with intent to provide employment in District 2 and connect community members across organizations, leasing of contracts to nourish community wellness with non-profit organizations such as Kāko‘o Oiwi (District 3), Kupu ‘Āina Corp (Several District Locations), and Catholic Charities (District 5) for example, lastly proposal to allot funding for improved equipment and machinery within District 2 under general funding.

These proposed budget amendments are written with good actions toward rebuilding society within all districts listed above, and it would be a gesture of attentive administration from city council. For example, during the Kona low storm meteorology by Hawaii News Now made a statement about Wahiawa dam. Tricia Watson, an interviewee of the article and Dole spokeswoman stated “As of 3 p.m., the reservoir level was reported around 82.6 feet. [...] There’s definitely some plans ahead for the Wahiawa irrigation system as a whole, and I think there’s going to be some announcements in the next coming weeks about sort of what the future of the dam and the system is going to be.” I have read Matt Weyer’s proposal and it brought self-concern about general funding to the debris flooded into convenience centers, as well as the ocean. The expenditure of two and a half million toward the Department of Design and Construction is warranted but as cited in the example above, a financial concern for the future of the inhabitants of District 2 is imperative. In conclusion, the fiscal operating budget of District 2’s Department of Environmental Services may be granted an allowance for salary to the

convenience center because of the resilience of workers during the storm but also to demonstrate commitment toward community resilience with job opportunities.

The proposal for leasing contracts toward non-profit organizations to nourish community wellness in District 2 is to improve community interconnectedness across generations. I had the experience of volunteering at Haona Street, where I learned that all people across different generations are ready to uplift one another in a time of emergency. The epitome of assistance may not be focused solely on the time of emergency, moreover, throughout the existence of a community's strive with life. In the resonating sound of Kākoʻo Oiwi, Kupu ʻĀina Corp, and Catholic Charities as examples within a community, I have no doubt in District 2ʻs ability to strive for the heavens "Kūlia ʻī ka nuʻu" with approval for funding local non-profit organizations. The leasing of contracts to non-profit organizations founded in serving Hawaiʻi, will create diversity among generations who want to bring life into a community.

Lastly, proposal to allot funding for improved equipment and machinery within District 2. The Department of Environmental Services operating budget can be increased to allot the purchase of new equipment to replace the previous equipment which may have sustained damage during the storm. The vehicles used during the flood to pump out waste-water were listed around $225,000 and machines such as a street sweeper used to clean the roads are listed at $150,000. These prices are listed to bring attention to city and county departments, like environmental services, ocean safety, and facility maintenance whose vehicles and equipment will need future maintenance or upkeep. For example, council member of District 5, Scott Nishimoto has allotted funding for emergency routine and maintenance of the Ala Wai this fiscal year of 2026-2027. District 2ʻs access is very limited via road, and funding for improved equipment and machinery will aid in keeping access open and safe.

"Wahiawa Dam structurally sound, owner says; evacuation order remains in effect" *Hawaii News Now,* 20 March 2026, https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2026/03/21/wahiawa-dam-structurally-sound-owner-says-evacuation-order-remains-effect

Weyer, Matt. "Letter to [Kiana Pascual] Proposed Budget Amendments." 17 March 2026. Honolulu City Council, Office of City Clerk.

Nishimoto, Scott. "Letter to [Kiana Pascual] Proposed Budget Amendments." 17 March 2026. Honolulu City Council, Office of City Clerk.