Bill 24 (2026)
Testimony

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To: Lam, Doris
Subject: Opposition Bill 24

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Public Testimony – Opposition to Bill 24 Honolulu City Council – April 15, 2026 Aloha Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council, My name is Shelby Billionaire, a resident of Nānākuli on the Wai'anae Coast. I am here to testify in **strong opposition** to Bill 24. After the devastating March 2026 Kona Low storms that caused over **one billion dollars** in damage across Hawai'i — with Nānākuli and the West Side among the hardest hit — this bill offers only **$32.5 million** for emergency disaster relief. That amount is simply not enough. What concerns me even more is **how** this money is being funded. Bill 24 is not providing new cash from current revenues. Instead, it authorizes the City to issue **general obligation bonds** — which means the City is borrowing the money now and will repay it, plus interest, over many years from the **General Fund**. The General Fund comes directly from **taxpayers** — from our property taxes, general excise taxes, and other revenue sources. So future generations of Honolulu residents will be paying back this debt, with interest, for projects that should be addressing an immediate crisis. Most people do not fully understand how bond financing works. When the City borrows money this way, we end up paying significantly more than $32.5 million over time because of interest costs. This feels like shifting today's emergency onto tomorrow's taxpayers. Our communities need real, meaningful disaster recovery funding — not a relatively small amount financed through long-term debt. After the scale of destruction we just experienced, $32.5 million borrowed is inadequate and places an unnecessary burden on Honolulu taxpayers for years to come. I respectfully urge you to **vote NO** on Bill 24 or substantially increase and restructure the disaster relief portion with more direct funding. Mahalo nui loa for your time and for listening to the people you serve.

Pikahu Shelby Billionaire