BILL022(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 165

*BUDGET (BUD)

***BUDGET (BUD) Meeting**

Meeting Date: May 1, 2026 @ 10:30 AM

Support: 52

Oppose: 4

I wish to comment: 28

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Andrew Rosen	andrew@ponoconnections.com	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 27, 2026 @ 10:38 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Amanda Shaw	amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org	96759
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i	I wish to comment	Apr 27, 2026 @ 01:06 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Joni Chun	jchun@susannahwesley.org	96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Susannah Wesley Community Center	Support	Apr 27, 2026 @ 02:43 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Nam Vu	nam@hubcoworkinghi.com	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hub Coworking Hawaii	Support	Apr 27, 2026 @ 05:57 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Chung Chang	chung.il.chang@hawaii.gov	96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
State of Hawaii Broadband Office	Support	Apr 27, 2026 @ 06:27 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Blake Briddell	blake.briddell@gmail.com	96791
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 27, 2026 @ 09:54 PM

Testimony:

I would like to voice my support for Council Member Weyer’s proposed amendment to the budget that would allocate at least $5M to farmers impacted by the recent Kona low storms. Some of the areas most devastated by the floods are also our most productive farmlands. The majority of small scale farmers in communities such as Mahiko Farms lost virtually

everything - crops, seed, fertilizer, tractors, etc.

Many of these operations were barely profitable before the floods and are thus having an incredibly difficult time getting back up and running. The recovery will take months if not years for most of them. We must help the farmers who feed us.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ryan Obrero	robrero89@gmail.com	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 27, 2026 @ 10:04 PM

Testimony:

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

My name is Ryan Obrero and I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

 Small business development and entrepreneurship
 Innovation and technology growth
 Sustainable Tourism
 Agriculture and local food systems
 Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

Various organizations, including the nonprofit that I'm employed at, works closely with OER to provide information on services that OER renders in the community. OER has spoken at various economic forums and has provided vast data and information to various user groups which has helped our local communities.

Sustaining OER is important because OER has served a vital role in helping small business on Oahu to thrive, coupled with helping local residents during tough times due to disasters and economic fallout.

I respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Mahalo,

Ryan Obrero

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Al Ogata	al.ogata@cyberhawaii.org	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
CyberHawaii	Support	Apr 28, 2026 @ 07:53 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Judy Manivong	judy.mnvg@yahoo.com	96791
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 28, 2026 @ 08:02 AM

Testimony:

My name is Judy Manivong and I am one of the farmers from the Mahiko farms lot and I am in Urgent Need for Disaster Relief and Infrastructure Reform Following Kona Low Floods

The Kona low storms in March and April 2026 have been catastrophic for the Mahiko Farms community. For many individuals, including me and my family, these lands are a business. The floods left behind a trail of total destruction. Total of crops lost fields of okra, long beans, bitter melon, eggplant, and many more were entirely submerged or washed away. Equipment like generators, weed whackers, lawn mowers, and tractors were destroyed.

Farmers who have spent years supporting the community now face a long and uncertain road to recovery, struggling to cover daily living expenses without a harvest to sell. It'll take farmers 3-6 months to plant, grow, and harvest produce, despite it being flooded, and without any harvest we still have to pay for our monthly lease.

While the rainfall was historic, the severity of the damage was cause by the neglect of overgrown culverts and inactive irrigation ditches became dams, forcing water onto our plots rather than draining.

A direct grant would be helpful to all the farmers, they'll be able to pay their rent, their living expenses, seeds, lost of equipment, and just anything to get the farm up and running again.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mary Alice Evans	dbedt.stateplanning@hawaii.gov	96804
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
State of Hawaii Office of Planning & Sustainable Development	I wish to comment	Apr 28, 2026 @ 08:17 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Anne Weber-Yarbrough	aweb3388@gmail.com	96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 28, 2026 @ 09:42 AM

Testimony:

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Anne Weber-yarbrough, a resident of Moanalua Gardens, former educator, homeowner, and parent and I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

 Small business development and entrepreneurship
 Innovation and technology growth
 Sustainable Tourism
 Agriculture and local food systems
 Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

Sustaining OER is important because since the pandemic OER has consistently come through for the people of Honolulu in

times of need— whether natural disaster or global pandemic. their work is essential to supporting local businesses, spurring growth in a diversified economy, and strengthening relationships between the public and private sector.

I respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Anne Weber-Yarbrough

Name: Emily Perry	Email: emily.perry@tpl.org	Zip: 96817
Representing: Trust for Public Land	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 28, 2026 @ 10:44 AM

Name: Trisha Kajimura	Email: tkajimura@pacthawaii.org	Zip: 96817
Representing: Parents And Children Together	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 28, 2026 @ 12:17 PM

Testimony:

Parents and Children Together (PACT) provides comments on Bill 022 (26)

Position: PACT supports full funding of the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) in the City's 2026-2027 Operating Budget

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

The work of OER is critical to support the well-being of the people that PACT serve who are dealing with challenges rooted in economic inequality. OER's programs are vital to providing opportunities that will help families build self-sufficiency and

release their need for social safety net assistance. Small business support, workforce development and rent and utility relief are just examples of how OER strengthens communities. These programs are not redundant and it is important that they continue at the County level.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Michael Bennett	michael@michaelhawaii.com	96821
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Tech Week	Support	Apr 28, 2026 @ 01:20 PM

Testimony:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

Apr 28, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

My name is Michael Bennett and I am the Founder of Hawaii Tech Week which is hosted in Honolulu. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a key role as the economic integrator of the City of Honolulu City's—improving how our systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. OER's focus on aligning efforts across groups, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into impact is important in reducing inefficiencies and driving economic upside.

Through leadership, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on, including:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen Oahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, economic growth, and the commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

OER has worked with Hawaii Tech Week to drive education and resources for the businesses participating in the week. Sustaining OER is important because they are a catalyst of growth, that in turn helps everyone.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every Oahu resident.

Michael Bennett

Founder

Hawaii Tech Week

Name: Nadezna Ortega	Email: executivedirector@tagnawa.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Tagnawa Hawai'i	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 28, 2026 @ 02:40 PM

Name: JESSE LIPMAN	Email: jlipman@kkv.net	Zip: 96819
Representing: Kōkua Kalihi Valley, CFS	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 28, 2026 @ 03:08 PM

Name: Walter Thoemmes	Email: wthoemmes@ymcahonolulu.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: YMCA of Honolulu	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 28, 2026 @ 03:30 PM

Name: Lauralee Dice	Email: kuika143@yahoo.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 28, 2026 @ 03:31 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

I am a concerned constituent. I do not agree with cutting the budget of 20 workers in the Office of Economic Revitalization. This department is necessary for growth of public and private sector jobs, increasing employment opportunities for people and they also help guide regenerative tourism, protecting our environment and ensuring cultural

jobs for people of Hawaii. They also help Oahu Farmers with necessary resources. After Kona Low storms, this should be the LAST department that should be decreased as they can focus efforts to help to rebuild and support local homeowners and businesses who most need it in the communities that were hardest hit.

I also think it's unimaginable that this department would suffer a substantial cut when a budget was revised to INCREASE Councilmembers' salaries. Councilmembers already had a very substantial raise and now they are planned in receiving another raise and this department is being cut? THIS DOES NOT MAKE ANY SENSE. Before any department is cut, there should be a review of other departments that can shift their funding to help support others.

Thank you,
Lauralee Dice
1479 Thurston Ave #201
Honolulu, HI 96822

Name: George Yarbrough	Email: gyarbrough@economicrecoverycorps.org	Zip: 96819
Representing: International Economic Development Council	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 28, 2026 @ 03:44 PM
Name: Summer Shiigi	Email: contact@tentomorrow.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Ten Tomorrow, Keep It Kaimukī	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 28, 2026 @ 03:57 PM
Name: Betty Lou Larson	Email: bettylou.larson@catholicchartitieshawaii.org	Zip: 96822
Representing: Catholic Charities Hawai`i	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 28, 2026 @ 04:12 PM
Name: Janel Yamamoto	Email: janelyamamoto@gmail.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 28, 2026 @ 04:22 PM

Testimony:
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER’S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

Aloha Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

Our names are Janel Yamamoto and Laura Ediger, and we serve as Co-Directors of GoFarm Hawaii. We are submitting testimony as private citizens in strong support of restoring the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization for Fiscal Year 2027.

Through our work leading GoFarm Hawai'i, we have seen firsthand the value OER brings as a connector across sectors. OER plays a critical role in aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and ensuring that resources translate into meaningful outcomes for local businesses, farmers, and communities. This approach strengthens the systems that support economic growth rather than duplicating services.

OER's leadership supports key sectors that are directly tied to our work, including small business development, workforce training, agriculture, and local food systems. These efforts are interconnected drivers of economic stability and opportunity across O'ahu.

At GoFarm Hawai'i, a University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience Extension program, we build farm businesses by supporting early stage and established producers to reach their operational and financial goals through training and advisory services. Our collaboration with OER helps ensure that farmers are not only trained, but also connected to broader economic opportunities, including markets, partnerships, and aligned initiatives that support long term viability.

Maintaining OER's funding is especially important at this time. As communities continue to recover from recent flood events and navigate ongoing economic challenges, the need for coordination, clear pathways, and strategic alignment has only increased. Without OER, these efforts risk becoming fragmented, limiting the impact of both public and private investments.

We respectfully urge the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. Its ability to bring partners together, align resources, and strengthen economic systems is essential to building a resilient and thriving O'ahu.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued commitment to our communities.

Sincerely,
Janel Yamamoto
Laura Ediger

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Trung Lam	trung.d.lam@hawaii.gov	96813

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC)	Support	Apr 28, 2026 @ 06:17 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Drew Wilkinson	info@growfruithawaii.com	96791

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 28, 2026 @ 08:46 PM

Testimony:

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Budget Committee:

My name is Drew Wilkinson and I farm in Mokuleia and also run a farm business called Growing Together. I support the $5 million Farmer Disaster Recovery Grant amendment to Bill 22. Farmers are experiencing extreme financial challenges now and need assistance as quickly as possible. This grant can help expedite that need.

The Kona Low storms caused enormous damage to farms across O'ahu. Approximately 250 farm operations have reported $19.4 million in losses, and many more have not yet reported. Fields remain buried under feet of mud and debris. Irrigation systems, fences, and access roads were destroyed. Many farmers lost tractors and have no equipment to begin clearing their land. Dozens of farmers are struggling to make lease and mortgage payments while generating no income, and many face 30 to 60 days or more before they can return to production due to floodwater food safety.

Many disaster programs are built for households or businesses, and farmers fall through the gap. Household programs don't cover agricultural losses. Business programs like SBA disaster loans are debt instruments that don't work for producers who just lost their entire productive capacity and have no near-term revenue. 80% of affected farms carry no crop or disaster insurance, not because they chose to go without, but because federal crop insurance is largely unavailable to diversified farms in Hawaii. Direct grants are the only form of relief that actually reaches farmers, allowing them to clear fields, replace equipment, cover operating costs, and restart production.

These grants also serve a federal purpose: USDA recovery programs like FSA's Emergency Conservation Program require cost-share from the applicant. Farmers who have lost everything may not be able to meet even those requirements. City-funded grants can bridge that gap and help unlock federal recovery dollars that would otherwise go unclaimed.

Please adopt this amendment.

Mahalo, Drew Wilkinson

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Keoni Lee	keoni.lee@gmail.com	96816

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 28, 2026 @ 09:33 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I support Bill 22, including continued funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER).

The City has many programs, funding streams, and initiatives aimed at supporting economic activity. What is often missing is coordination across those efforts. This includes ensuring that departments are aligned, resources are not duplicative, and residents and businesses can actually access what is already available.

OER exists to help address that gap. Its role is not to replace departmental work, but to connect it. This means identifying where efforts are fragmented, aligning partners and funding, and helping ensure that public investments are working together toward shared outcomes.

OER also helps bring in and align external resources, including federal and state funding. This allows the City to extend the impact of its own dollars and ensures that outside resources are coordinated with local priorities rather than operating in silos.

If this function is removed, the underlying challenges do not go away. Instead, fragmentation, duplication, and gaps in access are more likely to persist.

The recent audit highlights the need for clearer structure and stronger performance measures. That is an important and appropriate next step. It also underscores the importance of improving how this coordinating function operates, not eliminating it.

Maintaining OER within the budget allows the City to strengthen this role and improve how its economic efforts function as a whole.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Mahalo,

Keoni Lee

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Edward Oroyan	eddieoroyan@gmail.com	96797

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Lewaterra Farm	I wish to comment	Apr 28, 2026 @ 11:07 PM

Testimony:

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Budget Committee:

My name is Edward Oroyan(co-owner with my wife of LewaTerra Farm. I farm in Mokuleia. I support the $5 million Farmer Disaster Recovery Grant amendment to Bill 22.

The Kona Low storms caused enormous damage to our farm. We are looking at an estimate of upwards of $40,000 in damages and lost income. Approximately 250 other farm operations have also reported $19.4 million in losses, and many more have not yet reported. Fields remain buried under feet of mud and debris. Irrigation systems, fences, and access roads were destroyed. We lost nearly all our veggies and many fruit trees and wind breaks. We provided weekly veggies for our CSA(community supported agriculture) members, markets, and local restaurants. All of that revenue was halted. We also lost much of our infrastructure for harvesting, packing, and maintaining our field and orchard production.

Many disaster programs are built for households or businesses, and farmers fall through the gap. Household programs don't cover agricultural losses. Business programs like SBA disaster loans are debt instruments that don't work for producers who just lost their entire productive capacity and have no near-term revenue. 80% of affected farms carry no crop or disaster insurance, like us, not because we chose to go without, but because federal crop insurance is largely unavailable to diversified farms in Hawaii. Direct grants are the only form of relief that actually reaches farmer, allowing them to clear fields, replace equipment, cover operating costs, and restart production.

These grants also serve a federal purpose: USDA recovery programs like FSA's Emergency Conservation Program require cost-share from the applicant. Farmers who have lost everything may not be able to meet even those requirements. City-funded grants can bridge that gap and help unlock federal recovery dollars that would otherwise go unclaimed.

Please adopt this amendment.

Mahalo, Edward Oroyan - LewaTerra Farm

Name: Meli James	Email: meli@manauphawaii.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Mana Up	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 29, 2026 @ 09:27 AM

Name: Gregory Kim	Email: gkim@vantagecounsel.com	Zip: 96734

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 29, 2026 @ 09:54 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Terry George	einouye@hcf-hawaii.org	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Community Foundation	Support	Apr 29, 2026 @ 11:55 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Joshua Wisch	josh@holomuacollaborative.org	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Holomua Collaborative	I wish to comment	Apr 29, 2026 @ 12:56 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Eliza Manchester	eliza8482@gmail.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 29, 2026 @ 01:12 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Roberta Hickey-Gomez	roberta@mediatehawaii.org	96814
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
The Mediation Center of the Pacific	I wish to comment	Apr 29, 2026 @ 02:30 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kalani Kaanaana	kalani@hawaiigreengrowth.org	96848
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawai‘i Green Growth	Support	Apr 29, 2026 @ 04:41 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Daniel Rodriguez	manuelaearthworks@gmail.com	96712
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 29, 2026 @ 09:09 PM
Testimony:		

Aloha. I deeply appreciate the efforts taken to make this opportunity possible. I give you all my full support to make this happen. Mahalo.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
carrie alford	himakafarms@gmail.com	96712
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 29, 2026 @ 09:19 PM

Testimony:

Strongly support more financial assistance for farms impacted by the kona storms... As ns Farmers, who were impacted continuously these past months & especially with the last major flood, alongside neighbor farms and our North, community.. we know first hand the extent of the loss and devastation & how long this road to recovery will be. Major financial support is needed to save Farmer’s ss business, but also to save food security for Hawai'i

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Amy Agbayani	amy_agbayani@yahoo.com	96819
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 29, 2026 @ 10:12 PM

Testimony:

Aloha. I am a strong supporter of OER and request your support in budget bill 22. OER does good work, provide service, resources for the county and city. I have worked with individual competent OER staff (including equity, immigration staff you supported).

Mahalo

Amy Agbayani

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jayme Barton	jaymebee@gmail.com	96791
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 05:07 AM

Testimony:

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Budget Committee:

My name is Jayme Barton. On behalf of the Hawaii Farm Bureau and Hawaii Farmers Union, in partnership with Ag Stewardship, I have been working directly with farmers in Waialua to assess damage and help report their losses to the City and County following the devastating Kona Low storms.

What I've seen on the ground is difficult to fully capture in numbers alone. Waialua is a critical part of O'ahu's food system, and many of the farmers who regularly supply our local markets, restaurants, and communities were hit hard—some losing everything. I've walked properties that were under feet of water, where farmers didn't just lose crops, but their entire season of investment: seeds, labor, compost, fertilizer, and in many cases, tractors, tools, vehicles, and greenhouses. When we say they lost it all, we truly mean all of it.

In the days and weeks after the storm, I have worked alongside these farmers trying to document damage and navigate reporting systems, and one thing has been consistently clear: many of them do not have the resources to recover on their own. Most small, diversified farms in Hawai'i don't qualify for crop insurance, not by choice, but because those programs aren't designed for operations like theirs. At the same time, their rent, loans, and bills have not stopped. Without immediate support, some of these farmers may be forced to walk away from agriculture entirely.

Even now, many fields remain buried under thick layers of mud and debris that cannot simply be tilled back into the soil—it must be physically removed. Without access to equipment, and in many cases having lost that equipment in the storm, farmers are unable to begin recovery, let alone return to production.

I share this because behind the reported figures—approximately 250 farm operations and $19.4 million in losses—are real people I've worked with who are trying to figure out how to move forward. Many more have yet to report.

I strongly support the $5 million Farmer Disaster Recovery Grant amendment to Bill 22.

Existing disaster programs often miss farmers entirely. Household assistance does not cover agricultural losses, and business programs like SBA loans place farmers into debt at a time when they have no income and no clear timeline for recovery. With roughly 80% of affected farms uninsured due to structural barriers, direct grants are the only form of relief that can realistically help farmers clear their land, replace essential equipment, cover operating costs, and restart production.

These grants also play a critical role in unlocking federal support. Programs like USDA's Emergency Conservation Program require cost-sharing that many farmers simply cannot meet after losing everything. Local grant funding can bridge that gap and ensure Hawai'i farmers are able to access additional federal recovery resources.

Without this support, we risk losing not just individual farms, but a vital part of O'ahu's local food system.

Please adopt this amendment.

Mahalo,
Jayme Barton

Name:	Email:	Zip:

Mark Hamamoto	mohalafarms@gmail.com	96791
Representing: Mohala Farms	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 07:17 AM

Name: Daniel Carroll	Email: huaorchards@gmail.com	Zip: 96791
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 07:26 AM

Testimony:

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Budget Committee:

My name is Daniel Carroll owner/operator of Hua Orchards in Waialua. We grow mostly avocados limes and cut flowers. I strongly support the $5 million Farmer Disaster Recovery Grant amendment to Bill 22.

Name: Sondra Ouye	Email: sondra.ouye@gmail.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Abl Collective	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 07:47 AM

Testimony:

My name is Sondra Ouye and I farm in Waimanalo and Haleiwa. I support the $5M farmer disaster grant amendment but I do not support cuts to the OER food system staff.

The Kona Low storms caused heartbreaking damage to farms across O'ahu. Approximately 250 farm operations have reported $19.4 million in losses, and many more have not yet reported. I myself lost about 50% of my crops that were in ground and more income due to time to rebuild growing beds after the grounds were finally dried out enough to work in the fields. As bad as my loss is, I consider myself lucky compared to many other of my farmer friends who lost so much more.

Farming was not my first career. I spent over 20 years working in a corporate profession before making the decision to transition into agriculture. It was not a decision driven by financial opportunity—quite the opposite. Entering farming meant accepting a significant reduction in income and a much higher level of uncertainty. But I chose this path because I believe deeply in the importance of local food systems, caring for the land, and contributing something meaningful to our community.

This is a common story among farmers. Most of us are not in this work to maximize profit. We are here because we value

stewardship, resilience, and feeding our neighbors. We take pride in growing food locally, even when it is difficult and often financially precarious.

That reality becomes even more challenging when natural disasters occur. In Hawai'i, storms, flooding, drought, and other disruptions are not rare—they are part of farming. Even a short interruption in operations can be financially devastating. Crops are lost, infrastructure is damaged, and revenue stops immediately, while expenses continue. Unlike many other industries, there is little cushion to absorb these shocks.

This is why grant programs and public funding are so critical. Support that does not require matching funds is especially important. Many farmers simply do not have the capital reserves to meet match requirements, particularly after a disaster. Without accessible funding, some farms are unable to recover at all.

Investing in farmers is an investment in food security, economic resilience, and community well-being. Supporting those who have chosen this work—often at personal financial sacrifice—helps ensure that local agriculture can survive and continue to grow.

Please adopt this amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration of this important measure!
Sondra, Owner Abl Collective

Name: Bettina Mok	Email: director@tlchawaii.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: The Legal Clinic	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 08:02 AM
Name: Carol Philips	Email: director@gonorthshore.org	Zip: 96712
Representing: North Shore Chamber of Commerce	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 08:19 AM
Name: Nathaniel Pak	Email: nat@reusehawaii.org	Zip: 96818
Representing: Re-use Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 08:30 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
India Clark	info@hiregenerativefarms.com	96791
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 30, 2026 @ 08:33 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Hunter Heaivilin	hunter@supersistence.org	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Farmers Union	I wish to comment	Apr 30, 2026 @ 08:40 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Sherry Menor	smenor@cochawaii.org	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Chamber of Commerce Hawaii	I wish to comment	Apr 30, 2026 @ 09:37 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ramsey Brown	ramsey.brown@ponopacific.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 09:59 AM

Testimony:

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Budget Committee:

My name is Ramsey Brown, I live in Haleiwa and I work with twelve farmers in Kahuku at Kuilima Farm. I have also been supporting seven Otake farmers in their recovery after the Kona Low storms. I support the $5 million Farmer Disaster Recovery Grant amendment to Bill 22.

The Kona Low storms caused enormous damage to farms across O'ahu. Kuilima Farm saw over 2 feet of water flooding our crops and infiltrating our hydroponic lettuce system, contaminating it on two separate occasions during the Kona Low storms. Sections of our roads were washed out and fences broken by the huge rush of water, broken tree branches, and other debris that tore across the farm. Loss and recovery costs are in excess of $300,000 across the farm, and climbing with the recent food safety requirements of 30-60 days of land prep and rest. Safety is paramount, but this does extend the labor and time to production whereby impacted farmers can restart and generate income.

The farms near Otake camp were hit even harder. I personally brought volunteers to the Otake farms to help clear out debris and broken farm equipment. We were sinking knee deep in the mud a week after the storm as we trudged in and out of the fields hauling debris. We were able to give them small gift cards to hardware stores, but it won’t cover near the

cost of replacing all their tools and equipment. These farmers specifically rely on their farm income for their livelihood and we would like to see them back on their feet soon.

Many disaster programs are built for households or businesses, and farmers fall through the gap. Household programs don't cover agricultural losses. Business programs like SBA disaster loans are debt instruments that don't work for producers who just lost their entire productive capacity and have no near-term revenue. 80% of affected farms carry no crop or disaster insurance, not because they chose to go without, but because federal crop insurance is largely unavailable to diversified farms in Hawaii. Direct grants are the only form of relief that actually reaches farmers, allowing them to clear fields, replace equipment, cover operating costs, and restart production.

These grants also serve a federal purpose: USDA recovery programs like FSA's Emergency Conservation Program require cost-share from the applicant. Farmers who have lost everything may not be able to meet even those requirements. City-funded grants can bridge that gap and help unlock federal recovery dollars that would otherwise go unclaimed.

Please adopt this amendment.

Mahalo,
Ramsey Brown

Name: Liza Ryan-Gill	Email: lryangill@hicir.org	Zip: 96816
Representing: Hawaii Coalition for Immigrant Rights	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 10:26 AM
Name: Kūhiō Lewis	Email: kuhio@hawaiiancouncil.org	Zip: 96707
Representing: Hawaiian Council	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 10:30 AM
Name: Deborah Lui-Anderson	Email: deblui@yahoo.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 11:36 AM
Name: Lyra Pascual	Email: lahyruh@gmail.com	Zip: 96814

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 11:56 AM

Testimony:

Public pools should be kept safe, clean, and well-maintained. As an adult beginner, the pool is where I feel most comfortable practicing my swimming skills. Swimming has become an important part of both my mental and physical well-being, and I truly value the care and effort that go into maintaining public parks—especially their pools.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
James Tokioka	James.tokioka@hawaii.gov	96813

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
DBEDT - Business Development & Support Division (BDSD)	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 12:13 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Hudson Slay	hudsonslay@gmail.com	96734

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 12:15 PM

Testimony:

I am writing in support of critically important funding to maintain the K. Mark Takai swimming pool at Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center. I'm a life long swimmer, competitive swim parent and swimming official. This is the best aquatic complex in all of Hawaii but needs considerable resources for facility upkeep and maintenance. The pool is in dire need of a new bulkhead which is used to adjust the length of the pool

for the short and long course swim seasons but also accommodate other water sports. Without a new bulkhead the facility simply cannot operate. The facility has additional needs such as new starting blocks and a timing scoreboard which are not as time critical but are extremely important to keep this potentially world class facility up to date. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide you with testimony.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jenn Kim	jenniferjkim9@gmail.com	96819

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 12:32 PM

Testimony:

I support funds for budget to support the VMAC pool. It's a great resource for our community.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Daniela Spoto	daniela@hiappleseed.org	96815

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Appleseed	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 12:48 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Laurie Au	laurie@islanderinstitute.com	96782

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 30, 2026 @ 02:25 PM

Testimony:

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Laurie Au of Islander Institute. I submit this testimony in strong support of restoring the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

Islander Institute has been in relationship with OER since its founding during COVID, and from the start, it was clear this office operated differently.

When families across O'ahu were in crisis, OER moved faster and more effectively than many other government agencies and programs to get much-needed funds into the hands of those most impacted. They were able to do this because of the depth of relationships and the trust that community had in OER's leadership. They earned the trust of many nonprofits and community leaders, and those relationships have since deepened and widened.

From those critical moments, the DNA of OER was established: put the needs of the community first, and work with community to create real prosperity for our most vulnerable individuals, families, and communities.

COVID taught us painful but important lessons — about how fragile our local food systems are, about how isolating and volatile owning a small business is, about the urgent need to move our economy away from an extractive tourism model toward a more regenerative one. OER has taken those lessons seriously and has designed its operations accordingly, working to make City government more responsive in each of these critical areas.

OER is still a young office. It has spent six years building its team, its programming, and its relationships. And yet the trust it has earned across so many communities on O'ahu is remarkable and rare. In a time of deep public distrust of government, OER stands as a model of how government can actually work with community, listen from community, and be trusted by community. That is almost priceless.

We cannot afford to lose that now. I respectfully urge the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Laurie Au

Islander Institute

Name: Nathan Ohle	Email: nohle@iedc.org	Zip: 20005-4855
Representing: International Economic Development Council (IEDC)	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 02:28 PM

Name: Kiran Polk	Email: kiranpolk@gmail.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: Kapolei Chamber of Commerce	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 02:35 PM

Name: Jairus Aleka	Email: jaaaleka@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 03:15 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is Jairus Aleka, and I am the President & CEO of Koʻiahi. I am writing in strong support of the City's Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) and to respectfully urge you to protect its funding in the FY 2027 Operating Budget.

I had the opportunity to participate in OER's Idea2Biz program, and it truly changed the trajectory of my life. Before joining, I had a vision of starting my own business, but I did not know where to begin. I didn't have access to guidance, mentorship, or the foundational knowledge needed to move forward.

Through this 13-week program, I gained critical skills in entrepreneurship, including business model development, marketing, legal structure, and financial planning. Each week, we learned directly from experienced guest speakers, and we were supported every step of the way by OER's team, including regular check-ins with a dedicated Resource Connector who genuinely cared about our growth and success.

Because of this program, I was able to launch my business, Koʻiahi. More importantly, I was able to do so with confidence,

clarity, and a strong foundation. I also built meaningful connections with fellow entrepreneurs and mentors, and had the opportunity to present my business at a hōʻike, sharing my work with other business owners in the community.

What makes this program even more impactful is that it was completely free. As someone living paycheck to paycheck, I would not have been able to afford the level of training, mentorship, and support that Idea2Biz provided. Without OER, I likely would not have been able to start my business at all. The ʻike (knowledge) I gained would have otherwise cost me a significant financial burden—one I simply could not carry.

In addition, the program provided $1,250 in early-stage funding through a partnership with HawaiiUSA Federal Credit Union. OER also connected participants with the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce and provided a complimentary membership. This opened doors for networking, mentorship, and the opportunity to be part of a broader business community—something that is invaluable for new entrepreneurs trying to find their place and grow.

OER serves individuals like me—people who have the drive and vision but lack access to resources, guidance, and support. If funding is cut, many aspiring entrepreneurs will be left without a pathway to begin. Businesses that could have succeeded may never even start. This impact is especially significant in communities like Waiʻanae, where access to these types of resources is already limited.

I respectfully ask the City Council to protect funding for OER so they can continue the important work they do. Programs like Idea2Biz are not just educational—they are life-changing. They create opportunity, build confidence, and strengthen our local economy by empowering community members to succeed.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jairus Aleka
President & CEO, Koʻiahi

Name: Jairus Aleka	Email: jaaaleka@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 03:30 PM

Name: Boyd Ready	Email: reafyboyd@gmail.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Haleiwa Waialua Historical Society	Position: Support	Submitted: Apr 30, 2026 @ 04:29 PM

Testimony:
The Hongwanji historic site and structures are an irreplaceable part of the Waialua vomminity history and deserve appropriate reuse.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
‘Olu Campbell	olu.campbell@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 30, 2026 @ 06:16 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Dennis Fitzgerald	dennisfitzgerald742@gmail.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 07:06 PM

Testimony:
The VMAC swim facility has been great for my family. Investing in this great facility should be a strong priority for the state. All three of my children have swam at meets at this location and have gained a strong sense of confidence through training and head work. They have also gained a stronger a sense of community through the swim meets that bring together schools and clubs from across the island and off island too. The community deserves the investment in this facility to both represent a commitment to self improvement through swimming and also a supporting a venue worthy of travel amongst and to the island for competition.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Kami Yamamoto	kami@hawaiiworkerscenter.org	96820
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawai‘i Workers Center	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 07:35 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Akira Endo	taiyoendo2000@yahoo.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 08:05 PM

Testimony:
Vmac is our life.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Rainbow Ulii	rainbow@keyproject.org	96744

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
KEY Project	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 08:14 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Rainbow Ulii	rainbow@keyproject.org	96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
KEY Project	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 08:15 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Stefanie Sakamoto	ssakamoto@imanaka-asato.com	96789
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
BIA Hawaii	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 08:27 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Alyssa Peric	alyssa.peric@gmail.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 08:40 PM

Testimony:

As a member of the community, I would like to support the proposed budget. Specifically, I support funding to continue the maintenance and possible upgrades to the VMAC pool. It is important to have clean, well maintained, and safe public pools to promote healthy living and water safety for the people of Oahu.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Peric

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Denise Antolini	antolinid@gmail.com	96712
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Save Sharks Cove Alliance	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 09:01 PM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
CLAUDIA SULLIVAN	WITHOUTDELAY8@GMAIL.COM	96782

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Apr 30, 2026 @ 10:05 PM

Testimony:

My husband and I, both in our 70s, use this pool almost daily. It's not just about the physical exercise but also the friendships that we have developed over the years that makes this pool special. Please invest and care for one of the best assests this island has.

Claudia Sullivan

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Natalie Iwasa	iwasajunk@mail.com	96825
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 30, 2026 @ 10:17 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Steven Bakovic	stevenbakovic@gmail.com	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 30, 2026 @ 11:28 PM

Testimony:

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Steven Bakovic, a resident of O‘ahu and former employee of the Office of Economic Revitalization. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City Administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

Working at OER in 2021-2022, I saw firsthand how the office supports those in need. I was a program assistant distributing rent and utility relief to families struggling to make payments due to the pandemic. And now in 2026, in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs, OER continues to serve as a bridge between government and community.

OER does not just show up only during times of crisis, but is always and actively addressing pressing issues on O‘ahu such as local innovation, workforce development, sustainable agriculture and food systems, regenerative tourism, small business needs, and community equity.

Cutting across these issues, OER plays a vital role as the City’s economic integrator by coordinating and aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Let us not forget what OER stands for as the Office of Economic Revitalization. Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work strengthens O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

But, even more importantly, let us not forget who OER is. It is a family of community members who love serving other community members. And this is what I support.

Therefore, I respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Steven Bakovic
O'ahu Resident
StevenBakovic@gmail.com

Name: LorMona Meredith	Email: lormona@gmail.com	Zip: 96744-6020
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 1, 2026 @ 02:27 AM
Name: Brian Miyamoto	Email: brian@hfbf.org	Zip: 96759
Representing: Hawaii Farm Bureau	Position: Support	Submitted: May 1, 2026 @ 06:11 AM
Name: Frances Weiner	Email: weinerfrances@gmail.com	Zip: 92027
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 1, 2026 @ 06:25 AM

Testimony:
Submitted to: Honolulu City Council
Re: Preservation of the Office of Economic Development Budget & Operations
Date: May 1, 2025
Aloha, Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council:
My name is Frances Weiner, and Economic Recovery Corps Fellow, I am submitting this testimony in strong support of preserving and fully funding the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Economic Development (OED). I urge the Council

to reject any proposals to defund or dismantle this essential office. I recently had the opportunity to visit the Office of Economic Development and meet directly with the dedicated staff who serve our community every day. What I witnessed was not a bureaucratic office — it was a hub of real, meaningful activity working on behalf of Honolulu's businesses, workers, and families. The team shared how they are actively working with local businesses to help them not only survive, but grow right here on O'ahu. They walked me through specific examples of businesses that had been on the verge of relocating or closing, and how OED's direct intervention — through technical assistance, permitting navigation and strategic partnerships — kept those companies and their jobs in our community. One of the most critical functions of the OED is its business retention and expansion (BRE) program. Retaining an existing business costs far less than attracting a new one, and the ripple effects of a business leaving Honolulu — lost jobs, reduced tax revenue, hollowed-out neighborhoods — are felt for years. The OED serves as a direct lifeline for small and medium-sized businesses navigating Honolulu's complex regulatory environment. Whether it's helping a local manufacturer identify workforce development resources, connecting a small retailer with financing programs, or facilitating conversations between businesses and city agencies, the OED bridges gaps that no other city office fills. Eliminating or defunding this office would leave hundreds of local businesses without a critical point of contact — and would send the wrong message to entrepreneurs who are already weighing whether Honolulu is a viable place to build and grow. The OED's work extends beyond individual businesses. Every job retained means a family that can afford to stay in Honolulu. Every business that expands here rather than on the mainland means more tax dollars funding our schools, roads, and services. The OED's programs directly contribute to Honolulu's long-term economic resilience and self-sufficiency. As our city works to diversify away from over-reliance on tourism, the Office of Economic Development is one of the few city-level tools we have to actively shape that diversification. Defunding it now, precisely when its work is most needed, would be a serious mistake. I respectfully urge each member of this Council to visit the Office of Economic Development, meet the staff, and hear directly about the work they are doing. I am confident that, like me, you will come away with a deep appreciation for the incredible value this office delivers — often quietly, without fanfare, but with enormous impact. Please preserve and fully fund the Office of Economic Development. Our local businesses, our workers, and our community depend on it. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Weiner

775-770-4739

fweiner@economicrecoverycorps.org

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Mark Anthony Clemente	mclemente@hrcc-hawaii.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Hawaii Regional Council of Carpenters	Support	May 1, 2026 @ 07:30 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Patti Chang	pattichang@feed-hunger.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Feed the Hunger Fund	Oppose	May 1, 2026 @ 09:26 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair and Members of the City and County of Honolulu City Council,

My name is Patti Chang, CEO of Feed the Hunger Fund, a Community Development Financial Institution dedicated to supporting small businesses, local food entrepreneurs, and the economic vitality of our communities. I am submitting testimony in strong opposition to the proposal to deplete the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Economic development is not a luxury for O'ahu—it is a lifeline. Our island's small businesses, especially those in food and agriculture, are the backbone of our local economy. They generate jobs, preserve culture, and keep dollars circulating in our communities. OER has played a critical role in connecting small business owners with the resources, funding, and technical assistance they need to survive and grow.

Eliminating the OER budget would have devastating ripple effects:

1. Small Businesses Will Suffer: Without the OER's support, many small businesses—already operating on thin margins—will lose access to critical programs that help them recover from economic shocks, gain capital, and expand.
2. Job Creation and Retention Will Decline: O'ahu's economic health depends on the jobs created by local entrepreneurs. Cutting OER funding jeopardizes these opportunities and weakens our workforce.
3. Resilience and Self-Sufficiency Will Be Undermined: Economic revitalization efforts are essential for building a more resilient island economy that is less dependent on imports and more supportive of local producers and industries.

Feed the Hunger Fund sees firsthand the transformative impact of accessible economic development programs. The Office of Economic Revitalization has been a crucial partner in fostering inclusive growth that lifts up historically under-resourced communities. Without it, the pathways for economic mobility will narrow, and recovery from future challenges will be slower and more painful.

I respectfully urge the City Council to maintain and fully fund the Office of Economic Revitalization. Investing in O'ahu's economic future is investing in the well-being of our people.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Patti Chang

CEO, Feed the Hunger Fund

Name:	Email:	Zip:
GREGORY KIM	gkim@vantagecounsel.com	96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	May 1, 2026 @ 09:42 AM

Testimony:

I submitted written testimony yesterday. I would like to provide oral testimony remotely.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Eze Redwood	ezeredwood@gmail.com	46403
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	May 1, 2026 @ 09:58 AM

Testimony:

OER is extremely important for driving jobs and bringing in investment into Honolulu. Without it, millions in entrepreneur and programmatic investment being worked on would disappear.

I am an Economic Recovery Corps (ERC) Fellow currently serving Gary, Indiana. The ERC places experienced economic development practitioners in communities across the country to tackle complex, place-based challenges. The City and County of Honolulu earned this designation because O‘ahu’s economic challenges require exactly this kind of coordinated, expert-led effort. I am writing because eliminating OER’s budget would undo that work — and the consequences would be immediate and lasting.

OER is not overhead. It is the only entity in the City that acts as an economic integrator which means coordinating across departments, connecting small businesses and entrepreneurs to capital, aligning workforce and food systems investments with community needs, and ensuring federal and philanthropic dollars actually land in O‘ahu’s neighborhoods.

No other City department does this. If OER is eliminated, this function disappears entirely.

During my recent visit, I saw this work firsthand: the O‘ahu Business Connector helping small businesses navigate systems they could not access alone; the Community Equity team bringing City services directly to rural and limited-English-proficiency residents; the Sustainable Agriculture program strengthening local food systems and farmer livelihoods; and a Regenerative Tourism strategy actively reorienting O‘ahu’s visitor economy to benefit residents and not just extract from them. These are not duplicative programs. There is no backup.

The Kona Low flooding put that trust to the test — and OER delivered. When the crisis hit, OER was the entity that communities and partner organizations called first. That responsiveness did not happen by accident. It was the product of years of consistent, on-the-ground relationship-building: showing up before the emergency, earning credibility with farmers, small business owners, and nonprofit partners, and building the cross-agency coordination infrastructure that made a rapid, coherent response possible. OER coordinated disaster feeding efforts, connected impacted businesses to

recovery resources, and aligned the City's response in real time. That kind of institutional trust cannot be improvised during a crisis — and it cannot be rebuilt quickly once dismantled.

We chose Honolulu for an ERC fellowship because OER existed. This placement brought more than expertise, it brought over $600,000 in leveraged federal investment directly tied to OER's local capacity and credibility. Local capacity, embedded, accountable, responsive, is precisely what the ERC model is designed to strengthen, and it is what makes outside investment possible. As fellows who work in distressed communities nationwide, we know what happens when local governments step away from economic development: fragmented services, missed funding, and residents left to navigate broken systems alone. Honolulu built something most cities do

Mahalo for your service and your continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Respectfully submitted,

Eze Redwood

Fellow, US Economic Development Administration, Economic Recovery Corps

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Megan Hageney	mmhageney@gmail.com	77035
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	May 1, 2026 @ 10:06 AM

Testimony:

I am Megan Hageney, an Economic Recovery Corps (ERC) Fellow currently serving Appalachia region of New York . The ERC places experienced economic development practitioners in communities across the country to tackle complex, place-based challenges. The City and County of Honolulu earned this designation because O'ahu's economic challenges require exactly this kind of coordinated, expert-led effort. I am writing because eliminating OER's budget would undo that work — and the consequences would be immediate and lasting.

OER is not overhead. It is the only entity in the City that acts as an economic integrator which means coordinating across departments, connecting small businesses and entrepreneurs to capital, aligning workforce and food systems investments with community needs, and ensuring federal and philanthropic dollars actually land in O'ahu's neighborhoods. No other City department does this. If OER is eliminated, this function disappears entirely.

During my recent visit, I saw this work firsthand: the O'ahu Business Connector helping small businesses navigate systems they could not access alone; the Community Equity team bringing City services directly to rural and limited-English-proficiency residents; the Sustainable Agriculture program strengthening local food systems and farmer livelihoods; and a Regenerative Tourism strategy actively reorienting O'ahu's visitor economy to benefit residents and not just extract from them. These are not duplicative programs. There is no backup.

The Kona Low flooding put that trust to the test — and OER delivered. When the crisis hit, OER was the entity that communities and partner organizations called first. That responsiveness did not happen by accident. It was the product of years of consistent, on-the-ground relationship-building: showing up before the emergency, earning credibility with

farmers, small business owners, and nonprofit partners, and building the cross-agency coordination infrastructure that made a rapid, coherent response possible. OER coordinated disaster feeding efforts, connected impacted businesses to recovery resources, and aligned the City's response in real time. That kind of institutional trust cannot be improvised during a crisis — and it cannot be rebuilt quickly once dismantled.

{OPTIONAL : INSERT YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY - 2-3 SENTENCES}

We chose Honolulu for an ERC fellowship because OER existed. This placement brought more than expertise, it brought over $600,000 in leveraged federal investment directly tied to OER's local capacity and credibility. Local capacity, embedded, accountable, responsive, is precisely what the ERC model is designed to strengthen, and it is what makes outside investment possible. As fellows who work in distressed communities nationwide, we know what happens when local governments step away from economic development: fragmented services, missed funding, and residents left to navigate broken systems alone. Honolulu built something most cities do not have. Eliminating it would cost far more to undo than it saves today.

We respectfully urge this Council to maintain OER's funding at the proposed level. The coordination, the trust, and the infrastructure OER has built belongs to the people of O'ahu — and it deserves to continue.

Mahalo for your service and your continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Tracey Clark Jeffries	jeffries.tracey@gmail.com	63031
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
International Economic Development Council-Economic Recovery Fellow- Public Policy Advising Committee Member	Oppose	May 1, 2026 @ 10:12 AM

Testimony:

Opposition Summary – Bill 22 (2026), CD1 (Measure 3647)

Bill 22 (2026), CD1, which establishes the Executive Operating Budget for FY 2026–2027, should be opposed due to concerns about fiscal transparency, prioritization, and long-term community impact.

First, the measure represents a large-scale operating budget without sufficient clarity on how funds are allocated across critical needs. Without stronger accountability measures and clearer performance metrics, there is a risk of inefficient spending and limited return on public investment.

Second, the bill may not adequately prioritize pressing community issues such as affordable housing, small business support, and infrastructure improvements. Given ongoing economic pressures and cost-of-living challenges on O'ahu, residents deserve a budget that more directly addresses equity and economic resilience.

Finally, adopting a broad operating budget without deeper public engagement and scrutiny could reduce trust in government decision-making. Residents and stakeholders should have greater opportunity to evaluate how funds are distributed and whether they align with community priorities.

For these reasons, the bill should be reconsidered, revised, or delayed until greater transparency, accountability, and alignment with community needs are ensured.		
Name: Bettina Mok	Email: director@tlchawaii.org	Zip: 96822
Representing: The Legal Clinic	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 1, 2026 @ 10:20 AM
Testimony: Submitted earlier via email (from Ana Flores at The Legal Clinic, aflores@tlchawaii.org)		
Name: Doreen Wong	Email: doreenwong9@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 1, 2026 @ 10:23 AM

PONO CONNECTIONS

Andrew Rosen
88 Pi'ikoi Street,
Suite 2304
Honolulu, HI 96813

April 27, 2026

Aloha Chair Okimoto and Members of the Committee,

My name is Andrew Rosen, and I am writing on behalf of Pono Connections, LLC in support of the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) and its continued role in supporting innovative economic development initiatives within the City and County of Honolulu.

In 2023, OER played an important role in helping us launch the pilot phase of Project Ho'omana, a business development and workforce initiative focused on supporting Native Hawaiian entrepreneurs and professionals. Their willingness to support new ideas and invest in early-stage programming made it possible for us to demonstrate real impact in the community.

Through that initial support, Project Ho'omana has grown to serve over 1,000 participants, promote Native Hawaiian businesses, and create pathways toward long-term economic success. The results we are seeing today are directly tied to OER's early belief in the concept and their ability to move quickly in support of programs that align with community needs.

OER provides a unique and valuable function within the City by identifying and supporting initiatives that may not fit within traditional funding structures but have the potential to deliver meaningful economic impact.

As Honolulu continues to address workforce challenges, rising costs of living, and the need for inclusive economic growth, the role of OER remains critically important.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our experience and for your continued support of programs that strengthen our community and economy.

Respectfully and with Aloha,

Andrew Rosen
Founder | CEO
Pono Connections, LLC

PO Box 4, Kunia, Hawaii, 96759 || 808-622-9026 || www.agstewardshiphawaii.org

April 27, 2026

Dear Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

On behalf of Agriculture Stewardship Hawai‘i, I am writing in strong support of the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

Agriculture Stewardship Hawai‘i is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the viability and sustainability of Hawai‘i’s agricultural producers and food system through technical assistance, resource coordination, stewardship-based business education, and policy engagement. We also lead the Statewide Food Systems Coordination Initiative (HSFSC), launched in 2024 with philanthropic and gubernatorial support. HSFSC works to align agricultural stakeholders, address infrastructure barriers, secure federal resources, advance institutional procurement of local food, and support policy priorities that strengthen Hawai‘i’s food system.

Through our work with farmers and food access partners across the state, we consistently see the need for strong, city-led economic development services that directly support O‘ahu’s farmers and food producers. Based in Kunia, O‘ahu, we have also worked closely with OER during the Kona Low response to support impacted farmers. These experiences have underscored the importance of staff within OER who understand the economic realities of agriculture and food production in Hawai‘i. Such capacity is essential to effectively serving O‘ahu’s farmers and advancing a resilient local food system.

For these reasons, we strongly support OER’s continued work in this area and respectfully urge the Council to restore and preserve funding that supports farmers, the local food system, and OER’s broader economic development efforts.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Amanda

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator
Agriculture Stewardship Hawai‘i
Email: amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org,
Tel: 808 429 5310

Susannah Wesley
COMMUNITY CENTER

Budget (BUD) Meeting (May 1, 2026 @ 10:30 AM)

RE: Support of Bill 022(26) - Relating to the Executive Operating Budget & Program for FY27

Dear Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee,

My name is Joni Chun, and I serve as Executive Director of the Susannah Wesley Community Center (SWCC) in Kalihi. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of restoring the City Administration's FY2027 budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER), including the funding that restores and preserves the Community Equity Liaison positions.

OER plays an important role as the City's economic integrator by improving coordination across systems, reducing fragmentation, and helping public resources reach residents more effectively. In communities like Kalihi, where many families face rising costs of living, housing instability, food insecurity, and limited access to services, this work is critical.

The Community Equity Liaisons are a strong example of how OER translates City resources into meaningful community impact. Through SWCC's Food Pantry, Free Store, and large scale Ohana Food Distribution events, CELs help connect families to City services, improve access for individuals facing language and system barriers, and strengthen communication between the City and the communities it seeks to serve.

They help build trust between government systems and residents who may otherwise feel disconnected from available support. They also help identify emerging needs and barriers so the City can respond more effectively and equitably.

Without stable funding for OER and these positions, families would face greater barriers to accessing services, language access would be reduced, and opportunities for meaningful connection between the City and vulnerable residents would be weakened.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. Supporting OER is an investment in stronger neighborhoods, more effective public service delivery, and a more resilient O'ahu.

Mahalo for your time, leadership, and continued commitment to the people of Honolulu.

Sincerely,

Joni Chun
Executive Director

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Nam Vu the Chief Operating Officer of Hub Coworking Hawaii. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable Tourism
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

Hub Coworking Hawaii works closely with OER to provide small business services, disseminate information, and build community.

Sustaining OER is important because it is a valuable resource for the community that is underserved and struggling with challenges coming from all directions.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Nam Vu
Chief Executive Officer
Hub Coworking Hawaii
nam@hubcoworkinghi.com

HAWAI'I BROADBAND OFFICE

DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES • STATE OF HAWAI'I

May 1, 2026

Aloha Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee,

The Hawaii Broadband Office (HiBO) respectfully submits testimony in **strong support of restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027**. OER serves as the City and County of Honolulu's primary coordinating entity for economic and infrastructure initiatives and has been an essential partner to the State in advancing broadband and digital access efforts. As the State's coordinating office under **HRS §§27-C and 27-D**, HiBO relies on effective county-level counterparts, and OER has consistently fulfilled this role for the City.

This partnership is grounded in both current collaboration and demonstrated history. During the COVID-19 pandemic, while serving as Deputy Director at the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), I worked closely with OER to align State and City efforts focused on economic resilience, small business support, and community response. OER played a key role in connecting City resources with State-led initiatives, helping to ensure that programs were responsive to real-time needs and that information flowed effectively between agencies. That experience established a strong foundation for the coordinated approach that continues today in broadband and digital equity work.

OER has continued to demonstrate its value through concrete actions that directly support statewide priorities. In 2025, OER played a leading role in organizing and hosting the **Hawaii Broadband Hoike in Honolulu**, convening statewide government, private sector, and community stakeholders to advance broadband deployment, digital access, and workforce development strategies. This convening strengthened alignment across sectors and helped translate planning into actionable next steps.

OER has also worked in close partnership with HiBO to **identify and develop community-based project concepts** aligned with the State's Digital Equity Plan and Capacity Grant efforts. Through its direct connections with City departments, community organizations, and local stakeholders, OER has helped surface priority needs and implementation-ready projects, ensuring that proposed investments reflect on-the-ground conditions and deliver meaningful community benefit.

Equally important, OER serves as the **central point of connection between HiBO and the City and County of Honolulu**, enabling streamlined coordination across City departments, including planning, permitting, facilities, and community services. This coordination supports timely project advancement, aligns with permitting efficiencies under **HRS §27-45**, and ensures that

City priorities are integrated into statewide broadband and infrastructure planning. Without this centralized function, coordination would be fragmented, increasing the risk of delays and reducing the effectiveness of both State and City investments.

Maintaining OER's operational capacity is therefore not only a City priority but a statewide imperative. OER enables Honolulu to effectively partner in major infrastructure and digital initiatives, supports economic resilience, and ensures that public investments translate into tangible benefits for residents and businesses.

For these reasons, HiBO strongly urges the Council to **preserve OER's budget and operational capacity**. Continued support for OER will ensure sustained coordination, readiness, and execution of initiatives critical to Hawaii's broadband and digital economy future.
Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,
Chung I. Chang
Strategic Broadband Coordinator
Hawaii Broadband Office
Email: chung.il.chang@hawaii.gov

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

April 28, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Al Ogata the President & CEO of CyberHawaii, a Honolulu based non-profit focused on improving the overall community's resilience to cybersecurity threats and to improving educational opportunities for keiki in our increasingly digital world. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable Tourism
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

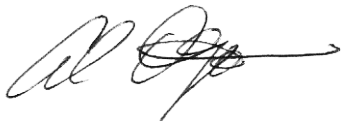
CyberHawaii works closely with OER to improve the ability of Honolulu based businesses and residents to defend themselves against increasingly sophisticated cyber threat actors. According to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), Hawaii businesses and residents lost over $101M in 2025 to cyber-criminals. This is up from $51M in 2024. Each dollar lost represents one less opportunity for a business to expand, a parent to pay for their Keiki's education or for Kupuna to remain independent as they age.

Sustaining OER is important because building a safe community requires participation from all levels of government. The federal government has reduced its participation in safety and security efforts, increasing the need for state and local governments to shoulder more of the load. Significantly reducing OER's budget increases the risk of more local businesses and residents becoming victims as technologies like Artificial Intelligence make it easier for cyber-criminals to succeed. Given how increasingly dependent we all are on technology to live our lives, maintaining or increasing OER's budget will demonstrate that the City understands its role

in the evolving technology ecosystem and is willing to invest in keeping the entire community resilient.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.



Al Ogata
President CEO
CyberHawaii
al.ogata@cyberhawaii.org
(808) 778-4725

STATE OF HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

KEITH A. REGAN
ACTING LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

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Web: https://planning.hawaii.gov/

Coastal Zone Management Program

Environmental Review Program

Land Use Commission

Land Use Division

Special Plans Branch

State Transit-Oriented Development

Statewide Geographic Information System

Statewide Sustainability Branch

Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS
Director

before the
HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

Friday, May 1, 2026
10:30 AM
City Council Chamber

in consideration of
BILL 22 (2026), CD1,
EXECUTIVE OPERATING BUDGET FOR FY 2027.

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Committee.

The State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) respectfully submits comments with concern regarding the contemplated elimination of funding and positions for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) under a proposed amendment to the Executive Operating Budget.

Established during the pandemic, OER played a pivotal role in guiding Honolulu through unprecedented economic challenges. It quickly proved effective as a gateway for business recovery programs, an advocate for an equitable economy, and a trusted steward of federal resources.

OER continues to play a critical role in strengthening O'ahu's economy, and therefore our state's, through its programs supporting small businesses and place-based economic development. Beyond its direct contributions to O'ahu, OER models innovative approaches that can be adapted to other counties statewide.

For example, OER's O'ahu Business Connector program deploys Resource Connectors who serve as small business liaisons within their communities. These individuals regularly engage entrepreneurs and businesses to understand their challenges and needs first-hand, and connect them to available resources and share essential information, such as disaster recovery support. In doing so, OER supports new business formation and helps existing businesses sustain operations, retain jobs for O'ahu's residents, and pursue new opportunities for growth.

With its established infrastructure and credibility across communities, OER serves as a critical bridge for implementing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)—a shared responsibility grounded in a long-standing partnership between OPSD and the four counties. With OER's support, the OPSD recently secured federal designation of a statewide economic development district, unlocking access to additional funding for CEDS-aligned projects that the City & County of Honolulu and the State would not otherwise have been eligible to pursue.

Reductions in OER capacity would undermine both Oʻahu and statewide initiatives to strengthen Hawaiʻi's economy at a time of global economic volatility and increasing climate-related disruptions.

OER's role as an economic integrator is essential to continue aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact. OPSD strongly supports restoring the City administration's proposed budget for OER to ensure continuity of these functions and avoid disruption to ongoing coordination and implementation efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND®

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1164 Bishop St., Ste. 1512
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tpl.org

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Oceanit

April 28, 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, for the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Budget (D-0176(26)). We request that DPR's budget remains without large proposed budget cuts to current expenses and salaries. 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 Hawaiʻi 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 Hawaiʻi, 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 Hawaiʻi with a pilot project at ʻAʻala Park and has been working with DPR to implement a grass-roots community-based park improvements for a shared vision for ʻAʻala 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,



Emily Perry
Parks for People Program Manager
Trust for Public Land

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Nadezna Ortega, the Executive Director of Tagnawa Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable Tourism
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

Tagnawa Hawai'i works closely with OER to provide language translation and interpretation for affected communities of the Kona Low flooding, particularly those who are immigrants and have limited English language proficiency, so that they may have equal access to resources and aid.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Nadezna Ortega
Executive Director
Tagnawa Hawai'i
executivedirector@tagnawa.org

KŌKUA KALIHI VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SERVICES

2239 N. SCHOOL STREET ✙ HONOLULU, HAWAI`I 96819 ✙ TEL: 808-791-9400 ✙ FAX: 808-848-0979

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee: May 1, 2026

My name is Jesse Lipman, I am the the Program Director for the Kōkua Kalihi Valley (KKV) Roots program. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

Our KKV Roots program works to connect the health of our local food system to community based health care. We work with many city and state departments, but OER is the government partner who best understands these crucial links between economic health, food security, and community relationships. They are the go to department for our Kalihi based efforts to revitalize economics and ecosystem, to make it easier to access healthy food and build bridges between government and community. Their staff is highly capable, committed and also accessible. To hear that their budget may be cut is gut wrenching. When community members and partners complain about government and express cynicism, I say "wait, look at OER. They are the example of how government can work for the people."

The state and county consistently make goals to strengthen small business development, expand sustainable tourism, and restore the local food system to be less dependent on imports. If we cut the funding to the guys who spearhead this work, do these goals mean anything?

Sustaining OER is both an investment in our future, and a commitment to the people who believe government has not given up on being a creative and responsible steward of sustainable economic development and land based small business support.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident. Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.



Jesse Lipman, jlipman@kkv.net 808-554-7916

Roots Program Director, Kōkua Kalihi Valley, CFS

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

TESTIMONY OF THE YMCA OF HONOLULU
SUPPORT OF BILL 22 (2026), CD1
EXECUTIVE OPERATING BUDGET FY2027
RELATING TO CONGREGATE DINING FUNDING

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
MAY 1, 2026

Aloha Chair Val Okimoto and Committee on Budget Members,

The YMCA of Honolulu strongly supports Bill 22 (2026) and respectfully urges the inclusion of $1 million in funding to support congregate dining programs in Honolulu.

We submit this testimony on behalf of the YMCA and our fellow community partners who provide essential nutrition and wellness services to kūpuna across Oʻahu.

Food security for kūpuna is not just a social service. It is a community health and sustainability issue.

In Hawaiʻi, kūpuna are the foundation of our families and communities. Yet too many face rising living costs, food insecurity, chronic health conditions, and increasing social isolation. Congregate dining programs exist because a meal alone is not enough.

At the YMCA of Honolulu, our Kūpuna Food & Fun program provides nutritious, culturally appropriate meals alongside physical activity, social connection, and enrichment opportunities. For many participants, this program is the primary reason they leave their homes and engage with others.

Since January 2022, our program has:

- Served over 210,000 meals
- Delivered more than 11,000 hours of wellness and enrichment activities
- Operated across six locations on Oʻahu
- Supported over 2,100 unduplicated kūpuna, serving approximately 575 annually

The outcomes are significant and measurable:

- 97% report more energy
- 95% feel stronger
- 99% have made new friends
- 96% report a more positive outlook on life

YMCA OF HONOLULU
1441 Pali Highway, Honolulu HI 96813
P 808 531 YMCA **F** 808 533 1286 www.ymcahonolulu.org

ARNOLD MARTINES, Chairman, Board of Directors
WALTER F. THOEMMES III, President & Chief Executive Officer

United Way
Aloha United Way

These are preventive health outcomes that reduce hospitalizations, delay institutional care, and support aging in place.

One participant shared that after losing her husband and struggling with isolation, the program gave her friends, laughter, and the strength to keep going.

Programs like Kūpuna Food & Fun demonstrate what effective public-private partnerships can achieve. Through collaboration with community partners, meals are prepared and delivered reliably, while the YMCA provides safe, welcoming spaces that support whole-person health.

However, despite strong outcomes and growing demand, these programs face a critical funding challenge.

Today, we serve hundreds of kūpuna and maintain a waitlist, not due to lack of capacity, but due to lack of sustained funding.

Act 310 funding expires at the end of 2026, creating an imminent funding cliff at a time when demand is rapidly increasing.

By 2035, nearly one in three Hawaiʻi residents will be over age 60. The need is not emerging—it is already here.

The YMCA and its partners are ready. We have the infrastructure, proven programs, trusted partnerships, and demonstrated impact.

What we need now is sustained, reliable funding to meet the scale of the need.

An investment of $1 million in congregate dining programs will expand access to meals, reduce isolation, improve health outcomes, and strengthen community resilience.

This is not just an investment in meals. It is an investment in connection, prevention, dignity, and the well-being of our kūpuna.

Mahalo for your leadership and your commitment to the health and sustainability of our community. The YMCA of Honolulu respectfully urges your support for Bill 22 (2026).

Respectfully submitted,

Walter F. Thoemmes III
President and CEO

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

Aloha, my name is George Yarbrough and I work as an Economic Recovery Corps Fellow of International Economic Development Council with OER. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

I've seen first hand over the years how OER's leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach. OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable Tourism
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

The ERC Fellows work closely with OER to support in specific areas of economic development. I am supporting the OER in launching the City's first small business loan fund which will help accelerate entrepreneurs' ability to tap into capital at an early stage. From our perspective I see a strong value proposition for there to be a City department focused on economic development. This is powerful as the city is closest to the problems affecting the population.

Sustaining OER is important because the office has been the only office interacting, supporting, and connecting with small businesses in Honolulu. They have the ability to make powerful connections and leverage the network of public and private resources.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

George Yarbrough

ERC Fellow, IEDC, (808) 754 6362 / gyarbrough@economicrecoverycorps.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Summer Shiigi, the owner of Ten Tomorrow and partner of Keep It Kaimukī. I am submitting testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for the Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role in the City's economic integrator — coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity.

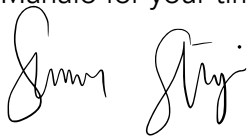
Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly support the economic pillars that our small business community depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable toursim
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

As a small business owner I have been called into meetings with OER to share our struggles and lend a voice to areas that need support. Ten Tomorrow is a local clothing brand and it felt valuable to explain the hardships of local manufacturing - dying workforce, high costs for materials, difficulties with retail/sales. Keep It Kaimukī is a grassroots brand with the purpose to uplift, connect, and bring awareness to the small business community in the Kaimukī neighborhood. We've also worked with OER on our annual event Keep It Kaimukī Saturday. They have helped us achieve some of our goals to pull off our growing event and connect us to other departments, grant opportunities, and agencies who we can build relationships with.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding in the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is important.

Mahalo for your time,



Summer Shiigi
Owner Ten Tomorrow
Partner Keep It Kaimukī
contact@tentomorrow.com

CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAIʻI

SUPPORT for BUDGET OF OFFICE OF ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

TO: Chair Okimoto and Members, Honolulu City Council Budget Committee
FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawaiʻi
Bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org; 808-527-4613
FOR: Hearing on May 1, 2026; 10:30 AM;
Bill 22, City Administration Operating Budget

Chair Okimoto and Members, Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison of Catholic Charities Hawai`i. Catholic Charities Hawai`i (CCH) strongly supports the restoration of the City's administrative budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER's leadership and focus on aligning efforts and reducing fragmentation strengthen O`ahu's overall economic health. Their work supports the resiliency and growth of small businesses, technology, sustainable tourism, local agriculture, and workforce development. These are core pillars of a vibrant community.

OER plays a vital role coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and to enhance how residents and businesses can access opportunities. Catholic Charities Hawai`i directly experienced how this Office enhanced the resiliency of our local systems in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Through close collaboration, OER helped CCH administer $120.6 million in emergency assistance to 10,162 O'ahu households through the Rent and Utility Relief Program (RURP), ensuring critical support reached those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. OER's steady guidance amid constantly evolving federal requirements was invaluable, helping CCH maintain compliance while delivering assistance efficiently. This partnership demonstrates OER's exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to supporting Oʻahu's communities not only during times of crisis, but throughout long-term recovery and resilience building.

Catholic Charities Hawaiʻi (CCH) is a community-based organization that has served Hawaiʻi for over 78 years, providing social services to more than 40,000 individuals statewide each year. Our programs serve some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, including kūpuna, veterans, children, families, individuals experiencing houselessness, and immigrants.

Because of our mission to strengthen families and support those most in need, we strongly support the Office of Economic Revitalization's mission to serve as a bridge between government and the community. Their work is even more critical now in light of the Kona Low flood recovery efforts. **We respectfully urge the Budget Committee to restore the OER budget request for FY 2027.** Thank you for considering this important proposal.

Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation
521 Ala Moana Blvd, Suite 255 | 808-539-3806
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 | www.htdc.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Trung Lam the Executive Director & CEO of the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC), a State agency attached to the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). I am submitting this testimony to express HTDC's support to maintain the City's administration budget request for the Office of Revitalization (OER), for FY27.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator - coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable Tourism
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

HTDC works closely with OER to deliver on our Federal award for the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), Technical Assistance (TA) program. OER's outreach on O'ahu helps to greatly extend the program's legal, accounting, financial, and capital-readiness services to diverse and underserved communities. OER also supports HTDC's accelerator funding opportunity by serving on the review committee and providing recommendations for awards to programs with strong economic potential to grow local high-impact companies and create high-value jobs.

We respectfully request that the Council strongly consider maintaining OER's funding at the requested level. OER's coordination of cross-sector partners, resource alignment, and facilitation between government and community remains crucial, particularly as Kona Low flood recovery efforts continue. Ensuring OER's continuity strengthens progress toward an affordable, resilient, and opportunity-rich economy for O'ahu.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued commitment to the people of O'ahu.

E Mālama Pono,

Trung Lam
Executive Director & CEO
Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC)
trung.d.lam@hawaii.gov | (808) 282-5729

May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Meli James the Cofounder of Mana Up. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable Tourism
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen Oʻahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

Mana Up is a statewide initiative that provides entrepreneurs in Hawaiʻi with the resources and tools to grow their businesses and scale globally. As these entrepreneurs continue to grow, they also contribute to the expansion of our local economy. As part of our mission, we aim to sustain the local economy through economic diversification, local job creation, community giveback, investment, and a regenerative culture of entrepreneurship, providing a better future for generations to come here in Hawaiʻi.

Our experience working with hundreds of local makers and innovators has shown us that Hawaiʻi has no shortage of talent, but we do have a shortage of long-term strategy to ensure our talent can find meaningful, well-paying work.

643 Ilalo Street
Suite 209
Honolulu, HI 96813

aloha@manauphawaii.com
manauphawaii.com

Mana Up works closely with OER to assist small businesses, support job training for residents in underserved communities, and support housing initiatives.

Sustaining OER is important because our experience working with hundreds of local makers and innovators has shown us that Hawai‘i has no shortage of talent, but we do have a shortage of long-term strategy to ensure our talent can find meaningful, well-paying work. Many of our local entrepreneurs struggle to find a workforce to support their businesses. When these positions go unfilled, or when our most creative minds move to the continent to find higher wages, we lose the very fuel that drives economic diversification. We need to ensure our workforce development efforts keep pace with the global economy.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER’s funding at the requested level. OER’s ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER’s work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O‘ahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O‘ahu.



Meli James
Cofounder
Mana Up
808-354-1238 / meli@manauphawaii.com

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

April 29, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

My name is Gregory R. Kim, and I serve on the Economic Revitalization Commission of the City and County of Honolulu. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

I have served as a Commissioner on the Economic Revitalization Commission (Commission) since January 2023, and have had the privilege of working closely with OER on various initiatives to incentive, develop, and grow good jobs for the people of Honolulu. When I was interviewed by the Honolulu City Council when it was considering my nomination, it urged me to pursue bold, new, ideas that can make significant impacts to our community and create good jobs that will enable them to continue to live, work, and thrive. To do so, the Commission needs the support of OER.

The Economic Revitalization Commission works closely with OER to support farmers, support and incubate small business, support job training, and support housing initiatives, and focuses on underserved communities. OER, in collaboration with the Commission, has implemented substantial programs, but it has much more work to do. Only a few years ago, OER pivoted from pandemic relief to economic development. It needs time to develop and implement its programs, and the impacts will then follow.

Sustaining OER is critical. It is the only office within the City and County of Honolulu that has programs to grow the economy of the City and County of Honolulu. And, as the economy grows, more residents are employed, and more revenues are generated for the City and County of Honolulu. In short, it is a wise and prudent investment to continue the work of OER.

Moreover, the challenges created by the Kona low flooding underscore the need for attention to the economy, and the role OER plays in fostering a resilient, sustainable economy.

OER is a unique resource for the City and County of Honolulu. Its "can do" attitude and proven track record make it the ideal Office to undertake this critical economic work. I have been most impressed by their ability to get things done, and if they commit do something, they do it. The Commission comprised a talented and motivated group of entrepreneurs, financial experts, and community leaders that, in collaboration with OER, can make big impacts in the community by taking bold, innovative action. That is our mindset.

Studies have shown that most of the new jobs in our country are created by small business owners, and not by large corporations. By providing support to our new and existing small business community, we will ultimately help them create thousands of new, high paying, jobs for the residents of the City and County of Honolulu.

I therefore respectfully urge the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of Oʻahu.

Sincerely,

Gregory R. Kim

Hawai'i Community Foundation

hawaiicommunityfoundation.org

827 Fort Street Mall Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
MAIN 808-537-6333 FAX 808-521-6286

TESTIMONY RE: BILL 22 (26) EXECUTIVE OPERATING BUDGET FY 26-27

May 1, 2026

Aloha e Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF), I am writing in **strong support of restoring the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER)** for Fiscal Year 2027. OER serves as the City's economic integrator, coordinating across systems to improve access to opportunity for residents and businesses. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on coordination, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through its initiatives, OER supports key economic pillars that our O'ahu communities rely on, including small business and entrepreneurship, agriculture and local food systems, and workforce development. Collectively, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's economy, cultural vitality, and community well-being. Many of these pillars align with HCF's priorities, specifically within our CHANGE Framework across our Community-Centered Economy, Arts and Culture, and Natural Environment sectors.

Reducing OER's budget would negatively impact our shared priorities in workforce development, small business investment & growth, and housing initiatives. As a philanthropic organization, HCF recognizes OER's role in bridging public and private sectors to help maximize the impact of collective resources. Supporting OER's core work ensures that progress in one area reinforces gains across others, creating a more durable economy for our island home. It takes county, state, federal, private and philanthropic resources to ensure we continue creating a vibrant O'ahu.

We respectfully request that the Council **restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level making whole OER's budget in Bill 22 CD 1.** OER fills a vital role in aligning systems, reducing fragmentation, and ensuring resources reach the communities that need them most.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and dedication to O'ahu's communities.

Sincerely,

Terrance R. George

Terry George
Hawai'i Community Foundation
CEO & President
808-566-5579 | TGeorge@hcf-hawaii.org

holomua
COLLABORATIVE

OUR MISSION
To support and advance public policies that make Hawai‘i affordable for all working families.

OUR VISION
Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai‘i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai‘i can thrive.

BOARD MEMBERS
Jason Fujimoto
Meli James, *Board Chair*
Micah Kāne
Brandon Kurisu
Brad Nicolai
Mike Pietsch
Sunshine Topping

ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Josh Feldman
Brittany Heyd
Alicia Moy
Ed Schultz

Josh Wisch
President & Executive Director

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HolomuaCollaborative.org

Committee: **Honolulu City Council, Committee on Budget**
Bill Number: **Bill 22 (2026), CD1, Executive Operating Budget for FY 2027**
Hearing Date and Time: **May 1, 2026 10:30**
Re: **Testimony of Holomua Collaborative – In Support of Restoring Funds for the Office of Economic Revitalization**

Aloha Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee:

We submit this testimony to respectfully urge you to restore the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

Holomua Collaborative has worked closely with OER since our founding nearly four years ago. Our missions are deeply aligned: we are both focused on strengthening Hawai‘i’s economy so that local working families and local businesses can afford to stay and thrive. OER’s mission to build a strong economy that improves quality of life for every community, small business, and ‘ohana on O‘ahu directly complements our own.

Because of that alignment, OER has been a critical partner in our work. Holomua convenes leaders from the for-profit, nonprofit, labor, and government sectors to address issues of affordability and economic opportunity. Through this cross-sector approach, we help develop, refine, and advance policies for legislative consideration. This work has contributed to the passage of legislation on workforce housing, statewide planning, support for local businesses, and more—efforts in which OER has played an important role.

Our partnership produces tangible results. Most recently, Holomua and OER have worked hand-in-hand to advance state-level efforts to give local businesses a better opportunity to compete for government contracts. That bill is currently pending final consideration in conference committee. Its continued viability is due in large part to OER’s leadership in identifying the opportunity, engaging cross-sector advocates, and helping to educate policymakers and the public about its potential impact.

OER’s effectiveness stems from both the expertise of its staff and the trusted relationships it has built with local businesses across industries throughout the City and County of Honolulu. As a result, OER has been a consistent and valued partner in shaping practical, broadly supported solutions. Progress moves at the speed of trust—especially in Hawai‘i. If the trust OER has built over the years is allowed to erode through the elimination of the agency, it will not easily be rebuilt.

Beyond our direct partnership, OER plays a unique role within the City’s broader economic strategy. It serves as the connective tissue across the City’s economic efforts—reducing fragmentation, improving coordination, and ensuring that public and private resources translate into meaningful impact. By aligning stakeholders and breaking down silos, OER helps ensure that initiatives in areas such as small business

holomua
COLLABORATIVE

development, workforce pipelines, and innovation reinforce one another rather than operate in isolation.

OER is also the only City agency whose core mission is building a strong economy. That singular focus matters. A budget is the government's clearest expression of its priorities, and eliminating OER would send a signal that economic revitalization is no longer a central focus. At a time when economic resilience and opportunity are top concerns for residents and businesses alike, that is not the message we should be sending.

For all these reasons, we respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. At a time of significant economic uncertainty, this is the moment to strengthen the relationships, coordination, and trust that drive progress—not dismantle them.

Mahalo for your time, your service, and your continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Sincerely,



Joshua Wisch
President and Executive Director

City and County of Honolulu
May 1, 2026
Testimony of Eliza Talbot - Bill 22(2026)

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 III. 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 building 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 plays a critical role in maintaining O'ahu's economic stability during these volatile times. I urge the Council to restore funds to OER and work with the Administration and the Commission to improve outcomes and address Council priorities.

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 Budget

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

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Roberta Hickey-Gómez the Programs and Communications Manager of The Mediation Center of the Pacific (MCP). I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable Tourism
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

MCP works closely with OER on housing stabilization initiatives, particularly in early intervention and pre-eviction services. This work is embedded in a broader cross-sector network that includes legal service providers, tenant advocates, faith-based organizations, and community-based partners engaged in housing stability efforts across O'ahu.

Through this collaboration, MCP supports multilingual, culturally responsive outreach to tenants at risk of housing instability. OER's convening role is essential to aligning these efforts across systems, ensuring that tenants—particularly those in immigrant, limited English proficiency, and historically underserved communities—can access timely, trusted information and support before eviction filings occur.

This coordination also strengthens the broader housing stabilization ecosystem, including rental assistance and intervention pathways such as RURP-related processes, where early engagement is critical to preventing displacement and reducing downstream impacts on courts, landlords, and social service systems.

Sustaining OER is important because it provides the connective infrastructure that enables early intervention at scale. Without this coordination function, pre-eviction and housing stabilization efforts become fragmented, reducing outreach effectiveness, limiting multilingual access, and increasing the likelihood of avoidable eviction filings and housing displacement in vulnerable communities.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Roberta Hickey-Gómez
Programs and Communications Manager
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers
The Mediation Center of the Pacific, Inc.
1301 Young Street, 2nd Floor
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Ph: (808) 521-6767

HAWAIʻI GREEN GROWTH
UN LOCAL2030 HUB

Honolulu City Council Committee on Budget
City Council Chamber
Friday, May 1, 2026, 10:30 A.M.

Position: Support of Restoring OER Budget in Bill 22

Aloha Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and members of the Committee,

My name is Kalani L. Kaʻanāʻanā, President & CEO of Hawaiʻi Green Growth. I write today on behalf of Hawaiʻi Green Growth's support of restoring the Office of Economic Revitalization's (OER) budget within Bill 22.

Hawaiʻi Green Growth (HGG) stewards the state's sustainability goals across economic, social, and environmental sectors, bringing together leaders, decision-makers, and public and private sector partners to work in coordination and collaboration to accelerate progress and innovation.

Among these partners, the most consistent innovation and action comes from our county partners. OER's programming across food systems, workforce development, and small-business acceleration is well aligned with the Aloha+ Challenge and is worthy of continued investment.

The team behind these programs is resourceful and collaborative, partnering across the county and state at large, exponentially increasing both their impact and value for investment. The work that OER leads both strengthens the fabric of our community and yields tangible, measurable outcomes. In many cases, the long-term value these initiatives generate far outweighs their present monetary cost. We owe it to our communities to invest in them; OER's blueprint works.

For these reasons, Hawaiʻi Green Growth supports the reinstatement of funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization into the Council Budget.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Kalani L. Kaʻanāʻanā
President & CEO

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Budget Committee:

My name is Mark Hamamoto and I have been farming in Waialua for the last 21 years. I strongly support the $5 million Farmer Disaster Recovery Grant amendment to Bill 22.

In all my years farming in Waialua, and additionally for the 5 years I farmed in Makaha (1995-2000), I have never experienced a farm as powerful and destructive as the Kona Low storms that hit O'ahu a little over a month ago. Upwards of 250 farms were negatively impacted with a total of over $15 million in losses. These costs relate to all kinds of property and equipment damage and destruction, loss of crops in fields and continued expenses relating to rents, leases and mortgages.

Farms are also more vulnerable when it comes to these types of natural disasters due to their inability to qualify for financial support programs that are more focused on households and other types of businesses. Household programs don't cover agricultural losses and business programs like SBA disaster loans usually don't work for farmers.

Farming is hard work with low profit margins. And yet there is a clear need for more food production in our State as a matter of food security and to actually help diversify our local economy. And even though farming is difficult, there is dignity in the work of farmers. There is a feeling of satisfaction knowing that you are providing food for your community and caring for the land in a way that honors and respects it's productive capacity. Aloha 'aina is a real value and something that everyone in Hawaii from their different cultures and ethnicities can embrace.

Please support this amendment. This Amendment will support farmer's who are struggling financially and facing a very difficult future due to these recent storms and flooding. Equally important, please approve this amendment as a way to tangibly support farmer's here in Hawaii as an essential, highly-valued part of the diversified local economy we want to see in our future.

Thank you,
Mark Hamamoto

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET
Val A. Okimoto, Chair, Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Hearing Date: May 1st, 2026 | Letter Date: April 29, 2026

Aloha Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto and Members of the Committee:

The Legal Clinic submits this testimony in support of restoring the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) budget for Fiscal Year 2027. Our mission is to ensure justice for low-income immigrants and migrants in Hawai'i through high-quality immigration legal services, education, and advocacy.

OER plays a vital role in strengthening the City's economy by bringing together agencies and partners to improve coordination and expand access to opportunities for residents and businesses. Through its leadership, policy work, and outreach, OER helps advance key economic pillars our communities depend on, including workforce development and small business entrepreneurship.

The Legal Clinic (TLC) works closely with OER to ensure that these opportunities are accessible to O'ahu's immigrant and migrant populations. Specifically, OER has been an essential partner to our office by:

- **Enhancing language access:** Ensuring that critical economic and City information reaches residents with limited English proficiency (LEP).
- **Strengthening community outreach:** Helping connect vulnerable populations with official City resources, and services like the ones TLC offers.
- **Facilitating information sharing:** Providing a centralized source of timely data that allows us to better advise our clients on their rights and resource opportunities. OER has coordinated several webinars where TLC shared know-your-rights information for the Micronesian/ COFA community and others. Each time, we reached thousands of viewers, thanks to OER.

Sustaining OER is critical because the office helps ensure alignment between government policy and the needs of our immigrant communities. Without OER, there would be a significant gap in the City's ability to communicate equitably across diverse linguistic and cultural communities, potentially leaving many residents behind in the City's economic recovery. This is especially true in times of disaster and post-disaster, like now, in response to the Kona Low flood impacts.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step toward a local economy built on affordability, resilience, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident.

Mahalo Nui loa for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of The Legal Clinic and Board President Amefil Agbayani,

Bettina Mok

Bettina Mok
Executive Director

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Mike Biechler
President
North Shore Law Offices

Carol Philips
Vice-President
North Shore Surf Girls

Marcia Murphy
Treasurer
Pacific One Mortgage

Darrell Whitaker
Secretary
Camp Mokulēʻia

Lamont Brown
Director
Maya's Tapas and Wine

T.J Cuaresma
Director
Tita Ei Nei Productions

Dave Fuga
Director
KT Protection Systems

Erica Lehmkuhl
Director
Seaside Realty

Michelle Maldonado
Director

Thomas Naylor
Director
Ke Nui Kitchen

Michael Sweetman
Director
Law Offices of
Einwechter & Hyatt

Robert Walker
Director
Integral Consulting

Bill Ward
Director
Corcoran Properties

Virginia Wallace
Administrator

Marsha Taylor
Community Outreach
Coordinator

City and County of Honolulu
May 1, 2026

Testimony of the North Shore Chamber of Commerce
Bill 22 (2026)

Aloha Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee,

On behalf of the North Shore Chamber of Commerce, we respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of restoring full funding to the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER)** within the executive operating budget under Bill 22 (2026).

Over the past several months, our community has been navigating the devastating impacts of the recent Kona Low flooding. The North Shore Chamber has been on the front lines of recovery—working daily with impacted residents, small businesses, and farmers to connect them with critical resources, assist with applications, and coordinate relief efforts. Through this work, we have seen firsthand the essential role that OER plays in disaster response and long-term economic recovery.

OER as a Critical Partner in Disaster Recovery

As highlighted in prior testimony, OER serves as a vital bridge between government resources and the communities that need them most . This has never been more evident than during the current flood recovery efforts.

When our community was in crisis, OER staff were among the first to respond—providing on-the-ground support, coordinating with City agencies, and helping ensure that recovery resources were accessible. Today, as federal disaster declarations unlock assistance through programs such as the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), OER continues to play a central role in helping our businesses and residents navigate complex application processes.

For many of our small, family-run businesses and agricultural operators, OER is not just helpful—it is often the **only accessible entry point into government support systems**.

Supporting Access to Federal and State Resources

The North Shore has experienced widespread damage impacting homes, farms, and small businesses. Access to federal relief—including low-interest disaster loans and resilience funding—is critical not only for recovery, but for rebuilding stronger and more prepared for future events.

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Carol Philips
Vice-President
North Shore Surf Girls

Marcia Murphy
Treasurer
Pacific One Mortgage

Darrell Whitaker
Secretary
Camp Mokulēʻia

Lamont Brown
Director
Maya's Tapas and Wine

T.J Cuaresma
Director
Tita Ei Nei Productions

Dave Fuga
Director
KT Protection Systems

Erica Lehmkuhl
Director
Seaside Realty

Michelle Maldonado
Director

Thomas Naylor
Director
Ke Nui Kitchen

Michael Sweetman
Director
Law Offices of
Einwechter & Hyatt

Robert Walker
Director
Integral Consulting

Bill Ward
Director
Corcoran Properties

Virginia Wallace
Administrator

Marsha Taylor
Community Outreach
Coordinator

OER's ability to connect local communities to these opportunities, including federal grants and SBA programs, is indispensable. As noted in the referenced testimony, OER has been instrumental in expanding access to federal funding and strengthening Honolulu's ability to secure critical resources for disaster preparedness and recovery .

Without a fully funded OER, our community risks losing this essential capacity at a time when it is needed most.

The Importance of Proactive Economic Resilience

The recent flooding has underscored a clear reality: we must prepare for when—not if—these events occur again. OER plays a key role not only in response, but in **proactive resilience-building**, helping businesses access funding, plan for continuity, and strengthen infrastructure ahead of future disasters.

From our perspective on the North Shore, reducing OER funding would shift the City from a proactive to a reactive posture—ultimately increasing long-term costs, prolonging recovery timelines, and placing additional strain on already vulnerable communities.

Impact on the North Shore Business Community

Our Chamber has seen a dramatic economic impact following the floods, with some businesses experiencing significant revenue losses. At the same time, there is an urgent need to restore confidence, support reopening efforts, and ensure that accurate information about available resources reaches those who need it.

OER is uniquely positioned to:

- Coordinate communication between government and local businesses
- Provide technical assistance for relief applications
- Support outreach efforts, including multilingual access
- Help stabilize and revitalize local economies during recovery

A reduction in funding would directly impact these services and slow the recovery of communities like ours.

The North Shore Chamber of Commerce strongly urges the Council to **restore and maintain full funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization**.

At a time when our community is actively rebuilding, OER is not optional—it is essential. Continued investment in OER is an investment in the resilience, stability, and long-term prosperity of Oʻahu's communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your continued support of our community.

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Marsha Taylor
Community Outreach
Coordinator

Respectfully,

Carol Philips,
Vice President
North Shore Chamber of Commerce

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET
May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

My name is Nathaniel Pak, and I serve as Director of Workforce Development at Re-use Hawaii. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:
· Small business development and entrepreneurship
· Innovation and technology growth
· Sustainable tourism
· Agriculture and local food systems
· Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen Oahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

Re-use Hawaii works closely with OER to advance workforce development pathways in the green jobs sector, particularly through deconstruction, material reuse, and circular economy–based employment. In this work, OER has been an especially valuable partner in providing labor market analysis and strategic insight that helps ensure our training programs are aligned with current and emerging industry demand. Their support has helped us better understand employer needs, identify growth opportunities in construction and green infrastructure, and design programs that connect participants to viable career pathways.

In addition to this analytical support, OER has consistently played a strong role in supporting grant applications and partnership development. Their ability to contribute data, provide strategic framing, and coordinate across agencies and stakeholders strengthens the competitiveness and effectiveness of workforce development proposals. Just as importantly, OER helps convene cross-sector partners—including workforce agencies, community-based

organizations, and employers—ensuring that initiatives are better aligned, more collaborative, and more impactful.

Sustaining OER is important because without this coordination, analysis, and partnership support, organizations like ours would face greater challenges in aligning programs with labor market realities, forming effective partnerships, and securing critical funding. The result would be a more fragmented and less responsive workforce development system, particularly for the communities we serve.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every Oahu resident.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Hearing: Friday, May 1, 2026 at 10:30 AM
Location: Council Chamber at Honolulu Hale
Livestream: honolulucitycouncil.org/
Additional Information: https://hnldoc.ehawaii.gov/hnldoc/agenda/698
Written Testimony Deadline: Thursday, April 30 at 10:30 AM
Submit Here: https://hnldoc.ehawaii.gov/hnldoc/testimony

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Budget Committee:

My name is India Clark and I'ʻve been working to support farmers across the islands since 2003 and I have my own farm in Waialua which was impacted by these recent Kona Low Storms. I'ʻve supported farm communities develop their own resilience plans, wetland farmers with place-based stream and drainage system management, tenant farmers negotiating long-term leases, specialty crop growings trying to capture the local market, farmers setting-up their small businesses, and farmers investing in soil health and to regenerate post-plantation field conditions. I'ʻm writing in support of the $5 million Farmer Disaster Recovery Grant amendment to Bill 22.

I also support other proposed amendments which provide funding to the community. The community can not continue to donate money, heavy machinery and operators like we did for these past storms. The community showed that we can organize and we can do the work efficiently. I support the following amendments in Bill 22, including:

- Restoring the 20 positions and budget for OER
- Reimbursements for Nonprofit Organizations:
  Allocates $3 million to reimburse nonprofit organizations that used their own funds to support community recovery efforts following the 2026 Kona Low storms
- Food Access For Kupuna: Adds $1,000,000 for kupuna feeding and social support programs, helping our most vulnerable seniors stay nourished and connected to the community
- Stream Maintenance Plan Report: Adds
- flood damage. $150,000 to develop a report evaluating the City's stream maintenance plan and
- establishing a timeline for planned stream clearing.
- Emergency Equipment Procurement: Adds $2,030,000 in capital funding to procure heavy machinery for emergency preparedness and recovery, including front loaders, back hoes, mini excavators, portable showers, large trailer generators, and roll-off bins.

You'ʻve heard many of us testify of the damage and the long-road to recovery many of us face from these storms. These storms have brought to light the tremendous kuleana we'ʻve taken as farmers of this era. Many of us have multi-generational ties as mahi'ʻai, some of us still caring for family and kuleana land from Pre-contact time, some with family ties from Waialua Sugar Company and Dole going back as far as 1865, some of us have learned through the Hawai'ʻi GoFarm Training Program close to 15 years ago when

it started. Our community used to be shocked when we started talking about 90% of our food being shipped in. Now we share this statistic as a norm and without fully realizing the food security risk all of Hawaiʻi faces if we have another Iniki. Currently, we are dependent on the federal government to reach us with emergency food. With the extreme weather weʻve been witnessing, the feds may be helping other communities going through disasters at the same time. We all know, itʻs not a matter of ʻifʻ we have another disaster event, but ʻwhenʻ.

Our communities are carrying more vulnerability then we should and the majority of this risk is carried on the shoulders of our farming families. Unless youʻre in this situation, it is hard to understand the kuleana farmers have taken on.

- Farm tenants and farm owners have inherited aging infrastructure from the plantation era. Cement bridges built over irrigation ditches a hundred years old and eroding away. Drainage and irrigation ditches hundreds of feet long and intended to have many outfalls to the ocean, but now filled in by development, increasing the flood water loads in the existing drainage ditches and culverts;
- Theyʻre actively managing land to improve soil tilth and fertility to improve drainage and water holding capacity, investing in infrastructure for water storage systems to address the insecurity of post-plantation era wells and pumps, installing fencing and other costly infrastructure. The costly, heavy lifting is in the first year to three years and the return on investment for improving soil resources takes 3 to 5 years. For some, this is a lifetime investment and for others with insecure land, theyʻre investing in these practices with increased risk.
- Theyʻre paying $1,200 a month in rent (and more for a mortgage) for a 4 acre field to a landlord that is (in many cases a commercial real estate developer) and not offering rent relief in a time when:
    - They have no other source of income,
    - Theyʻve lost their transportation,
    - When the $20,00 to $60,000 tractor they all pulled together as a family or neighbors isnʻt working and they donʻt know if itʻs fixable,
    - When all of the tools, equipment and supplies theyʻve taken out $50,000 to $100,000 loans are destroyed,
    - When the fields are just drying out enough to start pulling out entangled weed cloth, irrigation tape, netting and other debris from a couple feet of muck,
    - When their fruit tree crops bordering their fields that they planned to harvest for the next 20 years, are starting to dye from root root and other diseases,
    - When food safety guidelines are telling them, theyʻll need the labor to pull over 1,000 kalo plants, that theyʻll need to discard and then they canʻt plant another 30 to 60 days until after the fields dry and they might need to throw out their huli,
    - When they are trying to get gas, to go work for another farm in Kunia, to make money for rent or mortgage, while the money and labor needed to rebuild their own farms increases.

- If we want stability and economic growth for our farming families, they need a pathway to owning their land, to growing their small business, to reducing their cost of living, not dire situations in which they may lose their land they invested their life savings into,
- They need to capture the local markets and policy makers need to help with import substitution for many of the commodity crops and contracts that are going to the mainland or international economies;
- Many of the farmers are registered with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participate in cost-share programming for conservation practices, such as maintaining topsoil, preventing erosion, maintaining drainage and other environmental practices that keep our reefs and beaches clean and provide ecosystem services we all benefit from.

Many disaster programs are built for households or businesses, and farmers fall through the gap. Household programs don't cover agricultural losses. Business programs like SBA disaster loans are debt instruments that don't work for producers who just lost their entire productive capacity and have no near-term revenue. 80% of affected farms carry no crop or disaster insurance, not because they chose to go without, but because federal crop insurance is largely unavailable to diversified farms in Hawaii. Direct grants are the only form of relief that actually reaches farmers, allowing them to clear fields, replace equipment, cover operating costs, and restart production.

These grants also serve a federal purpose: USDA recovery programs like FSA's Emergency Conservation Program require cost-share from the applicant. Farmers who have lost everything may not be able to meet even those requirements. City-funded grants can bridge that gap and help unlock federal recovery dollars that would otherwise go unclaimed.

Please adopt this amendment.

Mahalo,
India Clark
info@hiregenerativefarms.com

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Budget Committee:

My name is India Clark and Iʻve been working to support farmers across the islands since 2003 and I have my own farm in Waialua which was impacted by these recent Kona Low Storms. Iʻve supported farm communities develop their own resilience plans, wetland farmers with place-based stream and drainage system management, tenant farmers negotiating long-term leases, specialty crop growings trying to capture the local market, farmers setting-up their small businesses, and farmers investing in soil health and to regenerate post-plantation field conditions. Iʻm writing in support of the $5 million Farmer Disaster Recovery Grant amendment to Bill 22.

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community showed that we can organize and we can do the work efficiently. I support the following amendments in Bill 22, including:
*Restoring the 20 positions and budget for OER
*Reimbursements for Nonprofit Organizations: Allocates $3 million to reimburse nonprofit organizations that used their own funds to support community recovery efforts following the 2026 Kona Low storms
*Food Access For Kupuna: Adds $1,000,000 for kupuna feeding and social support programs, helping our most vulnerable seniors stay nourished and connected to the community
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Our communities are carrying more vulnerability then we should and the majority of this risk is carried on the shoulders of our farming families. Unless youʻre in this situation, it is hard to understand the kuleana farmers have taken on.

*Farm tenants and farm owners have inherited aging infrastructure from the plantation era. Cement bridges built over irrigation ditches a hundred years old and eroding away. Drainage and irrigation ditches hundreds of feet long and intended to have many outfalls to the ocean, but now filled in by development, increasing the flood water loads in the existing drainage ditches and culverts;
*Theyʻre actively managing land to improve soil tilth and fertility to improve drainage and water holding capacity, investing in infrastructure for water storage systems to address the insecurity of post-plantation era wells and pumps, installing fencing and other costly infrastructure. The costly, heavy lifting is in the first year to three years and the return on investment for improving soil resources takes 3 to 5 years. For some, this is a lifetime investment and for others with insecure land, theyʻre investing in these practices with increased risk.
*Theyʻre paying $1,200 a month in rent (and more for a mortgage) for a 4 acre field to a landlord that is (in many cases a commercial real estate developer) and not offering rent relief in a time when:
**They have no other source of income,

**They‘ve lost their transportation,
**When the $20,00 to $60,000 tractor they all pulled together as a family or neighbors isn‘t working and they don‘t know if it‘s fixable,
**When all of the tools, equipment and supplies they‘ve taken out $50,000 to $100,000 loans are destroyed,
**When the fields are just drying out enough to start pulling out entangled weed cloth, irrigation tape, netting and other debris from a couple feet of muck,
**When their fruit tree crops bordering their fields that they planned to harvest for the next 20 years, are starting to dye from root root and other diseases,
**County departments spend more money and resources on ‘what we don‘t want‘ rather than ‘what we do want‘ in terms of safe roads, sanitation and farm security,
**When food safety guidelines are telling them, they‘ll need the labor to pull over 1,000 kalo plants, that they‘ll need to discard and then they can‘t plant another 30 to 60 days until after the fields dry and they might need to throw out their huli,
**When they are trying to get gas, to go work for another farm in Kunia, to make money for rent or mortgage, while the money and labor needed to rebuild their own farms increases.

*If we want stability and economic growth for our farming families, they need a pathway to owning their land, to growing their small business, to reducing their cost of living, not dire situations in which they may lose their land they invested their life savings into,
*They need to capture the local markets and policy makers need to help with import substitution for many of the commodity crops and contracts that are going to the mainland or international economies;
*Many of the farmers are registered with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and participate in cost-share programming for conservation practices, such as maintaining topsoil, preventing erosion, maintaining drainage and other environmental practices that keep our reefs and beaches clean and provide ecosystem services we all benefit from.

Many disaster programs are built for households or businesses, and farmers fall through the gap. Household programs don't cover agricultural losses. Business programs like SBA disaster loans are debt instruments that don't work for producers who just lost their entire productive capacity and have no near-term revenue. 80% of affected farms carry no crop or disaster insurance, not because they chose to go without, but because federal crop insurance is largely unavailable to diversified farms in Hawaii. Direct grants are the only form of relief that actually reaches farmers, allowing them to clear fields, replace equipment, cover operating costs, and restart production.

These grants also serve a federal purpose: USDA recovery programs like FSA's Emergency Conservation Program require cost-share from the applicant. Farmers who have lost everything may not be able to meet even those requirements. City-funded grants can bridge that gap and help unlock federal recovery dollars that would otherwise go unclaimed.Please adopt this amendment.

Mahalo,
India Clark

In Support of CD2 Amendments for Farmer Disaster Recovery and OER Budget Restoration

Committee on Budget Friday, May 1, 2026 — 10:30 AM Honolulu City Council

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee:

Hawai‘i Farmers Union is in strong support of the CD2 amendments to Bill 22 that address agricultural disaster recovery, specifically the $5 million allocation for farmer disaster recovery grants and the restoration of the Office of Economic Revitalization's operational budget.

Hawai‘i Farmers Union and partner organizations have collected damage reports from approximately 250 O‘ahu farm operations impacted by the Kona Low storms (report.agstewardshiphawaii.org). These reports represent only a fraction of the actual agricultural impact. Across five agricultural subdivisions between Mokuleia and Waialua alone, roughly 350 farm lots representing over 200 owners and operators were in the flood-impacted area. The reported losses show the scale of the crisis:

- **$19.4M in total reported damages** (~$9M North Shore, ~$11M rest of O'ahu)
- **$30,000 median reported loss per farm** (mean: ~$77,000)
- **80% of affected farms carry no form of crop or disaster insurance**
- **51% of farms reported immediate needs** after the storms: food, water, shelter; impact on farm families, not just farm operations
- **Two-thirds of all losses are crop production** ($13M), followed by infrastructure (~$4M) and equipment (~$2M)

These are not abstract figures. They represent farms and ranches that supply O'ahu's farmers markets, restaurants, and households. The majority are lessees on private land, but nearly all face rent and mortgage obligations regardless of whether they can produce. Floodwater contamination raises unresolved questions about soil safety, planting timelines, and forage quality, leaving many farmers unable to produce with no clear timeline for return. Acres of fields lost soil that took years to build, while others remain buried under feet of mud and debris. Irrigation systems, fencing, greenhouses, and access roads were destroyed. Farmers lost tractors, tools, and vehicles. Many have no heavy equipment to clear land or make repairs, and irrigation remains out of commission, preventing farmers from restarting even after fields are cleared.

To date, Hawai‘i Farmers Union Foundation has raised nearly $700,000 for impacted producers statewide, but private fundraising cannot match $20M in reported damages on O'ahu alone.

Farmer Disaster Recovery Grants ($5M). Most disaster relief programs are structured around either households or businesses, and farmers fall through the gap. Household assistance programs do not cover productive agricultural losses. Business-oriented programs, such as the Small Business Administration's disaster loans, are debt instruments; they do not work for producers who just lost their entire productive capacity and have no near-term revenue to service a loan.

80% of these operations are uninsured, not by choice, but because federal crop insurance is largely unavailable to diversified farms. In 2025, less than 4% of Hawaii's farms had a federal policy, nearly all on Hawaii Island, mostly for coffee. On all of Oahu, just one farm had federal crop insurance in 2025. Even the federal backstop for uninsured crops, the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, has only reached 58 Oahu producers in its 30-year history. Direct grants allow farmers to clear fields, replace equipment, cover rent and operating costs, and restart production.

Beyond immediate recovery, these grants can help unlock federal dollars. USDA disaster recovery programs such as FSA's Emergency Conservation Program require cost-share from the applicant, which can include in-kind contributions. But farmers who have lost their equipment cannot provide in-kind labor or machine time. City-funded grants that enable a farmer to hire an equipment operator can simultaneously satisfy the federal cost-share requirement, turning a single local investment into matched federal recovery funding.

Restoring OER's Budget. The administration has tasked OER with becoming a pass-through for federal recovery funding. The current amendment that reduces OER to three film office staff, three community equity liaisons, and an executive director makes this impossible. Neighbor island counties have maintained dedicated agricultural staff for decades, many since the 1980s. Honolulu did not create its Agricultural Liaison position in OED until 2011. When OED was reorganized into OER, that function was rebuilt as the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems program, whose staff connect farmers with federal and state funding and support local food production. Having come late to this work, the City should not now walk away from it, especially when this is the City's dedicated agricultural capacity, the staff who support local food production, connect farmers to funding, and are now essential to administering disaster recovery.

We also support the related CD2 amendments for emergency equipment procurement, emergency management district coordinators, and flood control investments that strengthen the County's capacity to prepare for and respond to future storm events.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heaivilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai‘i Farmers Union

Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

2030 BLUEPRINT
ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN FOR HAWAII

Testimony to the Honolulu City Council Committee on Budget
Councilmember Val A. Okimoto, Chair
Councilmember Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

Friday, May 1, 2026, at 10:30AM
City Council Chamber

RE: Bill 22 (2026), CD1 – Executive Operating Budget for FY2027

Aloha e Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber respectfully offers concerns with Bill 22 (2026) CD1, specifically regarding the proposed reduction of staffing in the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) from 25 full-time positions to seven.

The City has identified economic revitalization and diversification as core priorities. The Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) is central to advancing these efforts. Reducing its capacity at this scale would limit the City's ability to effectively carry out these priorities at a critical time when the state contends with high cost of living, disaster recovery, and outmigration.

As Oahu continues to navigate economic uncertainty, strong alignment between government and the business community is essential to recovery. Scaling back key economic functions risks slowing progress and weakening the foundation needed for long-term stability, diversification, and growth. Maintaining capacity in economic development is not only about near-term recovery, but about positioning Honolulu for long-term resilience.

For these reasons, the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii respectfully urges reconsideration of the proposed reductions in Bill 22 (2026) CD1. A strong and adequately resourced OER is fundamental to supporting the City's small businesses and economic future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer comments on Bill 22 (2026) CD1.

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.

HAWAI'I COALITION FOR IMMIGRANT RIGHTS
www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Liza Ryan-Gill, the Co-Executive Director of the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR). I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable Tourism
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

HCIR works closely with OER to advance language access, immigrant policy advocacy, and community-centered disaster response across O'ahu. HCIR is the only coalition in Hawai'i working specifically to build mainstream support for policies and laws that allow immigrant and migrant communities to thrive. During the Kona Low storms of 2026, HCIR co-organized the immigrant community response across four emergency briefings, coordinated funder engagement, produced a briefing for Lt. Governor Sylvia Luke, and worked to advance HB1870 (Restore Sensitive Locations), which would restore DHS non-enforcement policy at emergency shelters — a critical protection for immigrant families who currently fear accessing disaster aid.

Sustaining OER is important because its Community Equity Liaison (CEL) team is, right now, the most effective government-community bridge serving immigrant and farmworker communities in the Kona Low flood response. Without sustained City funding, this model dissolves the moment the disaster declaration ends — leaving the very communities it serves without any institutional home inside City government.

The OER Community Equity Liaison team, led by April Labrador, has demonstrated exactly what culturally grounded, multilingual government outreach can accomplish. During the Kona Low response, the CEL team stood up and contributed to the Community Assistance Center (CAC) at Waialua District Park Gym, serving approximately 100 people per day — with visitors traveling from as far as Wai'anae, Waipahu, and 'Ewa Beach. The team is actively providing services in Thai, Lao, Ilocano, Tagalog, Mandarin, and Cantonese, and has published multilingual resources at revitalizeoahu.org. Critically, CEL navigators do not simply direct

people to tables — they accompany each community member through every step of the process. This approach made the difference between families entering the CAC or not: Filipino farmworkers who had passed the center for a full week — some with 10 to 20 years living in Hawaiʻi — only came in when word spread that Filipino city workers were inside. A Laotian farmer who built trust through patient navigator accompaniment went on to refer other farmers to the CAC. One immigrant farmer at the CAC often represents three to seven additional families who could not attend. This is not incidental — it reflects how trust moves in these communities. HCIR has seen firsthand that when immigrant families see someone who looks like them, speaks their language, and works for their city, they engage with government systems they would otherwise avoid. That is the CEL model in action, and it must be sustained beyond this disaster.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every Oʻahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of Oʻahu.

Liza Ryan-Gill

Co-Executive Director

Hawaiʻi Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)

lryangill@hicir.org · hicir.org

HAWAIIAN COUNCIL

Honolulu City Council Committee on Budget
Bill 22 (2026), CD1 – Executive Operating Budget for FY 2027

RE: Comments on the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget May 1, 2026

Aloha Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and members of the Budget Committee,

On behalf of Hawaiian Council, I am writing in **strong support of the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER)** and respectfully urge the restoration of the City administration's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2027.

Throughout my tenure as CEO, we have partnered closely with OER to deliver financial assistance, stabilize housing, and support small businesses across Oʻahu. OER has proven to be an effective and trusted partner. With the proper support, its impact can grow even further.

OER plays a critical role as the City's economic integrator. It aligns systems, reduces fragmentation, and ensures that residents and businesses can access opportunity more efficiently. Its work strengthens key pillars of our economy, including small business development, workforce pathways, innovation, agriculture, and sustainable tourism. These go beyond abstract priorities—they are the foundation of community stability and the drivers of long-term economic health.

Reducing OER's funding would weaken our ability to respond to both immediate and long-term economic needs. This is especially concerning as we continue to recover from the recent Kona Low storms. Small businesses, the backbone of our economy, depend on coordinated support. Our budget should reflect that reality.

The impact of OER's work is clear.

From 2020 to 2025, Hawaiian Council, alongside Catholic Charities Hawaiʻi and OER, helped deliver over $120 million in rental and utility assistance, protecting thousands of households from displacement. This effort was recognized by the U.S. Department of Treasury as one of the top-performing programs in the nation.

Beyond financial assistance, OER-supported programs have connected thousands of residents to housing, healthcare, and social services, bridging immediate relief with long-term stability.

OER has also played a meaningful role in growing our local business ecosystem. Through programs like Idea2Biz and support for partners such as Keiki Rise, OER has helped cultivate entrepreneurs, empower youth, and generate real economic activity within our communities.

HAWAIIANS ADVANCING HAWAIʻI
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HAWAIIAN COUNCIL

Since 2023, Hawaiian Council has conducted over forty community outreach events through OER-supported programs, connecting families and small businesses to critical resources. These efforts demonstrate what is possible when public systems and community organizations are aligned.

The proposed reductions to OER's funding and staffing would significantly limit this impact.

OER has been essential in responding to crises, from the COVID-19 pandemic to the Kona Low storms, particularly for communities that often fall outside traditional emergency response systems, including farmers and small business owners. Reducing capacity now would hinder the City's ability to respond effectively to future challenges.

It is also important to recognize that every other county in Hawai'i maintains a well-resourced economic development office. Reducing O'ahu's capacity below that of our neighboring counties, while serving a significantly larger population, puts us at a disadvantage and limits our ability to compete and respond.

Progress is not measured by activity alone, but by the ability to adapt, coordinate, and deliver meaningful outcomes for the community.

We respectfully ask that you restore OER's funding to its requested level. Its role in aligning resources, strengthening partnerships, and advancing economic opportunity is essential to building a more resilient, affordable, and inclusive future for O'ahu.

Mahalo nui loa for your time, service, and continued commitment to our community.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kūhiō Lewis
Chief Executive Officer, Hawaiian Council

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

Aloha, my name is Deborah Lui-Anderson. I am a small business owner as well serving as a commissioner on the Economic Revitalization Commission. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

Having started our business over 31 years ago, we have navigated through many years of changes in the business and economic environment on Oahu. As the business climate today is more rapidly changing with technological and global influences, OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. OER is essential to provide the leadership in program coordination, policy, and outreach that helps to improve communication and provide economic information and opportunities within communities.

I respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.

Deborah Lui-Anderson

Deborah Lui-Anderson

(808)381-7095

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

KEITH A. REGAN
ACTING LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

KA ʻOIHANA HOʻOMOHALA PĀʻOIHANA, ʻIMI WAIWAI A HOʻOMĀKAʻIKAʻI

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
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Statement of
James Kunane Tokioka
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

Friday, May 1, 2026
10:30AM
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER

In consideration of
BILL022(26), CD1
RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OPERATING BUDGET AND PROGRAM FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2026 TO JUNE 30, 2027

To Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Committee on Budget:

My name is James Tokioka, and I serve as the Director of the State of Hawaiʻi Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT). I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of restoring the City Administration's Fiscal Year 2027 budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER).

OER is a critical partner to DBEDT and plays an essential role in advancing shared statewide and county-level economic development priorities. The office works collaboratively with DBEDT, the County Offices of Economic Development, business leaders, and community-based organizations to strengthen Oʻahu's economic foundation and improve quality of life for residents.

Through its leadership in policy development, program coordination, community engagement, and strategic partnerships, OER provides capacity in areas that directly align with DBEDT's mission and Oʻahu's long-term economic resilience, including:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation, technology, and emerging industry support
- Sustainable tourism and visitor industry management
- Agriculture and local food system development
- Workforce development and aligned employment pathways

These functions contribute to Oʻahu's economic stability, community well-being, cultural vitality, and the commercial activity that supports City services and revenues.

DBEDT and OER maintain a strong, productive working relationship across multiple initiatives, such as:

- Co-hosting business conferences and convenings, including recent events focused on artificial intelligence and international economic collaboration;
- Coordinating the small business grant program for enterprises affected by the recent Kona Low flooding;
- Supporting Community-Based Economic Development (CBED) initiatives, including loan programs, small business fairs, and informational workshops;
- Expanding general business assistance and technical support for local companies; and
- Collaborating on workforce and housing-stability initiatives that strengthen economic mobility for O‘ahu residents.

OER’s ability to manage funding for community-based partners, extend outreach into neighborhoods, and operate as a reliable, solution-oriented collaborator has been invaluable. As recovery and revitalization efforts continue following the Kona Low event, maintaining OER’s operational capacity is especially important to ensure coordinated, timely, and community-centered support.

For these reasons, DBEDT respectfully requests that the Council restore and preserve OER’s funding at the level requested by the City Administration. Sustaining OER’s work will help maintain an economy grounded in affordability, resilience, and opportunity for all who call O‘ahu home.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O‘ahu.

James Tokioka Director State of Hawai‘i Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism

HAWAII APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony in Support for Proposed Amendments to Bill 22 (2026), CD 1
Relating to Kupuna feeding and social support programs
Honolulu City Council – Special Meeting - City Council Chamber
Friday, May 1, 2026, at 10:30AM

Dear Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of proposed amendments to Bill 22 (2026), CD1, specifically those found in **CC-082, CC-087, and CC-094**.

Hawai‘i Appleseed’s mission is to ensure that all people in Hawai‘i, especially those with limited resources, have access to their basic needs. Central to this mission is **food equity**. We believe that a resilient food system is one where low-income communities have consistent access to fresh, local produce, and where our local food producers are supported at all phases of life, and particularly during times of crisis.These amendments represent a critical investment in two of O‘ahu’s most vulnerable populations: our local farmers and our kūpuna.

Supporting Kūpuna Food Security (CC-082)

Hawai‘i’s kūpuna face the highest food costs in the nation. While SNAP supports over 33,000 Hawai‘i seniors, new federal restrictions under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) threaten to cut off access for an estimated 16,570 older adults in our state who cannot meet the 20-hour work requirement.

The City and County of Honolulu, like Hawai‘i’s other counties, has an overlooked but critical asset to alleviate this upcoming threat: its federally-designated Area Agency on Aging, known as the **Elderly Affairs Division (EAD)**. This office already administers a variety of programs tailored toward older adults, including home-delivered and congregate meals. Currently, these programs are funded through a mix of state and federal funds, which come with a number of restrictions that make it difficult to reach all of the island’s seniors. The amendment proposed in CC-082 would allow the City to expand these programs and tailor them to the specific needs of O‘ahu’s kupuna population.

Restoring OER Funding & Agricultural Resilience (CC-082, CC-087, CC-094)

A resilient food system requires a functional City government and a stable farming sector. We work closely with the **Office of Economic Revitalization (OER)** and emphasize that restoring their 20 positions is essential to managing the very recovery programs these amendments fund.

- **Disaster Relief for Farmers (CC-082 & CC-087):** Data from the *Agriculture Stewardship Hawai‘i* dashboard shows recent self-reported losses on O‘ahu exceeding $334,000 in infrastructure and crop damages. The proposed $5,000,000 in grants is a vital alternative to debt-based federal loans, preventing small farms from permanent closure after natural disasters.

- **Nonprofit Reimbursement (CC-094):** We strongly support the $3,000,000 to reimburse nonprofits that expended their own funds during the 2026 Kona Low Storms. These

organizations are the backbone of disaster response; they must be made whole to remain ready for future crises.

Summary of Requested Actions:

1. **CC-082:** Restore 20 OER positions/funding and support kūpuna feeding programs.
2. **CC-082 & CC-087:** Appropriate **$5,000,000** for disaster recovery grants to farmers.
3. **CC-094:** Appropriate **$3,000,000** for nonprofit disaster recovery reimbursements.

By investing in these initiatives, the Council is taking a proactive, innovative stand against food insecurity. We urge you to pass these amendments to create a more equitable and resilient O‘ahu.

INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

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April 30, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I **am Nathan Ohle, President and CEO of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC)**. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of maintaining the City Administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

In 2023, IEDC established the inaugural Economic Recovery Corps. Much like OER, the program was established during the COVID-19 pandemic to address critical gaps in economic development approaches, particularly in communities experiencing persistent poverty and distress. Prior to OER's creation, there was no active coordinated economic development function at the city level. The pandemic exposed deep inequities across O'ahu, particularly among Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and immigrant communities, and made clear the need for a dedicated municipal entity to align resources, coordinate systems, and build pathways to economic opportunity. It was a clear choice that OER could be an instrumental partner to IEDC in launching the ERC program.

OER has taken on the work of building economic development infrastructure from the ground up by establishing new programs, building trust with communities, and positioning the City to access and effectively deploy federal, state, philanthropic, and private capital. This includes creating systems and practices that did not previously exist at the municipal level, and advancing a more equitable, coordinated, and resilient economic development approach for O'ahu.

Today, OER serves as the City's economic integrator—connecting resources, aligning partners, and ensuring that investments translate into real outcomes for residents and businesses. Its work spans small business development, workforce pathways, innovation, and equitable access to opportunity—particularly for communities that have historically faced structural barriers to participation in the economy.

Much of this work is not always immediately visible—but it is foundational. The coordination of agencies, the alignment of funding streams, the development of trust with communities, and the creation of pathways for businesses and workers to access opportunity represent what can be understood as the **"invisible infrastructure" of economic development.** Without this capacity, even well-funded initiatives can remain fragmented, duplicative, or inaccessible. OER ensures that systems function together—making investment more effective, accelerating implementation, and improving outcomes.

As the world's largest membership association for economic developers, IEDC has seen firsthand the increasing need for municipalities to play a more active and coordinated role in economic development. The pace and complexity of change—driven by global shifts, climate pressures, and evolving workforce dynamics—demand a level of local government engagement that goes beyond traditional approaches. Honolulu's investment in OER reflects the kind of forward-looking leadership that communities across the country must now embrace.

Through our partnership with OER via the Economic Recovery Corps (ERC), we have seen the tangible results of this model in action. ERC embeds experienced economic development professionals directly within local governments to accelerate investment, build institutional capacity, and deliver measurable outcomes.

In Honolulu, this partnership has delivered meaningful and lasting impact:

- In 2024, ERC Fellow **David Thalenberg** secured nearly **$300,000 in federal and local funding**—including a **$50,000 Small Business Startup Pilot Program**—while establishing the City's small business support infrastructure and laying the policy and programmatic foundation for long-term economic development tools still in use today.

- ERC Fellow **George Yarbrough** has advanced **Honolulu's first city-supported small business loan fund**, strengthened access to capital through federal financing pathways, and helped unlock public assets for economic use—creating new opportunities for local businesses and long-term growth.

These outcomes are not isolated—they are the result of OER's ability to host, integrate, and operationalize this work within the City's broader economic development strategy. More broadly, OER has strengthened Honolulu's ability to compete for and manage federal funding, built new systems to support entrepreneurs and small businesses, and created policy tools that expand how the City can leverage its own assets for economic development.

At a national level, ERC demonstrates what is possible when an integrator approach is put into practice. Across the country, the program has **unlocked more than $246 million for distressed communities**, **generated an 8:1 return on investment**, **advanced 32 regional strategies**, **built over 300 cross-sector partnerships** connecting lower- and higher-resource communities, and **strengthened the resilience of 31 organizations** to natural and other disasters. This level of impact is not achieved through isolated programs—it is the result of coordinated systems, sustained capacity, and intentional alignment across sectors.

OER's role is also critical in the context of resilience and economic disruption. Recent Kona Low weather events underscored the importance of having a coordinated local entity capable of responding quickly,

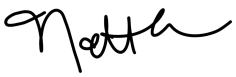
supporting impacted businesses, and aligning recovery efforts. At a time when federal resources for disaster response and economic recovery are becoming more constrained, local capacity is increasingly essential.

Reducing funding for OER at this moment would risk reversing critical progress—limiting the City's ability to coordinate resources, access funding, respond to economic disruptions, and support local businesses. Without OER, the City risks returning to a more fragmented approach, where opportunities are missed, efforts are duplicated, and communities face greater barriers to participation.

OER represents a modern, necessary approach to economic development, a model that IEDC sees as the future for economic development—one that fills systemic gaps, strengthens institutional capacity, aligns public and private resources, and creates the conditions for sustained, inclusive growth. It is not an ancillary function; it is core infrastructure for how cities compete, recover, and grow in today's economy.

We respectfully urge the Council to maintain OER's funding at the proposed level. Continued investment in OER is an investment in coordination, resilience, and the long-term economic future of O'ahu.

Mahalo for your leadership, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.



Nathan Ohle .
President & CEO, International Economic Development Council (IEDC)

KAPOLEI
CHAMBER
of COMMERCE
Working for West Oahu

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

Committee on Budget
Friday May 1, 2026, 10:30 a.m.
City Council Chamber & via videoconference

RE: Bill 22 (2026), CD1 – Executive Operating Budget Urging full funding of the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER)

Dear Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee:

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 urges the City Council to fully fund the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER).

OER is not simply a programmatic office. **It is the City's primary connection point to the business community** and a critical partner in supporting small businesses across Oʻahu, particularly in West Oʻahu.

OER serves as the connective tissue of the City and County of Honolulu's local economy across Oʻahu, providing direct, on the ground support to businesses and acting as a bridge between government and the private sector.

Neighbor island counties have similar, well-resourced economic development agencies supporting their local economies, and Oʻahu must ensure it maintains the same level of support for its business community. From the Kapolei Chamber's perspective, this is exactly how OER operates in practice.

OER has been an essential partner in supporting small businesses, especially in the wake of the COVID 19 pandemic and through ongoing economic uncertainty. Through **collaboration** with the State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), OER ensures that businesses have access to training, technical assistance, and critical resources.

One of the most impactful initiatives has been the **Idea2Biz small business incubator program in West O‘ahu**.

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 Wai‘anae 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.

This is targeted, place based economic development that delivers measurable outcomes.

OER also plays a critical role in disaster response and recovery. Following recent events such as the Kona Low storms and flooding impacts, **OER has been among the first on the ground providing direct support to affected businesses**. This level of responsiveness is not something that can be replicated by state level agencies alone. **OER’s ability to act quickly and locally is essential.**

In addition, OER has strengthened the City’s ability to compete for and secure federal funding.
At a time when federal resources are increasingly competitive and economic conditions remain uncertain, **reducing OER’s capacity would be counterproductive.**

O‘ahu is the economic center of the state, yet without a strong and fully supported OER, the City risks falling behind other counties that have well-resourced economic development infrastructure.

Reducing funding would result in decreased support for small businesses, reduced access to grants and technical assistance, and a weakened ability to respond to future economic disruptions.
For these reasons, we respectfully urge the City Council to fully fund the Office of Economic Revitalization.
Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Kiran Polk
Executive Director & CEO

Aloha Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is **Jairus Aleka**, and I am the **President & CEO of Koiahi**. I am writing in strong support of the City's Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) and to respectfully urge you to protect its funding in the FY 2027 Operating Budget.

I had the opportunity to participate in OER's Idea2Biz program, and it truly changed the trajectory of my life. Before joining, I had a vision of starting my own business, but I did not know where to begin. I didn't have access to guidance, mentorship, or the foundational knowledge needed to move forward.

Through this 13-week program, I gained critical skills in entrepreneurship, including business model development, marketing, legal structure, and financial planning. Each week, we learned directly from experienced guest speakers, and we were supported every step of the way by OER's team, including regular check-ins with a dedicated Resource Connector who genuinely cared about our growth and success.

Because of this program, I was able to launch my business, Koiahi. More importantly, I was able to do so with confidence, clarity, and a strong foundation. I also built meaningful connections with fellow entrepreneurs and mentors, and had the opportunity to present my business at a hōike, sharing my work with other business owners in the community.

What makes this program even more impactful is that it was completely free. As someone living paycheck to paycheck, I would not have been able to afford the level of training, mentorship, and support that Idea2Biz provided. Without OER, I likely would not have been able to start my business at all. The ike (knowledge) I gained would have otherwise cost me a significant financial burden—one I simply could not carry.

In addition, the program provided $1,250 in early-stage funding through a partnership with HawaiiUSA Federal Credit Union. OER also connected participants with the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce and provided a complimentary membership. This opened doors for networking, mentorship, and the opportunity to be part of a broader business community—something that is invaluable for new entrepreneurs trying to find their place and grow.

OER serves individuals like me—people who have the drive and vision but lack access to resources, guidance, and support. If funding is cut, many aspiring entrepreneurs will be left without a pathway to begin. Businesses that could have succeeded may never even start. This impact is especially significant in communities like Waianae and Māili, where access to these types of resources is already limited.

I respectfully ask the City Council to protect funding for OER so they can continue the important work they do. Programs like Idea2Biz are not just educational—they are life-changing. They create opportunity, build confidence, and strengthen our local economy by empowering community members to succeed.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jairus Aleka
President & CEO, Koiahi

Subject: Testimony in Support of Full Funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council,

My name is ʻOlu Campbell and I serve as a member of the Economic Revitalization Commission. **I respectfully urge the Council to provide full funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER).**

Oʻahu's economy continues to face significant and interconnected challenges, including the high cost of living, limited economic mobility, vulnerability to external shocks, and the need to diversify beyond a narrow set of industries. These challenges directly affect whether residents can afford to live, work, and remain in Hawaiʻi. Addressing them requires more than individual programs. It requires coordination across systems, sectors, and investments.

OER plays a unique and essential role in the City's ability to do this work effectively. It is the only entity within the City focused on aligning economic development efforts across departments and with external partners. By improving coordination, reducing fragmentation, and connecting resources to community needs, OER helps ensure that public investments translate into real, on-the-ground impact for residents and businesses.

The City has significant influence over the conditions that shape economic life, including land use, infrastructure, permitting, public investment, and community development. OER helps bring these elements together into a more coherent and strategic approach, allowing the City to respond more effectively to both immediate challenges and long-term opportunities.

Equally important, OER strengthens the City's ability to partner with state and federal agencies, the private sector, and community-based organizations. This coordination is critical to leveraging outside funding, supporting small businesses, building workforce pathways, and advancing initiatives that improve affordability and economic opportunity across Oʻahu.

As a member of the Commission, I have seen the value of having a dedicated entity focused on strategy, alignment, and accountability in this space. Economic revitalization is not a one-time effort. It is ongoing work that requires sustained attention, adaptability, and collaboration.

Funding for OER is an investment in the City's capacity to deliver more effective, efficient, and equitable economic outcomes. Without it, we risk continuing with fragmented approaches that limit impact and miss opportunities to better serve our communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of full funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization.

ʻOlu Campbell
Member, Honolulu Economic Revitalization Commission

April 30, 2026

To whom it may concern,

This letter is from the farmers of Hawai‘i – one of the state's major food production hubs. We are the laborers who tend to and grow the local produce that stock our shelves and the flowers that make the lei we give as a show of aloha. Now, almost two months since the back-to-back Kona Low storms that flooded our farmlands and destroyed our crops and equipment, we are asking for your support to support us to produce again.

On April 8, Governor Josh Green, M.D. announced that President Trump has “approved a Major Disaster Declaration for Hawai‘i”, following his conversation with Secretary of Department of Homeland Security Markwayne Mullin. We welcome the possibility of Federal support.

Yet according to major news outlets, the state has so far only been assured of receiving FEMA assistance focused on infrastructure repair under this federal declaration. We are concerned that the federal government’s response will fall short in meeting our needs, especially those of us from migrant communities who contribute significantly to Hawai‘i’s agricultural production.

We desperately need individual disaster assistance from the government. We cannot rely on crowdsourcing alone to recover what we have lost. We believe that our contribution to Hawaii’s food security is a very essential part of Hawaii’s economy – thus it demands a better support program.

We ask for support for at least the next three months in the following ways:

1. Financial assistance: Land rent ranges from $200 to $2,500 a month. The land is unfit for cultivation and we cannot work the land we till, yet we are still being asked to continue payment. We cannot rely on donations to cover anything beyond the basic needs of food, water, shelter, clothing, and healthcare for ourselves and our families.

2. Irrigation repairs: The neglect and abandonment of waterway maintenance have contributed largely to the flooding. Worse, the floods have dealt major damage to the water pumps installed by The Dole Food Company to irrigate our farms. Until irrigation system repairs are done and the stability of irrigation water is ensured, we will not be able to produce like we did before.

There is no recovery in Waialua without the recovery of farmers’ dignity. As the possibilities of flooding and other disasters increase, disaster preparedness must be the norm. Regardless of whether we are local-born or migrants, whether we own or rent the land we farm, it is irrelevant, as we have suffered devastating loss from the flood, which is now impacting our livelihood. Now more than ever, it is critical that we receive support from our local community.

Signed,

	Name	Farm/Area	Land Area (acres)	Rent Payment	Water Payment
1	Truatnok Warawut	Aloun Farm, Inc., Anurat Farm	22	$4,970.00	$774.00
2	Phannee & Thanongsak Chumphang	Kunia Loa Ridge Farm	15	$2,259.00	
3	Bounta Bannalak	Kahuku	13	$2,500.00	
4	Thongdam Ratcham	Kunia Loa Ridge Farm		$2,500.00	
5	Suriwong Chaiyachet	Keana Farms, LLC	34	$3,200.00	$2,000.00
6	Praiwan Thongbai	Keana Farms, LLC	20	$1,884.00	$534.00
7	Tiyamat Chinnawan	Keana Farms, LLC	8	$753.00	$1,000.00
8	Naruemon Sreechai	Keana Farms, LLC	4	$376.00	$1,524.00
9	Soukpanya Soulivong	Laie	10	$1,420.00	$703.00
10	Bunlue Khamphrajan	Keana Farms, LLC	11	$1,945.72	$162.00
11	Moksoda Piasourapanya	Punaluu	3	$452.00	$86.00
12	Yaeng Luangsiyotha	Keana Farms, LLC	7	$659.00	$98.00
13	Som Manivong	Mahiko Farms	4	$1,257.00	
14	Mel Manivong	Mahiko Farms, Gilbert Farms	29	$37,575.00	
15	Judy Manivong	Mahiko Farms	4	$700.00	
16	Somphane Manivong	Mahiko Farms	4	$838.00	
17	Boonmee Saengthong	Mahiko Farms	2	$620.00	
18	May Khammy Maharath	Mahiko Farms	4	$1,000.00	
19	Orathat Ratchabouth		2	$440.00	
20	Ky Chareune	Mahiko Farms	10.5	$2,051.00	$1,370.00
21	Bandith Sayamoungkhoune		3	$220.00	$500.00
22	Khampasong Phonphakdy	Mahiko Farms	2	$1,000.00	$500.00
23	Andy Phasouk	ADC	42	$4,500.00	$2,500.00
24	Bong Lo	Kahuku Farm	11.19	$1,000.00	$50.00
25	Teo Soukhaseum	ADC, Wahiawa	36	$3,529.00	

26	Sing Chanthabouasith	Malaekahana Hui West, Kahuku	14	$1,026.00	$140.00
27	Khamdy Sykeo	Malaekahana Hui West, Kahuku	5.6	$500.00	$300.00
28	Sylane Souvorivong	Mahiko Farms	1	$300.00	$50.00
29	Sagnad Sihavong	Mahiko Farms	13	$2,200.00	$1,200.00
30	Samlee Labun	Haleiwa, Pacific Gateway Center	4.5	$1,518.00	
31	Anong Savangdy	ADC	40	$1,336.00	
32	Airdee Sybounmy	Dept. of Agriculture, Kahuku	10	$550.00	
33	Jay Mounsena	Mahiko Farms	2	$419.00	$750.00
34	Anouphab Angsy	Mahiko Farms	23	$2,169.00	
35	Bounthong Senthammavong	Mahiko Farms	2	$419.00	$750.00
36	Uthen Sila	Mahiko Farms	4	$4,425.00	
37	Ouan Khamlong	Mahiko Farms	3	$800.00	$400.00
38	Sony Thamdy	Mahiko Farms	4	$880.00	
39	Thoune Hongphao	Thoune Farm, LLC (AG PARK)	20.8	$3,727.00	
40	Phongdet Thepracha	PGC	4.58	$1,500.00	$200.00
41	Khamsay Leanglithideth	Waianae (Jianjun Liang)	5	$2,000.00	$400.00
42	Tammy Lunagkoth	Turtle Bay Mauka Lands, LLC	20	$1,000.00	$400.00
43	Outh Sivongxay	Mahiko Farms	5	$2,000.00	$745.00
44	Bounhong Vannasook	Turtle Bay	5	$1,000.00	
45	Bounnum Vannasoouk	Turtle Bay, Kahuku	5	$1,000.00	
46	Vicky Ramsuvan-Thammavongsa	Mahiko Farms	8.8	$3,200.00	
47	Sod Somseemee	Kahuku Farms	11	$1,900.00	$800.00
48	Manisone Inthasan	Kunia Camp	5	$900.00	
49	Nongkhran Reynolds	PGC	4.5	$1,518.00	
50	Chai & Noy Soukrasmy	Kaala Ranch	16.5	$1,200.00	
51	Nukhai Chorrak	Mahiko Farms	10	$3,675.00	

52	Kasy Soun	Mahiko Farms		$500.00	
53	Touan Luangrath		4	$800.00	$400.00
54	Komkwan Moses	Monsanto Farms		$924.00	
55	Thirawat Vongcammar	Monsanto Farms	9	$1,400.00	
56	Marut Sila	Mahiko Farms	4	$820.00	
57	Douang Luangrath	Haleiwa Beach Rd. (Richard Sherman)	6	$2,000.00	
58	Lamyai Khotwongthong	Punaluu, Kamehameha Schools	3.5	$615.00	
59	Benjie Yogayog	Mahiko Farms	9	$1,800	$450
60	Primo Agsalda	Mill 6, Savio Farms	1.35		$100
61	Alexander Colobong	Mahiko Farms	1.35	$200	$100
62	Romualdo Gallego	Mahiko Farms	1.6	$720	$150
63	Sherwin Ramos	Mahiko Farms	2		$100
64	Jose Medrano	Mahiko Farms	1.6	$200	$100
65	Rolly Pedro	Savio Farms			$200

1) [illegible] Manivong Dey

2) [illegible]

3) [illegible]

4) [illegible]

5) [illegible]

6) Praiwan Thongkoi

7) Tiyamat Chinnawan

8) NARUEMON SREECHAI

9) [illegible]

10) Buh/w Khamphraja

11) MOKSODA

12) YAENG LUANGSIYOTHA

13) San Manivay

14) Mel Manivong

15) [signature]

16) Somphae manivong

17) BONIYES

18) MAY [signature]

19) ORRATAY RATCHABOUTH.

20) Ky Charsuke

21) SIKHAM SAYA.

22) KHAMPASONG. PHONPHAKDY

23) [signature]

24) Bong Lo

25) TEO SOKKHASEUM.

26) [signature]

27) [illegible]

28) Sylana C Sowaniz -

29) [illegible]

30) SAMCEG LABUN[illegible] -

31) ay Suy

32) TOUY SYSOUNMY

33) Jay Mounsena

34) Anonphab Lasaya

35) BOUNTHONG

36) UTHEN SILA

37) [illegible]

38) Sony P. Thundy

39) [illegible]

46) PHONDET THEPPANA

47) KHAMSAY LEANGLITHdeTh.

48)

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50) OUTH SUNGXAY

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58) NUKHAI CHORRAK

59) KASY SOUN

53) Tausi

54) konferen

55) maneesat (sunblock)

56) Narut sila

57) chanh

58) LAMAI

59)

60)

Kualoa-He'eia Ecumenical Youth
(KEY) Project

April 30, 2026

KEY Project
47-200 Waihe'e Rd.
Kāne'ohe HI 96744

Subject: Support for Bill 22 Operating Budget Amendment

Board Officers

President
Apu Jacobsen

Vice President
Sharon Lau

Secretary
Umi Jensen

Treasurer
Deacon Hanson

Board Members

Ryan Catalani

Reyn Akamine

Kanoe Vares

Kehaunani Meyer

Fran Palama

Kala'i Miller

Aloha Chair Okimoto and Members of the Budget Committee,

On behalf of KEY Project, I am writing to express strong support for the proposed amendments to Bill 22 that invest in community resilience, public safety, and economic recovery. These targeted allocations reflect a thoughtful and necessary response to the challenges facing our island communities, particularly in Ko'olau.

KEY Project is a longstanding, community-based organization rooted in the Ko'olau region. Founded in 1968 as the Kualoa-He'eia Ecumenical Youth Project, it was established through a collaboration of churches, residents, and social service agencies to support at-risk youth in rural communities. Over time, KEY Project has grown into a vital civic resource working across Ko'olau, offering programs for keiki, kūpuna, and families, including food assistance, youth development, cultural programming, and social services. Our mission is to nurture the well-being of people and 'āina by supporting and sustaining our community, and we continue to play a critical role in connecting residents to resources and each other.

Investments proposed in this budget directly strengthen organizations like ours and the communities we serve.

First, we support the $5,000,000 allocation to the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) to provide grants for farmers recovering from natural disasters. Local agriculture is essential to our food security and cultural heritage, and farmers need reliable support to rebuild and sustain their operations after increasingly frequent climate-related events.

Equally important is the restoration of $2,032,253 to OER for 20 positions and associated expenses. These roles are critical to ensuring that the City can continue delivering assistance to small businesses, farmers, ranchers, and residents who face language barriers. Maintaining this capacity strengthens economic stability and ensures equitable access to vital services—support that many community-based organizations rely on to effectively serve their constituents.

Kualoa-He'eia Ecumenical Youth
(KEY) Project

April 30, 2026

KEY Project
47-200 Waihe'e Rd.
Kāne'ohe HI 96744

Board Officers

President
Apu Jacobsen

Vice President
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Secretary
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Kanoe Vares

Kehaunani Meyer

Fran Palama

Kala'i Miller

The $90,000 investment in the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) to support watershed management is a prudent and forward-looking measure. Improved coordination and outreach around stream maintenance will help mitigate flooding risks that directly impact Ko'olau communities.

Public safety investments in the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and Emergency Medical Services (HESD) are also essential. The addition of nine district coordinators in DEM will enhance preparedness and recovery coordination across all council districts. Meanwhile, the $900,000 allocation to establish a new 12-hour ambulance on the North Shore will improve emergency response times and expand access to life-saving services in underserved areas.

We also support the $150,000 for the Department of Facilities Maintenance (DFM) to evaluate and improve the City's stream maintenance plan. A clear, accountable timeline for stream clearing is critical to reducing flood risks and protecting communities.

Finally, the $1,000,000 investment in the Department of Community Services (DCS) for kūpuna feeding and social support programs is vital. KEY Project operates a robust kūpuna program that provides regular meals, wellness checks, social engagement activities, and culturally grounded support services for seniors across the Ko'olau region. Increased funding for these programs will allow organizations like ours to expand outreach, reduce isolation, and address food insecurity among our aging population, ensuring our kūpuna can age with dignity and connection to their community.

Together, these amendments represent a balanced and responsible approach to strengthening our economy, safeguarding our environment, and supporting the health and safety of our residents. On behalf of KEY Project, we respectfully urge you to adopt these provisions in the final budget.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Rainbow K. Uli

With aloha,
Rainbow Uli'i-Akina
KEY Project

Kualoa-He'eia Ecumenical Youth
(KEY) Project

April 29, 2026

KEY Project
47-200 Waihe'e Rd.
Kāne'ohe HI 96744

Subject: Support for Budget Amendment – Nonprofit Reimbursement for Kona Low Recovery

Board Officers

President
Apu Jacobsen

Vice President
Sharon Lau

Secretary
Umi Jensen

Treasurer
Deacon Hanson

Board Members

Ryan Catalani

Reyn Akamine

Kanoe Vares

Kehaunani Meyer

Fran Palama

Kala'i Miller

Aloha Chair Okimoto and Members of the Budget Committee,

Kualoa-He'eia Ecumenical Youth (KEY) Project is writing in support of the proposed amendment to Bill 22 (2026), CD1, which sets aside $3,000,000 to reimburse nonprofit organizations that used their own funds to support recovery efforts following the 2026 Kona Low storms.

KEY Project was part of the conversations that helped shape this amendment based on what organizations experienced in real time during the storm response. In the Ko'olau region, our team mobilized immediately, helping to establish the Community Assistance Center at BYUH, coordinating rapid response efforts, and conducting over 10 community distributions within the first week and a half to ensure families had access to food, supplies, and essential resources. We also incurred significant out-of-pocket costs, including rolloff rentals and other emergency response expenses, to meet the scale of need on the ground.

This amendment reflects those realities and provides a practical path to stabilize organizations that stepped in without delay. We support this measure as a necessary investment in the nonprofit sector's role in disaster response and recovery, ensuring that organizations can continue serving communities without long-term financial strain while strengthening preparedness for future events.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Rainbow K. Uli

With aloha,
Rainbow Uli'i-Akina
KEY Project

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET
HONOLULU HALE
10:30 am

May 1, 2026

Subject: Bill 22 CD1 - Relating to Executive Operating Budget (RE: DPP funding for salaries)

Chair Okimoto, Vice Chair Nishimoto, 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 support of the funding for the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) included in Bill 22, CD1, specifically the appropriation for salaries and the proviso allocating at least $240,000 for an educational loan forgiveness program for up to 20 engineers.

BIA Hawaii has consistently highlighted that permitting delays are one of the most significant constraints on housing production in Honolulu. This appropriation focuses on the root of the issue: recruitment and retention of qualified personnel. By investing in salaries and workforce incentives, the City is taking a practical and necessary step toward improving permitting timelines.

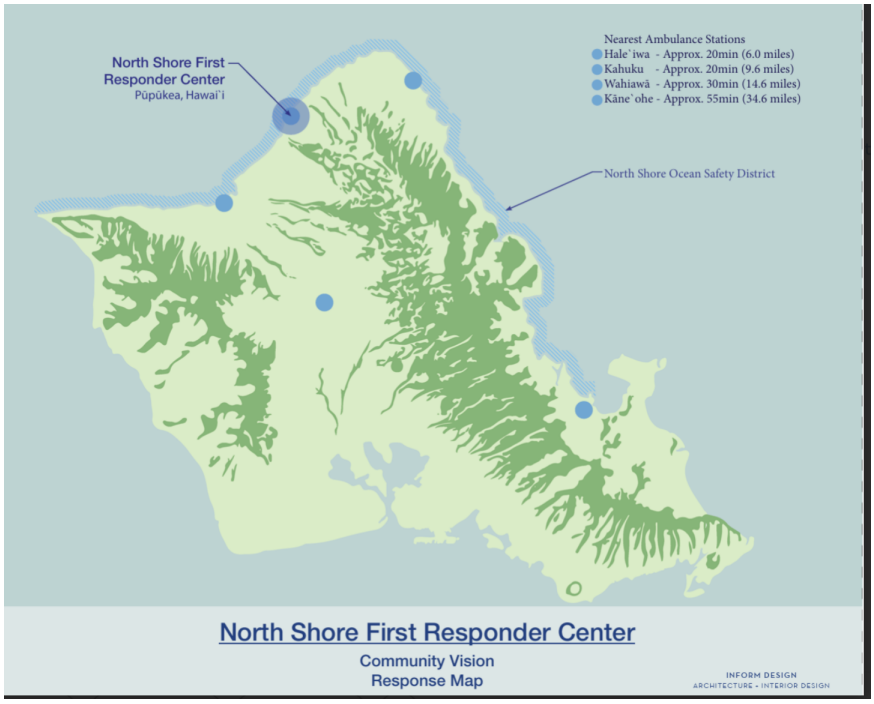
The proposed educational loan forgiveness program is especially important. The City competes directly with the private sector for engineers, where compensation and benefits are often significantly higher. Providing incentives like loan forgiveness will help DPP attract and retain the technical professionals needed to perform timely plan reviews and inspections.

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

Bill 22 – RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OPERATING BUDGET
May 1, 2026 City Council Budget Committee Meeting

Testimony in Strong Support of Pūpūkea Ambulance

Emergency Medical Services (HESD)	$900,000	Adds 6 positions and appropriates $700,000 for salaries, $150,000 for current expenses, and $50,000 for equipment to establish a new 12-hour ambulance to serve the North Shore.



Aloha Budget Chair Okimoto, Committee Members,

Please support the urgently needed ambulance for the North Shore at Pūpūkea!

The proposed budget, as proposed by Councilmember Weyer, is $900,000 - for staffing and supplies. HESD *already has the vehicle capacity for this site* but not the staffing.

Filling the ambulance "gap" area in our rural area – see map with response times above -- is urgently needed. This ambulance has been a City priority since the Mayor's team proposed it as part of a North Shore First Responder Center three years ago at a presentation to our Sunset Beach Community Association in March 2023.

You will recall from last year's budget hearings the tremendous community support for the City to acquire the "Sharks Cove property" for the Ocean Safety District station and the HESD ambulance. Over 8000 Hawaii residents signed a petition to urge the Mayor and City Council to get it done. As you know from attending the Mayor's State of the City address on March 18, 2026, the property is now in escrow. The dream is becoming a reality thanks to your support.

The ambulance in our area is even more urgent given the devastation of the recent Kona Lows, which showed how Pūpūkea is easily cut off from help in such a disaster.

Between the flooding and swamped cars on Kamehameha Highway on both sides of Waimea Bay, the Pūpūkea/Sunset communities were isolated for several days. The three rockslides at Waimea Bay – two makai slides in the first storm and later the dramatic rockfall from the cliffs onto the highway with boulders over 9 feet tall – severely reduced highway access – including for first responders - and that contraflow restriction will last for months.

We hope that the City Council will continue its past strong support for this crucial first responder center ambulance that will make our communities and visitors safer especially with winter season arriving. Let's continue to work together to make this dream a reality in late 2026 or early 2027!!

Mahalo,

Denise Antolini
President, Save Sharks Cove Alliance

Save Sharks Cove Alliance

TO: Members of the Budget Committee of the Honolulu City Council

FROM: Natalie Iwasa, CPA, CFE
808-395-3233

DATE: Friday, May 1, 2026

SUBJECT: Bill 22, CD1, Operating Budget– **COMMENT on OER**

Aloha Chair Okimoto and Councilmembers,

Thank you for allowing testimony on Bill 22, CD1, which sets the city's operating budget for next fiscal year.

During my testimony before the full council on April 15, I supported the approximate $2 million cut to the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) on the basis that I had thought the office was providing services already offered by nonprofit organizations. It is now my understanding that the services are not duplicative but rather that OER partners with these groups to assist in its responsibilities of assisting small businesses. I apologize for this error.

I am, however, concerned about findings of the city auditor as noted in his January 2026 report and ask that councilmembers follow up with the department regarding any duplicative services and related costs that might be overlap with other departments.

Aloha Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am LorMona Meredith, the Project Director of the Sustainable Tourism Association of Hawaiʻi and a small business owner. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact. Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable tourism
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen Oʻahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations. I've worked closely with OER on various projects related to improving workforce development, stakeholder collaboration, and providing resources and access to programs that help uplift communities and improve the lives of our residents. Sustaining OER is important because we need a dedicated entity that can see across sectors, connect the dots, and ensure that public investments are working together—not in silos—to create meaningful, long-term impact. At a time when our communities are navigating rising costs, workforce shortages, and economic uncertainty, OER's role is not optional—it is essential.

We respectfully urge the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is especially critical as Oʻahu continues to respond to and recover from the impacts of the recent Kona Low flooding. Maintaining OER's work is a tangible investment in a more affordable, resilient, and opportunity-driven local economy—one that works for every Oʻahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, your service, and your continued commitment to the people of Oʻahu.

LorMona Meredith
808-387-5943 | lormona@gmail.com

P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

May 1, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

TESTIMONY ON BILL 22 (2026), CD1
RELATING TO THE EXECUTIVE OPERATING BUDGET FOR FY 2027

City Council Chamber
10:30 AM

Aloha Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee,

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaiʻi Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized in 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawaiʻi's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports the restoration of the City Administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays an important role in coordinating across sectors to support key components of Hawai'i's economy, including small businesses, workforce development, and agriculture. Efforts that help align programs, resources, and partnerships are critical to ensuring that farmers and agricultural businesses can access opportunities and support services.

HFB appreciates OER's work in supporting local food systems and its role in connecting stakeholders across government, industry, and community organizations. As recent events such as the Kona Low flooding have demonstrated, coordinated responses and accessible support systems are essential to helping businesses, including agricultural producers, recover and continue operations.

Maintaining OER's capacity to serve as a connector and partner will help strengthen O'ahu's economic resilience and support a more coordinated approach to recovery and long-term growth.

For these reasons, HFB respectfully supports the restoration of OER's budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

HAWAII REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS

May 1, 2026

To: The Honorable Val A. Okimoto, Chair
The Honorable Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Budget

Re: In Strong Support of Bill 22 (2026), Proposed CD1

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai‘i Regional Council of Carpenters, representing over 6,000 skilled union carpenters and tradespeople across the islands, is grateful for the opportunity to submit our testimony in strong support of Bill 22 (2026), CD1.

We are writing in strong support of Bill 22 (2026), CD1, specifically the provision establishing and funding an educational loan forgiveness program to recruit and retain engineers within the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP).

This measure directly addresses one of the most significant structural constraints on housing and infrastructure development in Honolulu: the permitting backlog. As reflected in the bill, funding is allocated—at least $240,000—for a recruit and retention incentive tied to an educational loan forgiveness program for up to 20 engineers . This is not just a workforce investment; it is a capacity solution.

We understand from the proposed amendments that this program has been deliberately repositioned within DPP to maximize impact, aligning with broader workforce strategy recommendations and the need to strengthen permitting operations . This is the right policy move.

From a construction and labor perspective, delays in permitting have real economic consequences. Projects stall. Costs escalate. Workers lose opportunities. When DPP cannot process permits efficiently due to staffing shortages, the entire housing pipeline slows down. That directly undermines efforts to increase housing supply, stabilize costs, and deliver critical infrastructure.

STATE HEADQUARTERS & BUSINESS OFFICES
OAHU: 1311 Houghtailing Street, Honolulu Hawaii 96817-2712 • Ph. (808) 847-5761 Fax (808) 440-9188
HILO OFFICE: 525 Kilauea Avenue, Room 205, Hilo, Hawaii 96720-3050 • Ph. (808) 935-8575 Fax (808) 935-8576
KONA OFFICE: 75-126 Lunapule Road, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740-2106 • Ph. (808) 329-7355 Fax (808) 326-9376
MAUI OFFICE: 330 Hookahi Street,Wailuku, Maui 96793-1449 • Ph. (808) 242-6891 Fax (808) 242-5961
KAUAI OFFICE: Kuhio Medical Ctr Bldg., 3-3295 Kuhio Hwy, Suite 201, Lihue, Kauai 96766-1040 • Ph. (808) 245-8511 Fax (808) 245-8911

This bill recognizes a simple reality: we cannot build faster if we cannot permit faster.

Investing in engineers, particularly through loan forgiveness, is a targeted, market-responsive strategy. It acknowledges the competitive labor environment where public sector agencies must compete with private industry for highly skilled professionals. Without tools like this, DPP will continue to struggle to fill and retain critical positions.

We also note that this approach aligns with recommendations from broader workforce initiatives aimed at addressing long-term permitting capacity constraints. In other words, this is not a one-off fix, but rather, this is part of a systemic solution.

For our members, this matters. Every delayed permit is a delayed jobsite. Every delayed jobsite is lost work hours, delayed income, and slower economic activity across the construction sector.

For the public, this matters even more. Faster permitting means faster delivery of housing, including workforce housing, and faster completion of public projects that communities rely on.

We urge the committee to support this provision and ensure that DPP has the staffing capacity necessary to meet the demands of our growing state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF OER'S FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

May 1, 2026

Chair Okimoto and Members of the Honolulu City Council Budget Committee:

I am Doreen Wong, a consultant with the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC), with 14 years of experience in developing the sustainable blue economy and working at the intersection of technology innovation, policy, and finance. I am submitting this testimony to support the restoration of the City administration's budget request for the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) for Fiscal Year 2027.

OER plays a vital role as the City's economic integrator—coordinating across systems to improve how those systems function and how residents and businesses access opportunity. Rather than delivering services directly, OER focuses on aligning efforts, reducing fragmentation, and translating resources into place-based impact.

Through leadership, policy, program coordination, and outreach, OER's work improves systems and directly supports the economic pillars that our communities depend on:

- Small business development and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and technology growth
- Sustainable Tourism
- Agriculture and local food systems
- Workforce development and employment pathways

Together, these efforts strengthen O'ahu's broader economic health by supporting community well-being, cultural vitality, and commercial property tax revenues that help sustain City operations.

I have seen how HTDC and OER have partnered closely to help build economic resilience in one of Hawai'i's natural strengths: the Blue Economy. HTDC and OER have been collaborating with added intention to help grow a sector where Hawai'i can be a strong leader.

In UHERO's recent report, Beyond the Price of Paradise: Is Hawai'i Being Left Behind?, warns that our state risks falling further behind economically. Sustaining OER is important to help foster these kinds of collaborations as we continue to address our economic needs and support our residents.

We respectfully ask the Council to restore and preserve OER's funding at the requested level. OER's ability to coordinate cross-sector partners, align resources, and serve as a bridge between government and community is critical, especially in light of the Kona Low flood recovery needs. Maintaining OER's work is a meaningful step towards a local economy that is built on affordability, resiliency, and opportunity for every O'ahu resident.

Mahalo for your time, service, and continued dedication to the people of O'ahu.



Doreen Wong