RES26-106
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 230

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Jun 3, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Pikachu Shelby Billionaire	presidentbillionaire@gmail.com	96792
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Ohana Unity Party	Oppose	May 31, 2026 @ 08:39 AM

Testimony:

Oppose Resolution 26-106, CD1 – Transfer of Funds for Disaster Debris Costs

Chair Waters and Members of the Honolulu City Council:

I respectfully submit this testimony in OPPOSITION TO RESOLUTION 26-106, CD1, OR IN THE ALTERNATIVE, REQUEST ADDITIONAL SCRUTINY AND TRANSPARENCY BEFORE APPROVAL.

This resolution authorizes the transfer of up to $1,500,000 from the Department of Environmental Services Refuse Collection and Disposal Salaries account to the Current Expenses account to cover costs associated with disaster debris collection, monitoring, hauling, and management following the Kona Low storm events.

No reasonable person disputes that storm debris must be removed and public safety must be protected.

The question before the Council is not whether debris should be cleared.

The question is whether taxpayers are receiving sufficient transparency, accountability, and fiscal oversight regarding these expenditures.

QUESTIONS TAXPAYERS DESERVE ANSWERS TO

Before approving a $1.5 million transfer, taxpayers deserve to know:

• How much has already been spent under the Disaster Debris contingent contracts?

• What is the total projected cost of Kona Low cleanup efforts?

• How much of these expenditures are expected to be reimbursed through FEMA or other federal disaster programs?

• Why were existing budget contingencies insufficient?

• Why are funds being transferred from salaries?

• Were positions left vacant?

• Will service levels be impacted as a result of this transfer?

• What procurement and oversight measures were used to ensure taxpayers received competitive pricing?

THE SALARIES QUESTION

One of the most significant concerns in this resolution is that the transfer originates from the Salaries category.

The public deserves a clear explanation regarding:

• Whether positions remain vacant.

• Whether these funds were originally budgeted for personnel who were never hired.

• Whether staffing shortages contributed to the need for outside contractors.

• Whether long-term personnel planning is being adequately managed.

Taxpayers should not be left guessing why $1.5 million is available for transfer from a salaries account.

DISASTER RESPONSE MUST INCLUDE ACCOUNTABILITY

Natural disasters create urgent situations, but urgency should not eliminate oversight.

In fact, emergency expenditures often require greater scrutiny because large contracts can be activated quickly and substantial public funds can be spent within a short period of time.

The Council should ensure that:

• All disaster-related contracts are publicly reported.

• Contractor payments are fully disclosed.

• Performance metrics are available for public review.

• Expected reimbursement amounts are publicly identified.

• Taxpayers receive regular updates regarding total recovery costs.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS

The City frequently returns to taxpayers requesting additional spending authority, budget transfers, bond issuances, and supplemental appropriations.

Each request may appear reasonable in isolation.

However, taken together, these requests contribute to a pattern of budget growth and fiscal expansion that deserves careful examination.

Taxpayers have a right to expect both emergency response and financial accountability.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC RESPONSE

If this resolution is approved, I respectfully request that the Council publicly address the following:

1. What percentage of the $1.5 million transfer is expected to be reimbursed through federal disaster assistance?

2. What is the total projected cost of Kona Low debris removal and recovery operations?

3. Why were salary appropriations available for transfer?

4. What safeguards are in place to prevent future budget shortfalls of this nature?

CONCLUSION

Disaster recovery is important, but accountability is equally important.

Before approving the transfer of $1.5 million in public funds, the Council should ensure that taxpayers receive a full explanation of costs, reimbursements, staffing impacts, and financial oversight measures.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Council to defer action on Resolution 26-106, CD1, until additional information is provided to the public, or alternatively amend the measure to include enhanced reporting and accountability requirements.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM

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