BILL033(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 261

*HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & PARKS (HHP)

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

Meeting Date: Jun 23, 2026 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Emily Perry	emily.perry@tpl.org	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Trust for Public Land	Support	Jun 23, 2026 @ 11:10 AM

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND®

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June 22, 2026

City and County of Honolulu
City Council
530 S King St.
Honolulu Hale, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

SUBMITTED VIA ONLINE TESTIMONY

Subject: Letter of Support for Bill 22(26) and Bill 33(26)

Dear Committee Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, and Council Committee members,

Trust for Public Land strongly supports for Bill 32(26): Relating to public parks, recreational facilities, and botanical gardens and Bill 33(26): Relating to Funds. A community's quality of life and health is in large part determined by the built and natural environment in which the community lives.

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.

Bill 32(26) repeals specific charges for fees and charges for the use of public parks and recreational facilities and designates authority to the DPR Director to establish fees and charges. This bill allows for fees to be flexible and representative of rising costs to maintain and care for DPR facilities. We support the additional language added by the Council which reinforces that any changes in fees be fair, reasonable, and consistent with the city's commitment to equitable access and ask that the Council works with DPR to determine the right mechanism to facilitate future changes in fees.

Bill 33(26) creates the "parks maintenance and recreation services revolving fund" so that monies from fees for various park uses, gifts or contributions, transient accommodations tax revenues, and grants to be used towards DPR operations. This provides an additional

dedicated fund for DPR operations, maintenance, programming, and planning to grow revenue to fund growing operations.

We extend our full support to Bill 32(26) and Bill 33(26) which would 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