

BILL047(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 272

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Jul 8, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 3

Oppose: 3

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Jonathan Huynh	Email: jhweather123@yahoo.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 1, 2026 @ 11:28 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

I testify in strong opposition to Bill 47, which reduces vehicle weight tax rates across all categories. As someone who navigates Honolulu's car-dominated streets daily, I read this bill with genuine disappointment. It moves us in exactly the wrong direction for these reasons:

1. Road damage: Each doubling of axle weight causes approximately sixteen times greater pavement deterioration. A 6,500-pound pickup inflicts vastly disproportionate damage compared to a 2,800-pound sedan, yet both receive identical percentage reductions under this bill. Heavier vehicles pay less relative to the cost they impose. The math is settled science in transportation engineering.
2. Cost shifting: Honolulu faces chronic road repair backlogs. Cutting weight tax revenue widens that gap. Every dollar discounted from vehicle registrants falls on taxpayers regardless of what they drive, including residents who do not drive at all. Non-drivers already fund road maintenance through general fund allocations and federal grants sourced from income taxation. They absorb noise pollution, deteriorated air quality, and delayed emergency services responding to collisions they had no role in causing. Bill 47 deepens this imbalance.
3. Climate commitments: Heavier vehicles consume more fuel and emit more pollutants. Discounting their operation during a declared climate emergency sends contradictory policy signals encouraging continued oversized vehicle adoption.
4. Equity impact: Wealthier households purchasing luxury SUVs and large pickup trucks benefit substantially while working families driving smaller economical vehicles receive negligible savings. The dollar benefits skew upward dramatically. Most critically, non-driving residents, whose tax dollars maintain infrastructure degraded by vehicles they neither own nor operate, shoulder mounting costs while receiving nothing in return. Households without cars effectively subsidize operators of 6,000-pound commuter vehicles tearing through their neighborhoods daily.

I urge the council to reject Bill 47 and replace it with graduated surcharges on vehicles based on weight, with revenue dedicated to active transportation infrastructure and road rehabilitation. Mahalo for your consideration and time.

Name: Brett Kulbis	Email: brett.kulbis@use.startmail.com	Zip: 96706
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Support	Jul 2, 2026 @ 11:48 AM
Testimony: Chair Waters, and Members of the Council, Aloha, my name is Brett Kulbis. I am a proud resident of 'Ewa Beach and a 26-year U.S. Navy veteran. As a concerned citizen who values limited government, fiscal responsibility, and real accountability to the people, I submit this testimony in strong support of Bill 47, relating to the motor vehicle weight tax. Bill 47 moves Honolulu in the right direction by reducing the vehicle weight tax rates for passenger vehicles, trucks and noncommercial vehicles under 6,500 pounds, and commercial vehicles. At a time when local families, workers, and small business owners are dealing with high costs across the board, this kind of tax relief is both reasonable and necessary. From my viewpoint, the government should not collect more from residents than it truly needs, especially on something as essential as transportation. For many people on Oahu, a vehicle is not a luxury. It is how they get to work, take care of their families, and manage daily responsibilities. Bill 47 recognizes that reality by lowering rates while keeping the overall tax structure in place. I do want to respectfully raise one concern with the bill as written. The measure does not take effect until July 1, 2027. If the Council believes these rates should be reduced, then taxpayers should not have to wait another full year to see the benefit. That delay is especially hard to justify when the registration process already appears to be largely automated. Honolulu residents can renew registration by mail, online, at self-service kiosks, and at satellite city halls, and the notices themselves are computer-generated. For that reason, it seems reasonable to ask whether the effective date could be moved up so this relief reaches residents sooner. I respectfully urge the Council to pass Bill 47 and, if possible, amend the effective date to an earlier and more practical timeline. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support. Respectfully submitted, Brett Kulbis, Navy Veteran Ewa Beach		
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ted Kefalas	tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Support	Jul 7, 2026 @ 11:18 AM

Name: Darius Kila	Email: repkila@capitol.hawaii.gov	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 7, 2026 @ 02:47 PM

Name: Angie Knight	Email: angela.g.knight@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 7, 2026 @ 03:23 PM

Testimony:

I oppose Bill 47 as written, though I support its intent to provide relief for our high cost of living. This measure would make only a marginal dent in households' annual transportation costs. Moreover, the proposed cost savings would not amount to a full tank of gas for most. Car registration fees are among the few main revenue streams for the City. Year after year, the City & County issues a public request for households to pay their registration fees on time, as it needs the revenue.

If registration fees are used to help fund our public transit program and its annual revenue decreases, I worry that public transit riders would see an additional rate increase to offset the reduction, which would negate the cost savings intent of the measure and, instead of reducing the financial burden, simply shift it from those with cars to those without.

Name: Dale VanderBrink	Email: sandmandfgh@gmail.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Jul 7, 2026 @ 11:53 PM

Testimony:

Aloha,

My name is Dale VanderBrink. I am the 2nd Vice chair of the Ala Moana Kaka'ako Neighborhood Board but I am providing this testimony in my personal capacity.

I strongly oppose Bill 47.

My opposition to Bill 47, lowering the vehicle weight tax rates, is not directly tied into lowering the taxes themselves. It is embedded in the actions of the council over the past year.

This council has taken to raising the everyday cost of living of residents by raising transit fares. It did so upon the belief that much needed revenue was needed to fund our bus system and a minimal cost to residents.

This council has also taken to spend \$4 million to buy a long term vacant building in Kaimuki. It did so by claiming it would

benefit the neighborhood. Yet there was no question on if the council had this money to spend.

The council has also taken the opposite approach and cut spending, sending a budget to the mayor that eliminates jobs. This was done under the notion we need to “tighten our belts”.

I oppose Bill 47 because the Council can't get its story straight. Do we need new revenue? Do we need to cut spending? Do we need to increase spending? Or do we need to cut taxes, which is what Bill 47 does.

Until this Council takes action to reduce our everyday cost of living, rather than increase it, I cannot support a bill that hides behind that same phrase while attempting to reduce an annual fee.

Mahalo,

Dale VanderBrink

July 8, 2026, 10 a.m.

Honolulu Hale

To: Honolulu City Council

Tommy Waters, Chair

Andria Tupola, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: Bill 47 (2026) — RELATING TO THE MOTOR VEHICLE WEIGHT TAX

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

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [Bill 47 \(2026\)](#), which would cut the city's vehicle weight tax by 1.5 cents per pound. Currently, Honolulu's weight tax includes a 7-cent-per-pound levy on all commercial and passenger vehicles registered in the county.

Each county levies weight taxes on vehicles, but Honolulu's is the highest by a substantial amount. For passenger vehicles, Maui County's weight tax is 3.5 cents per pound, Kauai County's is 2 cents, and Hawaii County's is 1.75 cents.¹ Each county's weight tax is imposed in addition to the state's per-pound weight tax of 1.75 cents to 2.25 cents, a state highway beautification fee and a city vehicle registration fee.

For context, the owner of a 2019 Toyota Tacoma would pay about \$310 annually for only Honolulu's portion of the weight tax. That would decrease to about \$265 under this proposed legislation.

This measure will make transportation more affordable for Honolulu residents struggling with high gas prices. Saving \$45 will not be a make or break most residents, but it will help mitigate the affordability crisis that most people deal with everyday.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas

Director of Strategic Campaigns

Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

¹ Daryl Huff, "[Lawmakers moving to slash city vehicle tax by 75%](#)," Hawaii News Now, April 14, 2026.



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Hale o nā Luna Makaʻāinana

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
415 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

July 7, 2026

Meeting: July 8, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

First Reading
Regular Meeting, City Council Chamber
Honolulu, Hawaii

RE: Testimony in Support of Bill 47(2026), RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLE
WEIGHT TAX; Reduces the Vehicle Weight Tax Rates for Motor Vehicles

Aloha Chair, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Honolulu City Council,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of Bill 47 (2026), which seeks to reduce the Vehicle Weight Tax Rates for passenger vehicles, trucks and noncommercial vehicles with a net weight of 6,500 pounds or less, and certain vehicles designed primarily for carrying property.

I strongly support this measure because it provides meaningful tax relief for the residents of Oʻahu and moves the City’s vehicle weight tax structure closer to that of the other counties. For many working families, owning a vehicle is not a luxury, it is a necessity. On the Waiʻanae Coast and throughout Oʻahu, many residents have no practical alternative to driving to work, school, medical appointments, and other daily responsibilities. Every opportunity to reduce the cost of vehicle ownership makes a difference.

This is an issue I have been working on at the state level as well. During the 2026 Legislative Session, I introduced legislation to establish a statewide cap on county vehicle weight taxes to encourage greater consistency across the counties while providing relief to taxpayers. Although that measure did not become law this year, I remain committed to finding ways to reduce the financial burden associated with vehicle ownership while ensuring counties have the resources necessary to maintain and improve our transportation infrastructure.

Reducing the vehicle weight tax also promotes responsible vehicle ownership by making registration more affordable. When registration costs become more manageable, more residents are able to register their vehicles on time, improving compliance and reducing unnecessary penalties.

Representative Darius K. Kila

House District 44— Maʻili, Lualualei, Nānākuli, Honokai Hale Ko Olina
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 403 / Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-9480 / Fax: (808) 586-9485 / Email: RepKila@capitol.hawaii.gov

City Council

Subject: Testimony in Support of Bill 47(2026), RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLE WEIGHT TAX;
Reduces the Vehicle Weight Tax Rates for Motor Vehicles

July 7, 2026

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I commend the City Council for taking this step and encourage you to continue exploring thoughtful, fiscally responsible ways to gradually reduce the overall cost of vehicle ownership for O‘ahu residents. Incremental changes like this can have a meaningful impact on household budgets while strengthening public confidence in our tax system.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in support of this bill. Should you have any questions, you may contact me at (808) 586-9480 or by email at repkila@capitol.hawaii.gov.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darius K. Kila', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Darius K. Kila
Representative, House District 44
Mā‘ili, Lualualei, Nānākuli, Honokai Hale,
Ko ‘Olina