

**MAKAKILO - KAPOLEI - HONOKAI HALE
NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO.34**

City and County of Honolulu
Neighborhood Commission Office
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'26JUL06 AM 8:18 CITY CLERK

BOARD MEMBERS

Ferreira, Michael	Medeiros, Sheila (Treasurer)
Paris, Anthony Makana (Chair)	England, Carol (Secretary)
Dudley, Kioni	Kahele, Moon
Bosler, Amy	Taala, Tiare
Lidstone, Mikiala (Vice Chair)	

July 8, 2026

Honolulu City Council
Ke Kanihela O Ke Kalana O Honolulu
City and County of Honolulu

Re: Bill 22 (2026) CD2 FD1I Funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization

Aloha Chair Tommy Waters, Vice Chair Dr. Andria Tupola, and Members of the Council:

I submit this testimony on behalf of the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34. We respectfully request that the Council support full funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization.

At our May 20, 2026 special meeting, the Neighborhood Board adopted Resolution 2026-5S-4, entitled "Support O'ahu's Future by Strengthening the Office of Economic Revitalization as the City's Economic Integrator," which is attached for your review.

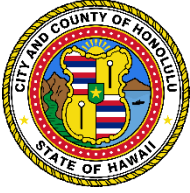
Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Me ke aloha,

Anthony Makana Paris
Chair

encl.

DEPT. COM. 453(26) CCL



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RESOLUTION 2026-5S-4

**SUPPORT O'AHU'S FUTURE BY STRENGTHENING THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC
REVITALIZATION AS THE CITY'S ECONOMIC INTEGRATOR**

Whereas, The Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 ("Board") is a citizens' advisory board whose purpose is to "increase and assure effective citizen participation in the decisions of government" per the City and County of Honolulu's Neighborhood Plan of 2008; and

Whereas, The City has identified economic revitalization and diversification as core priorities and the Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) serves as the City's economic integrator, aligning systems, reducing fragmentation, and ensuring residents and businesses access opportunities efficiently; and

Whereas, OER was established during the COVID-19 pandemic and proved essential in coordinating recovery, administering federal relief, advocating for equitable economic outcomes, and building credibility with communities and funders; and

Whereas, OER strengthens key pillars of O'ahu's economy including small business development, workforce pathways, innovation, agriculture, and sustainable tourism, which are foundational to community stability and long-term economic health; and

Whereas, OER's Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems program, created after neighbor islands had long maintained dedicated agricultural staff, connects farmers to federal and state funding, supports local food production, and now administers disaster recovery resources critical to food system resilience; and

Whereas, OER's O'ahu Business Connector program and Resource Connectors provide place-based small business outreach and liaison services that help retain jobs and sustain local commerce; and

Whereas, From 2020–2025 OER, in partnership with community organizations, helped deliver over \$120 million in rental and utility assistance and linked thousands of residents to housing, healthcare, and social services, demonstrating measurable protection against displacement and nationally recognized program performance; and

Whereas, OER's community outreach and coordination (including 40+ outreach events since 2023) show how aligned public systems and community organizations expand access to resources and generate economic activity; and

Whereas, OER has been critical in responding to crises from the COVID-19 pandemic to the recent Kona Low storms, particularly for communities and sectors, including farmers and small business owners, that often fall outside traditional emergency response systems; and

Whereas, Reducing OER's funding and staffing would diminish the City's ability to administer federal recovery funds, deliver coordinated business recovery programs, sustain agricultural and disaster recovery functions, and implement the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS); and

Whereas, Other Hawai'i counties maintain well-resourced economic development offices and reducing O'ahu's capacity below neighboring counties, while serving a much larger population, would weaken the island's competitiveness and resilience; and

Whereas, The State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development has urged restoring the City administration's proposed OER budget to preserve coordination, implementation, and disaster recovery continuity; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 that it hereby supports O'ahu's future by strengthening the Office Of Economic Revitalization as the City's Economic Integrator; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board:

1. Strongly supports full funding for the Office of Economic Revitalization in the City budget to preserve OER's capacity to serve as the City's pass-through for federal recovery funding, deliver business recovery programs, coordinate CEDS implementation, steward federal resources, sustain place-based economic development, and advance economic revitalization and diversification;
2. Opposes the proposed amendment that would reduce OER to a minimal staff configuration (three film office staff, three community equity liaisons, and an executive director), because such reductions would prevent OER from administering federal recovery funds, supporting small businesses, maintaining essential agricultural and disaster recovery functions, and positioning Honolulu for long-term resilience and growth;
3. Urges the Mayor, Honolulu City Council, and other decision-makers to recognize OER's demonstrated value, especially its Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems program and O'ahu Business Connector initiative, and to restore full funding to protect local food production, farmer support, job retention, disaster recovery responsiveness, and strategic economic diversification;
4. Requests that decision-makers weigh both near-term recovery needs and long-term resilience when evaluating OER's budget and ensure the City retains the municipal capacity necessary to align government and the business community for sustained economic stability and growth; and be it finally

Ordered, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, Honolulu Council members, Area Legislators, and All Neighborhood Boards.

The Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 adopted this resolution during its Wednesday, May 20, 2026 Special Board Meeting, 6-0-0 (**Aye**: Bossler, England, Ferreira, Kahele, Medeiros, Paris; **Nay**: None; **Abstain**: None).