BILL050(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 295

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

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

Support: 1

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ted Kefalas	tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Support	Jul 7, 2026 @ 11:23 AM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Dylan Armstrong	dylan.p.armstrong@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Jul 8, 2026 @ 02:59 AM

Testimony:

Aloha,

On first reading, I am normally willing to defer judgment of a particular bill, no matter how immediately it catches my attention or grates my beliefs. I am not so wedded to my opinions that they are incapable of revision--separating me from Donald Trump, the Islamic State, and my esteemed icon Bernie Sanders.

Perhaps there is a justifiable argument for repealing the fledgling Land Conservation Fund, but at this time I am unaware of it.

As the city's Office of Resilience expands and bears fruit there is a tendency to 'satisfice' and assume the environment is on the right track, locally anyway, and sometimes 'too much of a good thing' annoyingly constrains economic development. As a sometimes annoying constraint on politicians myself, I assure you, saving the environment is not the problem.

The environment allows the free conditions needed for successful economic development. These include water, liveable temperatures, reasonable wind, reasonably safe oceans. How many Europeans are now about to see Honolulu-style energy bills because they never before needed air conditioning to any great degree?

The more that piecemeal and initial climate progress is made by the City and County, the more that climate change becomes seen as a nuisance, like litter or traffic congestion, to be solved with technology. Unfortunately, it is not. Technology will never be the answer for the climate emergency under current conditions, conditions which you and thousands of lawmakers around the world would have to vote to change, radically, and which, owing to the path of your trade and the skills by which you maintain it, you assuredly will not.

Climate change is a political emergency that was already solvable before I was born. It was and remains only solvable with a complex of combined political solutions--one of which was clearly disseminated through the United Nations a few years ago, the conservation of 1/3rd of all Earth's land area.

When the state bucked this clarion call to set aside 1/3 of all land area for conservation it was not for the better, just as, absent a larger offset served by the repeal of this fund, there will not be a commensurate net benefit for the city. Rickety and tenuous new funds and programs fail most readily when they are set up to fail. Local culture leans conservative about new ideas, and it is probably at its worst at maintaining new efforts.

To be crystal clear, climate change quite credibly looms over our heads, like the sword of Damocles, and threatens to kill thousands of Honolulu residents in my natural lifetime.

Corroborating research includes that of just Camilo Mora, PhD, at UH Manoa, some of which was published in the world's leading academic journals. The proof for such an 'alarmist' scenario that would satisfy a trial lawyer's approach would be eye-witness testimony, first hand observation, and not scientific models made up of byzantine variables. Okay, fair enough. But that would mean waiting until after thousands had died. My sense of urgency exceeds perfectionism.

And the benefits to genuine climate mitigation and adaptation--even were an overreaction genuinely possible, which I can't concede--include a better, more affordable, more beautiful world for more of us to share.

This fund is a small thing. It is easy to excuse and exclude small things. At this time, I see it as a small part of a bigger picture. I am opposed.

Best,
Dylan P. Armstrong

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Removing barriers to Hawaii's prosperity

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 50 (2026) — RELATING TO FUNDS

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

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** Bill 50 (2026), which would repeal the land conservation fund and direct the city Department of Budget and Fiscal Services to transfer any monies in that fund to a similar fund.

As the measure points out, the city created this fund in 2005 to support conservation efforts. However, the city created the clean water and natural lands fund in 2007, which duplicated the efforts of the land conservation fund and has received the lion's share of conservation monies since then.

Therefore, the land conservation fund is not necessary to advance the city's environmental protection efforts and only serves to increase the paperwork burden on city staff and add complication to the city code.

Grassroot appreciates the intent of this measure and would welcome further Council actions to repeal outdated and redundant portions of the city code.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii