

RES26-158

Testimony

MISC. COMM. 304

*ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY (EES)

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Meeting

Meeting Date: Jul 14, 2026 @ 01:00 PM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 1

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Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Jul 13, 2026 @ 07:42 AM

Testimony:

Testimony for the Honolulu City Council

Committee on Energy, Environment & Sustainability

The Honorable Matt Weyer, Chair

14 July 2026

RESOLUTION 26-158

Aloha Chair Weyer, and Committee Members,

I am submitting comments on the proposal.

The fundamental conundrum that the City and County faces is that energy markets are both speculative and reactive. If inflation continues to remain high, or further shocks affect energy consumption, than impacts on the city may be severe. Nonetheless, there will be local reactions at the policy and implementation levels to affect cost savings. I.e., shifting energy behaviors and sources.

Should prices fall, and energy markets experience disinflation or deflation, the City can expect solar energy markets to crater and therefore revert back to the status quo. Nonetheless, there is little incentive to pursue renewable energy when oil and natural gas are 'cheap,' and solar or wind or geothermal tends to remain out of favor for years at a time.

For a counter-example, in 2016 the Board of Water Supply prevented \$56 million in energy costs through a deal with NORESKO that supplied partly renewable energy to the BWS. Even in 2025, the BWS suffered from rising energy costs, pale in comparison to a more volatile 2026. Though this was dealt with through rate hikes, that it not necessarily always the best policy.

The impetus behind a vulnerability assessment is not wrong. But neither does that make it 'right.' There is a cliché that governments spend too much money on studies that go nowhere. While I am not cynical in that manner, a study does not necessarily change anything about what we know. What we know with certainty is that a consultants' study will profit the consultants..

The council ultimately needs to have a forward-positioned policy that to some extent is ideological, but, being rooted in practical and focused scientific data, is not blindly so. Without this framework the best vulnerability assessment will inform nothing. With a new Managing Director, and many Council Members approaching the ends of their consecutive terms,

questions remain:

1. What is the Energy Policy of Honolulu for the late 2020s? What does that practically mean for each and every Department and Office?
2. How proactive vs. reactive is the City on the climate emergency, as an energy-driven crisis? The city's own bureaucracy cannot be left to be the sole voice on this, because bureaucracies even at their most progressive have a stabilization incentive driven by career and political pressure. The council must have a voice.

The actual climate news has been consistently worsening for the past few decades, and in the most recent years is increasingly apocalyptic overall. Is this policy driven by concern about energy shocks and one-off-events (incidents)? Or, is it looking forward to a very real future which many, if not most, remain unwilling to face?

Kamehameha Highway as we know it will probably be lost in my lifetime. That means, practically, that it would be rebuilt higher up on cliffs, which would be prohibitively expensive, or converted increasingly into bridges, which is also shockingly expensive. Bridges are multiple times more expensive than regular road, per area. It's money the state simply doesn't have, nor would the city for its arterial and local streets, and from there, new ditches, culverts, and associated city infrastructure . Thus there would ensue cascading effects to the City and County. There is currently no capacity to absorb this climate shock, financially or otherwise, to say nothing of the property owners looking at near or total losses.

What does mitigation look like? For instance, I previously assisted the BWS with securing a backup diesel generator for a well in 'Aiea. Liquid pipeline infrastructure is more susceptible to power disruptions than other kinds of infrastructure, as many are now learning with petroleum and gas plants in the Persian Gulf. Though I am a committed environmentalist, and a more genuinely comprehensive one than some of our political friends, being science-educated means not treating any energy type with ideological fixation. Renewables have considerable environmental impacts, which proponents often ignore. They are also not a one size fits all solution.

Some of what I write seems dire, I know. Yet the future loss of Kamehameha Highway has been discussed openly by public workers in public meetings. I write nothing truly new. When it's not familiarized, new information seems crazy, dismissible. And so will go the results of a truthful vulnerability assessment. We likely already would know much of what it would say, if you will ask the right people, the real experts, the right questions in hearing.

Mahalo nui loa,
Dylan P. Armstrong

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Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Aloha Independent Living Hawaii	Support	Jul 13, 2026 @ 10:26 AM



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MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

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Testimony of Aloha Independent Living Hawai'i

Resolution 26-158 — Urging the City Administration to Conduct a Citywide Energy Vulnerability Assessment

Committee on Energy, Environment & Sustainability

Tuesday, July 14, 2026, 1:00 p.m.

Position: Support with a request

Aloha Chair Weyer, Vice Chair Dos Santos-Tam, and members. Aloha Independent Living Hawai'i, the federally designated statewide Center for Independent Living, supports Resolution 26-158. Responsible stewardship of energy costs is a disability issue, because when energy budgets break, the services that break first are the ones our community cannot live without.

The resolution itself notes that public transportation is essential for low-income residents, seniors, and persons with disabilities, and that the Department of Transportation Services does not anticipate service reductions despite a roughly \$7 million fuel cost increase. We ask that the assessment test that assumption rather than assume it: specifically, that it evaluate the exposure of TheBus and TheHandi-Van service levels to sustained energy price increases, and identify how ADA paratransit will be protected under the cost-efficiency strategies the assessment recommends. For a rider who uses a wheelchair, a "route adjustment" is not an inconvenience — it can mean losing the way to work, dialysis, or the pharmacy.

We also ask that, as departments inventory facilities most exposed to energy vulnerability, they flag facilities whose interruption would disproportionately harm residents with disabilities — including Emergency Medical Services response capacity — so the Council sees those risks alongside the dollar figures. What gets measured gets planned for.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,



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Roxanne U. Bolden

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