

BILL018(26)

Testimony

MISC. COMM. 387

*HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & PARKS (HHP)

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

Meeting Date: Sep 22, 2026 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 9

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 7

Name: Geena Thielen	Email: geena@ccs-hawaii.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 17, 2026 @ 08:48 AM

Name: Spencer Lee	Email: spencer@jlalamoana.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: JL Capital	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 17, 2026 @ 11:59 AM

Name: Daiki Hirakawa	Email: daigon.hirakawa@gmail.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 17, 2026 @ 02:48 PM

Testimony:

Honolulu City Council

Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks

Re: Personal Testimony in Strong Support of Bill 18

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Daiki Hirakawa, and I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity in strong support of Bill 18. These views are solely my own, and I am not submitting this testimony on behalf of my employer or any other company or organization.

I work in a profession in which I evaluate the feasibility of affordable housing projects. That experience has shown me the widening gap between the affordable housing our community urgently needs and the housing that can actually be built under existing regulations.

The central issue is not simply whether affordable housing is permitted on paper. It is whether a permitted project can obtain financing, absorb current construction and operating costs, and reach completion. An affordable housing approval that never results in construction does not provide a home to anyone.

In my professional experience, the amount of housing allowed under existing regulations can be insufficient to support the cost of building and operating a project. Increasing allowable density can create additional affordable homes while helping the entire project proceed. Without sufficient development capacity, the practical outcome may not be a smaller affordable project. It may be no project at all.

This is why Bill 18 should not be viewed primarily as a benefit for developers. Its purpose should be evaluated from the perspective of the residents who need housing. Financial feasibility is simply the condition that allows an approved project to secure financing, begin construction, remain properly maintained, and provide affordable homes over the long term. If those basic conditions cannot be met, no amount of good intention will produce completed housing.

Ala Moana is an especially appropriate place to allow additional affordable housing. It is close to employment, public transportation, shopping, healthcare, schools, and other daily necessities. At the same time, high land and construction costs make affordable development in the area particularly difficult. Allowing more affordable homes on suitable urban sites would enable more working residents, families, and kūpuna to live near jobs and essential services rather than being pushed increasingly farther away.

I understand that residents may have concerns about building height, neighborhood character, traffic, and infrastructure. Those concerns deserve thoughtful consideration. However, the consequences of maintaining the status quo must also be acknowledged. When appropriate density is rejected in central, transit-served neighborhoods, the housing shortage does not disappear. Instead, local residents face higher rents, overcrowding, longer commutes, displacement, homelessness, or the difficult decision to leave Hawai'i.

Bill 18 offers the Council an opportunity to connect meaningful affordability requirements with development standards that give affordable housing a realistic chance of being built. Its success should ultimately be judged by public outcomes: how many affordable homes are completed, how long they remain affordable, and how many local residents are able to remain in their community.

Honolulu's housing shortage is too severe to accept policies that produce approvals without construction. It is also too urgent to delay workable reforms by restarting the legislative process with a substantially similar proposal. Every additional delay means that families continue to struggle while construction and housing costs continue to rise.

I respectfully ask the Committee to advance Bill 18 without weakening the provisions necessary for affordable housing projects to move from plans to completed homes. The Council has an opportunity to help turn suitable urban sites into housing for Honolulu residents who need it. Please support Bill 18 and move it forward promptly.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Best Regard,

Daiki Hirakawa

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Lance Berringer	ldberringer@gmail.com	96826

Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 17, 2026 @ 08:49 PM
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Testimony:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL 18 (2026), CD1

RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

September 17, 2026

To: Honolulu City Council / Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks

From: Lance Berringer Project Superintendent — Island Structural Contracting

Re: Bill 18 (2026), CD1 — Relating to Affordable Housing — TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is [Your Name], and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of Bill 18 (2026), CD1, which would expand the development standards under the City's Bill 7 affordable rental housing program (Chapter 32, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu).

I offer this testimony as someone who works directly in the construction of affordable housing on Oahu. From that vantage point, the limitations in the current Bill 7 program are not abstract policy questions - they are the specific constraints that determine, project by project, how many affordable units actually get built on a given parcel. Since its enactment in 2019, Bill 7 has been one of the few genuinely effective tools the City has for encouraging affordable rental construction, offering relaxed zoning standards and financial incentives in exchange for deed-restricted affordability. But the program has fallen far short of its goal of roughly 500 units per year. To date it has produced only 189 completed units, with another 550 under construction, against a stated pipeline of roughly 2,000 units across 65 buildings. Meanwhile, the 2024 update to the state's housing planning study estimates Honolulu needs 27,710 new units between 2023 and 2027 to keep pace with demand. The gap between what the program was designed to deliver and what it has actually delivered is significant, and the current 20,000-square-foot lot cap, blanket 60-foot height limit, and unit-size restrictions are a major reason why.

Bill 18 addresses this directly. Raising the maximum lot size from 20,000 to 40,000 square feet, allowing height to match the underlying zoning district where that is taller than 60 feet, and removing arbitrary unit-size and building-coverage limits does not change who Bill 7 serves - the 80% affordability requirement at or below 100% AMI stays in place. What it changes is how many affordable units can be built on a site that already qualifies for the program. A larger, taller building on the same footprint means more units, and more units built under an existing incentive program is a direct, near-term way to add affordable housing supply without waiting on new land, new zoning districts, or new subsidy programs.

I recognize some members and members of the public have raised concerns that these changes could shift Bill 7 away from its original intent of small, low-rise infill projects toward larger-scale development. I'd ask the Committee to weigh that concern against the plain reality of the numbers above: the small-scale version of this program has not come close to meeting the City's own production targets. Modestly larger buildings, still subject to the same affordability requirements and still limited to appropriate zoning districts, is a reasonable and proportionate response to that shortfall - not an

abandonment of the program's purpose, but an adjustment to make it actually work at the scale Honolulu needs.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to advance Bill 18 (2026), CD1, to its third and final reading. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Lance Berringer
Project Superintendent
Island Structural Contracting

Name: Brian Fujiwara	Email: brian808@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: BKF & Associates LLC	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 18, 2026 @ 07:03 AM
Name: Jonathan Huynh	Email: jhweather123@yahoo.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 18, 2026 @ 10:26 AM

Testimony:
Aloha,

I provided testimony on August 22. While the latest drafts address some concerns I raised, ATUP5 still contains provisions that will undermine the bill's purpose if passed as written. I offer the following amendments before this bill advances.

1. Off-street parking: strike the "encouraged" language entirely.
- ATUP5's language encouraging parking "to the extent reasonably feasible" will function as a de facto requirement during permit review. DPP staff will reasonably ask developers to justify why they haven't provided parking, and that conversation becomes an informal mandate. Restore "None" as the clean standard.
- Parking is one of the single most expensive components of housing construction. Each stall adds \$30,000-50,000 in hard costs, consumes land and space that could hold additional units, and increases the building's footprint. When parking is built, those costs are passed directly into rent.
- But the deeper problem is what parking does to supply. When a project includes parking, fewer units fit on the lot. When fewer units get built, rents rise across the island, not just in the neighborhood where the project sits. A family in Nanakuli or Maili who has never set foot in the building still pays more for housing because every mandated stall in town is a unit

that wasn't built. The shortage we're all feeling is the cumulative result of decisions like this, made project by project, over decades.

Many of my neighbors on the leeward coast depend on cars because transit doesn't serve them adequately. I understand that. But forcing every affordable housing project to build parking doesn't fix transit access. It just makes housing more expensive for everyone, including the families who need it most. The answer to inadequate transit is better transit, not more parking requirements embedded in housing policy.

2. Elevators: Require in buildings over 40 feet.

The current language, "not required unless mandated by Section 1007.2.1," is a loophole. That code section only triggers when accessible floors exist, and a walk-up has none by definition. The result: upper-floor units are effectively closed to wheelchair users, kupuna, and anyone with mobility impairments.

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii testified that a person on SSI receives \$994 per month. The City's "affordable" rent at 100% AMI for a one-bedroom is \$2,850. When accessible housing doesn't exist, people with disabilities are pushed into nursing homes or institutional care costing \$759 per day, which is far more expensive than community living. A housing incentive should move people toward community living, not away from it.

Adopt DCAB's recommended language requiring elevators in buildings over 40 feet.

3. FAR 5.0: apply island-wide, not just PUC.

Limiting the increase to the Primary Urban Center penalizes identical projects in other areas where the City says it wants growth, such as areas near Skyline stations outside PUC. If the goal is more housing everywhere, the standard should match. A project in Kapolei shouldn't face stricter density limits than one in town.

4. Sunset: extend to 2050 or later.

At 661 days average permit time, 2040 barely gives developers one project cycle. But ATUP5 also includes a 180-day delayed effective date, meaning no new project can use these updated standards for six months after passage. If you add 180 days of legislative delay to 661 days of permitting, a developer starting today would face over two years before ground breaks, and that's before construction, financing, and design. A developer starting today might get one project through before the program expires. People financing multi-year projects need certainty. The housing crisis was decades in the making; the program should match that horizon.

5. Post-construction grants: retain the flat grant structure, oppose MW3's tiered approach.

The current flat grant already incentivizes smaller, more affordable units. A \$12,000 grant covers a larger share of a small unit's construction cost than a large unit's, making efficiencies and studios proportionally more attractive to build. MW3's tiered structure moves in the wrong direction by giving more money to larger, more expensive units. That redirects public subsidy toward the unit types that rent for more and serve higher-income households. Keep the flat grant.

6. Pre-construction subsidies: retain the flat \$50,000 per unit, oppose MW3's tiered approach.

Same logic. A flat \$50,000 subsidy covers a greater share of a small unit's cost, making smaller units more feasible to build. MW3's tiers would give up to \$62,500 to larger units with public money directed toward bigger, more expensive apartments. If the goal is affordability, the flat subsidy already does the job better.

7. Project completion bonds (from MW3).

If taxpayers are subsidizing construction through grants, subsidies, and tax exemptions, the City should have a financial guarantee the project actually gets finished. Require a completion bond from a surety company rated A or better, as MW3 proposes. This protects public investment without adding cost to projects that complete as promised.

8. Efficiency dwelling units: retain 170 sq ft minimum (from ATUP5).

ATUP5 allows efficiency units at 170 sq ft, far below the current 500 sq ft studio minimum. This is a significant improvement. Smaller units are cheaper to build and rent for less, making them accessible to lower-income households. Keep this provision.

9. Professional management requirement: retain (from ATUP5).

ATUP5 requires professional management with a 24-hour emergency contact publicly posted. This holds operators accountable without imposing the cost of a live-in manager, which would reduce the number of units available to renters. Keep this provision.

10. Height setbacks above 75 feet: retain (from ATUP5).

ATUP5 requires buildings over 75 feet to set back upper floors 1 foot for every 10 feet of height above 40 feet. This protects light and air for neighbors and the public realm without restricting the building envelope below what's feasible. Keep this provision.

11. RPT exemption period: align with affordability period.

The current real property tax exemption is fixed at 15 years. If a project voluntarily commits to longer affordability, like 20 or 30 years, the tax exemption should match. As written, the City penalizes deeper affordability commitments by cutting tax relief at year 15 regardless. Align the exemption period with the affordability period, with a 15-year floor.

12. Ground-floor nonresidential requirement: restore for projects in business districts.

Earlier drafts of Bill 18 expanded Chapter 32 into B-1 and B-2 business zoning districts. ATUP5 deleted that expansion. The Council should restore it, but with a ground-floor nonresidential requirement, as ATUP3 proposed. Housing in business districts only works when the ground floor activates the street. All-residential buildings with blank walls or parking entrances facing the sidewalk kill pedestrian activity, reduce foot traffic for neighboring businesses, and make the street feel like a corridor rather than a place. Honolulu's street life is already thin in many of these areas. Adding housing without ground-floor commerce would make it worse.

The nonresidential requirement is what makes density work. It puts eyes on the street, creates destinations people walk to, and supports the small businesses that give neighborhoods character. Without it, you get residential towers hovering over dead ground floors and housing that doesn't contribute to the neighborhood around it. Restore the business district expansion, but require ground-floor nonresidential uses so the housing that gets built actually builds street life, not just building height.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments.

Name: Roxanne Bolden	Email: systemsadvocacy@alohailhawaii.org	Zip: 96782
Representing: Aloha Independent Living Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 18, 2026 @ 07:06 PM
Name: Charles Lee	Email: success881@hawaiiantel.net	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 18, 2026 @ 08:17 PM

Testimony:

****RE: Bill 18 (2026), Proposed CD2 — Relating to Affordable Housing****

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

I support the need for affordable housing and recognize the importance of creating more housing opportunities for our residents. My concern is ensuring that the flexibility provided to developers under Bill 18 is balanced with reasonable, enforceable safeguards that protect residents, surrounding communities, and the long-term public interest.

The proposed CD2 expands development flexibility, including increasing the maximum lot size to 40,000 square feet, eliminating the maximum building-area limit, and allowing increased density in the Primary Urban Center. While the draft adds professional property management and a 24-hour emergency contact requirement, I believe additional accountability is warranted.

I respectfully request that the Council consider incorporating:

1. ****Developer accountability:**** Clear responsibility for ongoing compliance with affordability requirements, property maintenance, and applicable safety standards.
2. ****Effective enforcement:**** Defined inspection, reporting, complaint-response, and corrective-action procedures, including consequences for repeated or serious violations.

3. **Long-term affordability:** Transparent monitoring to ensure that the required affordable units remain affordable for the full 15-year period.
4. **Public transparency:** Accessible project-level information showing compliance, complaints, corrective actions, and enforcement outcomes.

Affordable housing should provide lasting value—not simply an initial supply of units. Developers receiving significant regulatory flexibility should also accept clear responsibilities to the residents and communities affected by their projects.

Mahalo for considering a balanced approach that supports housing production while protecting the public interest.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Lee

Name: Charles Lee	Email: success881@hawaiiantel.net	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 19, 2026 @ 08:56 AM

Testimony:

RE: Bill 18 (2026), Proposed CD2 — Relating to Affordable Housing

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

I support affordable housing and recognize that Honolulu needs more housing options for local residents. However, affordable housing development should also respect the communities in which these projects are built.

My concern is that Bill 18 provides substantial development flexibility without clearly establishing a meaningful process for community input to be heard, considered, and incorporated into project planning.

I respectfully request that the Council consider adding the following provisions:

- Meaningful community consultation:** Require developers to engage affected residents and Neighborhood Boards early enough for their input to influence project design and operations.
- A documented response:** Require developers to identify significant community concerns, explain how they were addressed, and provide reasons when recommendations are not incorporated.
- Practical community benefits:** Establish reasonable, project-appropriate measures addressing concerns such as parking, traffic, refuse collection, pedestrian safety, landscaping, and property management.
- Ongoing communication:** Require a designated contact and a clear process for residents to report concerns and

receive timely responses after occupancy.

Community input should be more than a meeting, a presentation, or an opportunity to submit testimony. It should be a meaningful part of the planning process, with a documented response and reasonable consideration of practical solutions.

I respectfully ask the Council to ensure that affordable housing projects provide benefits not only to future residents, but also to the surrounding community.

If my recommendations are not incorporated into a proposed CD3 then I would be OPPOSED to this Bill.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Lee

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Chuck Lee	success881@hawaiiantel.net	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Sep 19, 2026 @ 09:08 AM

Testimony:

****RE: Bill 18 (2026), Proposed CD2 — Relating to Affordable Housing****

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

I support the need for affordable housing and want to see practical solutions that help Honolulu residents remain in our community.

At the same time, I believe Bill 18 should establish a fair balance between the development flexibility provided to property owners and developers and the responsibilities owed to residents and the surrounding community.

The proposed CD2 makes significant changes to development standards, including larger allowable lots, increased density in certain areas, and smaller efficiency dwelling units. These changes make it especially important to establish clear, measurable safeguards.

I respectfully request that the Council consider incorporating three basic principles:

****1. Accountability must accompany flexibility.****

Developers should be held to clear affordability, property-management, maintenance, and safety requirements, supported by transparent reporting and meaningful enforcement.

****2. Community input must have a meaningful role.****

Affected residents should have an opportunity to raise practical concerns early in the process. Developers should document their responses and explain how reasonable concerns can be addressed.

****3. Public benefits must be identifiable and measurable.****

Each project should address its foreseeable effects on the surrounding community, including parking, traffic, refuse collection, pedestrian access, and neighborhood safety. Where appropriate, developers should provide reasonable, project-specific public benefits.

I also respectfully request that the Council consider whether the proposed 170-square-foot minimum efficiency dwelling unit, increased density allowances, and revised development standards provide adequate protections for residents and surrounding neighborhoods.

My request is straightforward: affordable housing should be developed in a way that benefits both future residents and the broader community.

Please consider incorporating reasonable, enforceable guardrails into Bill 18 so that housing production, developer responsibility, and community interests are addressed together.

If any of my recommendations are not incorporated into a proposed CD 3 then I would be OPPOSED to this Bill.

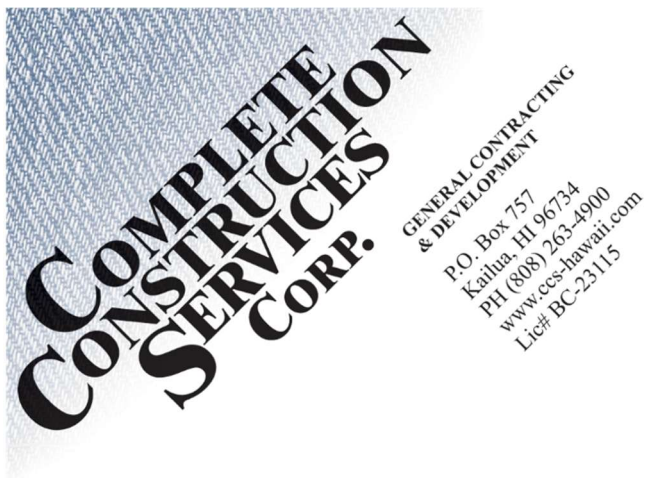
Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Chuck Lee

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Paul LAM	paullam77@gmail.com	96816
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Sep 19, 2026 @ 10:00 AM
Name:	Email:	Zip:
Damien Waikoloa	damien.waikoloa@gmail.com	96822
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Hawai'i YIMBY	Support	Sep 20, 2026 @ 11:24 AM
Name: Andy Boyd	Email: aboyd@gprmp.com	Zip: 96707
Representing: GPRM PRESTRESS LLC	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 21, 2026 @ 10:49 AM
Name: Ted Kefalas	Email: tkefalas@grassrootinstitute.org	Zip: 96813
Representing: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Sep 21, 2026 @ 11:26 AM
Name: Ryan Dennis	Email: ryan@ischawaii.com	Zip: 96819
Representing: Island Structural Contracting	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 21, 2026 @ 11:50 AM
Name: Tony Mizuno	Email: tmizuno@asbhawaii.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Sep 21, 2026 @ 12:12 PM
Testimony: Bill 7 has demonstrated that we can deliver affordable housing. However, production remains far far below the level needed to address our housing shortage. Bill 18 (CD2) is an important next step in expanding housing production. By allowing greater use of our limited urban land and improving the economics of affordable housing development, it can help build on the progress achieved through Bill 7. I respectfully urge the Committee to support Bill 18 and continue advancing practical policies that will enable Honolulu to produce the housing our residents urgently need. Respectfully submitted, Tony Mizuno		



September 22, 2026

Honolulu City Council, Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks

Re: Bill 18 Relating to Affordable Housing

Dear Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba and Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in **STRONG SUPPORT** ON Bill 18 Relating to Affordable Housing. My comments specifically address the proposed CD2-ATUP5 version of the Bill.

Our team has been the most prolific of all the Bill 7 Developers with 5 successfully completed projects that have CO's and are currently housing Oahu residents in over 200 units. We have an additional 4 buildings under construction with another 145 units of affordable housing that will be ready for occupancy from late 2026 to early 2027. I believe I speak with a strong voice of experience when I offer my support for Bill 18.

To be clear, this is by no means a perfect Bill from the Developers' perspective. It requires us to give up height increases outside of the Primary Urban Core, it requires us to give up exemptions from building codes offered under the original Bill 7 and it imposes new requirements such as the 24-hour building management oversight. While I would love to gain the advantages Bill 18 offers without these losses, I fully understand and accept them as a necessity to move forward with the important structural changes contained in this Bill.

Throughout the Bill 18 evolution I have counseled caution on the risk of possibly harming rather than helping the City's affordable housing goals. I believe that caution has paid off in this latest draft that strikes an appropriate balance between the needs of Developers and community stakeholders. I believe this Bill allows the original Bill 7 concept to expand and do so in a way that is in keeping with the City's goals for housing and community planning. For these reasons, I respectfully request this committee vote in support of this bill at this time.

Sincerely,
Geena Thielen
President/RME

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT
Bill 18 (2026), CD1, Proposed CD2 — Relating to Affordable Housing

To: Honolulu City Council – Housing, Homelessness & Parks; Chair, Vice Chair; and Members

From: Spencer Lee, Senior Vice President of Operations, JL Capital

Re: Bill 18 (2026), CD1, Proposed CD2 – ATUP5 – STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, and Committee Members,

JL Capital strongly supports the Proposed CD2 of Bill 18 and respectfully urges its passage without amendment.

The CD2 gets three things right that determine whether affordable rental projects actually get built:

1. **Height of 75 feet or the underlying zoning height, whichever is greater, within the Primary Urban Center Development Plan area and TOD Special District.** Above 75 feet, a building becomes a high-rise under the Building Code, and construction costs increase substantially. Seventy-five feet is the practical ceiling for feasible mid-rise affordable rentals, and it is the number the Department of Planning and Permitting itself recommended in its June 23, 2026 testimony. Outside the urban core, the 60-foot standard max is retained, respecting community concerns.
2. **FAR of 5.0 within the Primary Urban Center.** This ensures the added height translates into actual homes on the same lot. DPP also testified in favor of an FAR of 5.0 at the last committee hearing on 8/25/2026.
3. **Unit density based on lot square footage divided by 130, or 120 within 2,000 feet of a high-service bus stop.** This rewards building where transit already exists and residents need fewer cars.

These provisions are targeted where they belong: the urban core, where zoning already supports density. This bill is paired with sensible safeguards, including new height setbacks above 40 feet.

The need is not in dispute. UHERO's 2026 Housing Factbook reports that 57.7% of O'ahu renters are rent-burdened, only 278 multi-family developments were permitted island-wide in the past five years, and the Chapter 32 program has produced just 189 completed units against a goal of 500 per year, because unfeasible projects don't get built. The CD2 fixes that.

We urge the Council to pass Bill 18, CD2. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Spencer Lee

Senior Vice President of Operations, JL Capital

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF BILL 18 (2026), CD2 RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Voting Members of the Honolulu City Council Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks:

I am submitting this testimony in **strong support of Bill 18 (2026), CD2**, and I respectfully urge the Council to pass this measure.

As an architect that have worked directly on several affordable housing projects in Honolulu, including projects at **1568 Pensacola Street and 765 Amana Street**. That experience has given me a firsthand understanding of what it takes to move an affordable housing project from an idea on paper to completed homes for Hawai'i residents.

The reality is simple: **we cannot solve Honolulu's affordable housing shortage if we make it unnecessarily difficult or expensive to build affordable housing.**

Every additional regulatory constraint, every unnecessary delay, and every requirement that reduces the efficiency of a project can affect the number of homes that can ultimately be delivered. These impacts are particularly significant for affordable housing, where project financing is already highly constrained and development costs must be carefully managed.

I see these challenges firsthand. Site constraints, building requirements, parking, density, infrastructure, construction costs, financing, and the approval process are not separate issues. They are interconnected. Changes in one area can determine whether a project can provide additional units, remain financially feasible, or proceed at all.

That is why legislation such as Bill 18 is important.

We need to focus our regulations on achieving the outcome Honolulu urgently needs: more affordable homes that can actually be built.

Affordable housing policy should encourage responsible development and good design, but it should also recognize the economic and practical realities of construction. A project that is technically permissible but financially infeasible does not house anyone. A project that takes so long to approve that financing no longer works does not house anyone. And a project constrained to the point where significantly fewer units can be delivered does not meet the magnitude of the need we face.

My experience has taught me that **well-designed affordable housing and efficient regulations are not opposing goals**. We can achieve both. In fact, a practical regulatory framework gives architects and project teams greater ability to design housing that is functional, attractive, durable, and appropriate for its community while making efficient use of limited land and resources.

Honolulu's housing challenges require action that recognizes what happens at the project level. We need policies that help qualified teams deliver housing rather than policies that inadvertently add cost, delay, or uncertainty to projects that are intended to serve residents who need affordable homes.

Bill 18 (2026), CD2 is an important step in that direction. I believe the Council should take this opportunity to support a framework that facilitates the production of affordable housing and helps turn housing proposals into completed projects.

I strongly urge the Council to pass Bill 18 (2026), CD2.

As an architect who has participated in the actual delivery of affordable housing in Honolulu, I respectfully ask you to consider the practical consequences of this legislation and the difference it can make in our ability to produce the housing our community needs.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued efforts to address Honolulu's affordable housing crisis.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Fujiwara, AIA
BKF & Associates LLC



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

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.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

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Testimony of Aloha Independent Living Hawai'i

Bill 18 (2026), CD1 — Relating to Affordable Housing Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 2:30 p.m. — City and County of Honolulu

Position: Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Bill 18 (2026), CD1.

Aloha Independent Living Hawai'i (AILH) is a federally designated Center for Independent Living serving people with disabilities statewide, across all disabilities and ages. We support the production of affordable rental housing on O'ahu. We submit these comments so that the housing this program produces is housing disabled residents can enter, live in, and leave safely.

Two committee drafts are before the Committee: the CD2 approved by the Committee on August 25, 2026 (OCS2026-0533), and the Proposed CD2 submitted by Chair Tupola on September 16, 2026 (OCS2026-0570). These comments apply to both. Where the two differ on a point raised below, we identify the difference.

Fire exit stairwell width

The CD2 approved by the Committee on August 25, 2026 amends Section 32-3.2 to require at least one fire exit stairwell with a minimum width of 44 inches. The Proposed CD2 of September 16, 2026 returns that width to 36 inches. The figure 44 inches does not appear anywhere in the September 16 draft.

We respectfully urge the Committee to retain the 44-inch width.

A 36-inch stairwell is the entire egress path. Assisted evacuation of a resident who cannot use stairs unaided occupies that path completely, whether by evacuation chair or by carry. Other occupants cannot pass. The



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

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.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

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Department of Planning and Permitting raised a related concern in Department Communication 556 (2026), advising that a larger, taller building with more occupants may take longer to escape.

Both drafts raise the maximum lot area from 20,000 to 40,000 square feet and increase allowable density. Both raise the building envelope. Under the September 16 draft, a project inside the Primary Urban Center Development Plan area or the Transit-Oriented Development Special District may build to 75 feet or the height permitted by the underlying zoning district, whichever is greater. There is no numeric ceiling. Egress width should not narrow as buildings grow taller.

Elevators and the building code citation

Section 32-3.2 provides that elevators are not required unless mandated by Section 1007.2.1 of the building code. Both the August 25 draft and the September 16 draft carry that provision forward word for word.

That citation no longer locates the requirement it was written to reference. Under ROH Section 16-1.1, the City has adopted the Hawai'i State Building Code, which adopts with modifications the International Building Code, 2018 Edition. In that code, the accessible means of egress elevator requirement is Section 1009.2.1. Section 1007 governs exit and exit access doorway configuration and does not address elevators.

We respectfully recommend that the Committee correct the citation before this bill advances.

We further request that the Committee ask the Department of Planning and Permitting to state on the record how Section 1009.2.1 applies to an affordable rental housing project at the new 75-foot height limit, including its interaction with the exceptions in Chapter 11 of the building code for buildings without elevator service. The answer determines whether these buildings will have elevators. It is not in the record before this Committee.



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

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.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Sheila Castaneda
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Fair Housing Act coverage

Section 32-3.2 requires that the design of the building and facilities comply with the federal Fair Housing Act.

Under 42 U.S.C. Section 3604(f)(7), a building of four or more units with one or more elevators serving upper floors is covered in full, and every dwelling unit must meet the Act's design and construction requirements. A building without such an elevator is covered only on the ground floor.

The elevator decision therefore determines how much of each building federal accessibility law reaches. At the building envelope these drafts permit, with a floor area ratio of 5.0 in the Primary Urban Center and the revised unit formula, that is the difference between one accessible floor and an accessible building.

The Act sets a floor, not a ceiling. Under 42 U.S.C. Section 3604(f)(8), nothing in the Act limits a State or local law that requires dwellings to be designed and constructed in a manner affording greater access than federal law requires. The Council has express authority to require an elevator in these projects. The Council can resolve this question without waiting for an interpretation of the building code.

Reserved accessible parking

The development standards table sets off-street parking at "None" in both drafts. The August 25 draft at least required the ground floor of projects over 60 dwelling units outside a transit-oriented development special district to be devoted primarily to parking and building access. The September 16 draft deletes that requirement and provides instead that projects are encouraged to provide off-street parking to the extent reasonably feasible.



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Requirements for accessible stalls are calculated as a proportion of the parking a project provides. Where no parking is required, no accessible stall is required. Neither draft requires a reserved accessible space.

We do not ask the Committee to impose general parking minimums. We ask that one reserved accessible parking space, and an accessible route from that space to the building entrance, be required in any project that provides off-street parking or a passenger loading area.

Efficiency dwelling units

Both drafts create an efficiency dwelling unit with a minimum habitable floor area of 170 square feet, notwithstanding any provision of Chapter 16A or 18.

We ask the Committee to confirm that a 170-square-foot unit can meet the maneuvering clearances required for Fair Housing Act Type B units under ANSI A117.1.

AILH supports this program. O'ahu needs these units. We ask that the Committee build them so that disabled residents are not excluded from them by design.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Roxanne Bolden
Executive Director



LAM CAPITAL LLC
AFFORDABLE HOUSING HAWAII

September 22, 2026

**Honolulu City Council
Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks**

Re: Strong Support for Bill 18 (CD2) – Relating to Affordable Housing

Dear Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, and Members of the Committee:

For decades, Honolulu has recognized the critical shortage of affordable housing. With the leadership of Mayor Rick Blangiardi, DPP, and the Honolulu City Council, we are finally seeing meaningful new production of low- and mid-rise rental housing in our urban core—much of it replacing aging and increasingly inadequate housing stock while putting underutilized parcels to productive use.

Bill 7 has demonstrated that we can deliver affordable housing. However, production remains far below the level needed to address our housing shortage. DBEDT's 2024 Hawai'i Housing Planning Study estimates that Honolulu needs approximately **25,710 additional housing units**, with the majority needed for households at or below 80% of AMI.

The challenge is becoming more difficult. On September 16, the Federal Reserve raised its target federal funds rate by 25 basis points, with the possibility of another rate increase before the end of the year. This is increasing borrowing costs at a time when land, construction, and labor costs remain elevated. These pressures threaten not only the feasibility and pace of affordable housing development, but, more importantly, the viability of the development pipeline.

We must therefore protect and accelerate the Bill 7 pipeline, which has already demonstrated its ability to produce housing in urban Honolulu. DPP reports that Bill 7 has produced approximately 300 units to date—still far short of the need. We cannot afford to become complacent.

Bill 18 (CD2) is an important next step in expanding housing production. By allowing greater use of our limited urban land and improving the economics of affordable housing development, it can help build on the progress achieved through Bill 7.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support Bill 18 and continue advancing practical policies that will enable Honolulu to produce the housing our residents urgently need.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Lam

922 KEALAOLU AVE. HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96816 U.S.A

PHONE: (808) 479-3414 FAX: (808) 737-7588 EMAIL: PAULLAM77@GMAIL.COM



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

September 22, 2026

Honolulu City Council - Committee on Housing, Homelessness & Parks
530 South King St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: SUPPORT BILL 18 (26) - RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING - PROPOSED
CD2 ATUP5**

Aloha Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, and Council Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are testifying **in support of Bill 18**. We appreciate the proposed changes to Chapter 32 and the effort to strengthen a program intended to facilitate the production of affordable rental homes.

We are disappointed that the most recent version of the bill does not extend the sunset date for Chapter 32 to 2040. **We request that the sunset date be extended to 2040 or beyond.**

UHERO's preliminary report on Chapter 32 found that the program's permitting process has not operated as intended. Although Chapter 32 was designed around a 90-day permitting pathway, the average time from application to permit issuance for the projects evaluated was more than 600 days. This is a fundamental problem for a program whose purpose is to make it easier and faster to produce affordable homes. **Despite an average permitting timeline of more than 600 days, and this committee's apparent unwillingness to address this major barrier to housing, we should at least extend the sunset date to account for these extraordinarily long permitting timelines.** With the current 2030 sunset date, the window for new projects is rapidly closing considering the near-two year permitting timeline.



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

We **support** the following provisions of the proposed CD2:

- *Height:* We support the 75-foot height limit within the Primary Urban Center Development Plan area and the Transit-Oriented Development Special District. **However, outside of the PUC and TOD Special District, we believe the maximum height should be 60 feet or the underlying zoning height, whichever is greater.**
- *Density and FAR:* We support the increased maximum-unit formula and the increased maximum FAR within the Primary Urban Center Development Plan area.
- *Lot size:* We support increasing the maximum eligible lot size from 20,000 to 40,000 square feet.
- *Parking:* We support maintaining no minimum off-street parking requirements for Chapter 32 projects.

Chapter 32 provides an important pathway for creating affordable rental homes, particularly on smaller urban sites where conventional development standards can make projects difficult to build. The program should be given sufficient time to operate and demonstrate its potential.

We ask the committee to pass Bill 18, extend the Chapter 32 sunset date to 2040 or beyond, and amend the height provision outside of the PUC and TOD Special District to allow 60 feet or the underlying zoning height, whichever is greater.

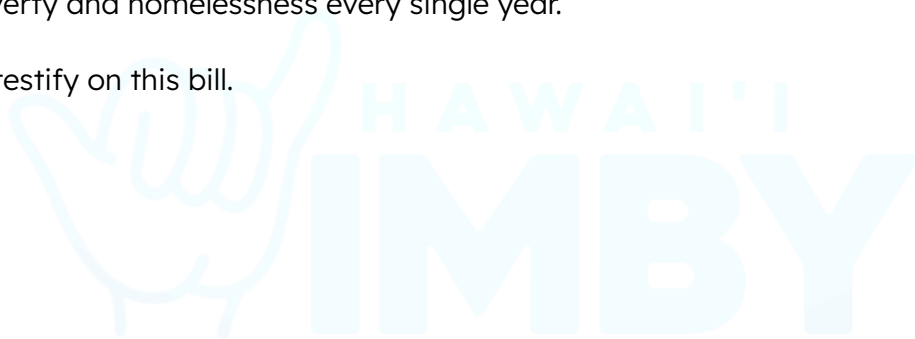
Hawai'i YIMBY (*Yes In My Backyard*) is a volunteer-led grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting bold and effective solutions for Hawai'i's devastating housing crisis. Our members are deeply concerned about Hawai'i's chronic and worsening housing shortage, which has caused home prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushes thousands of kama'āina out to the mainland or into poverty and homelessness every single year.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Mahalo,

Damien Waikoloa & Huey Kwik

Chapter Leads, Hawai'i YIMBY





September 21, 2026

Honolulu City Council

Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks.

RE: Support for Bill 18 (CD2) – Related to Affordable Housing.

Dear Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, and Committee Members,

This letter is in support of Bill 18, as part of a practical approach to help address our shortfall in urban core housing.

The GPRM plant in Kapolei has been manufacturing precast concrete products locally for over 50 years, and with the passing of Bill 7, it has been exciting to be involved with several of these projects to date. These projects not only help fill a portion of our urban core housing needs, they provide steady employment at our plant with good access to westside commuters. Although we are unlikely to see the low and midrise unit building numbers of several decades ago, the industry has plenty of capacity to locally produce much more than the current pipeline is delivering.

As part of a committed local team, Bill 7 has demonstrated that we can deliver affordable housing, but there are always challenges to overcome. As such, Bill 18 represents an important step forward by helping make the economics of affordable housing development more sustainable.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support Bill 18, and continue exploring these practical policies that promote additional urban housing stock to be affordably constructed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Boyd", written in a cursive style.

Andy Boyd
President

Sep. 22, 2026, 2:30 p.m.

Honolulu Hale

To: Honolulu City Council Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks

Andria Tupola, Chair

Augie Tulba, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: Bill 18 (2026), CD1 — RELATING TO AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

Aloha Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **offers comments** on [Bill 18 \(2026\), CD1](#), which proposes changes to the Bill 7 affordable housing program.

Specifically, the draft of the bill approved by the Committee on Aug. 26 would increase the 20,000-square-foot maximum lot area to 40,000 square feet; repeal maximum square footage rules for different unit configurations; allow projects built in the Primary Urban Center Development Plan area to have a floor-area ratio of up to 5.0; and change the calculation for the maximum number of units that can be built in a Bill 7 project, with even more units allowed in projects near high-service bus stops.

Regarding height limits, the current draft would clarify that Bill 7 projects can be built to the height allowed by the underlying zoning district or 75 feet, whichever is taller. For projects in a special district, heights would be limited to 60 feet or the height of the underlying zoning district, whichever is less.

Currently, Honolulu's Bill 7 program offers homebuilders relaxed zoning rules, property tax breaks, fee waivers and other financial incentives in exchange for building multiple housing units, at least 80% of which are required to be rented for at least 15 years at rents that would be affordable to residents making 100% or less of the area median income.¹

¹ [§ 32-1.1 Definitions.](#), Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, accessed Oct. 31, 2025.

The Bill 7 program has been an important tool for city homebuilders interested in producing affordable housing, and the expansions proposed in Bill 18 (2026) would add much-needed flexibility.

After all, a 2024 update to the Hawaii housing planning study estimated that Honolulu needs 27,710 new units built between 2023 and 2027 to keep up with demand.²

Bill 18 (2026) also aligns with the city's 2025-2028 Strategic Housing Plan, which sets a goal to "Identify opportunities for maximizing urban land use through adjustments to density standards in the Land Use Ordinance," and states that "Enhancing predictability for developers is also critical, with a focus on methods to streamline and standardize processes."³

Likewise, this bill supports the housing goals laid out in the city's Primary Urban Center Development Plan.

Policy H-1.3 in that plan aims to "Encourage a greater variety of housing types, including low or middle-density multifamily housing, ADUs and ohana units, mid-rise apartment buildings and shared housing models," and policy H-2.1 aims to "Expand the supply of income-restricted affordable housing through requirements, incentives and public-private partnerships."⁴

Likewise, it would advance policy H-1.1 of the Primary Urban Center Development Plan, which is to "Enable and incentivize residential infill development in transit-accessible planned growth areas."⁵ It would also address a weakness of the Bill 7 program identified by the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization: its lack of transit-oriented or rail-corridor-specific development standards.⁶

Grassroot also makes the following comments on Chair Tupola's proposed CD2 amendment and requests additional language.

First, Grassroot believes the height limit currently in the bill must be changed to recognize that some special districts throughout the island allow for buildings taller than 60 feet. Chair Tupola's proposed CD2 would address this by allowing buildings to be 75 feet tall or the height of the underlying zoning district, whichever is taller, in the Honolulu Primary Urban Center Development Plan area that encompasses most of the island's urban areas.

Second, Grassroot requests that section three of earlier drafts of the bill be reinserted into the legislation, which would allow Bill 7 projects to be built in the business zoning district.

² ["Hawaii Housing Planning Study 2024,"](#) prepared by SMS Research and Marketing Services, Inc., FSR Consulting LLC and Ward Research, Inc. for the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Table 39A, p. 124.

³ ["Strategic Housing Plan 2025-2028,"](#) Prepared by the Mayor's Office of Housing with CommunityScale, January 2025, p. 70.

⁴ ["Primary Urban Development Center Development Plan,"](#) Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting, April 2025, p. 158.

⁵ Ibid, p. 158.

⁶ Trey Gordner, Edith Prager and Rafael Ceilio Munoz, ["Draft report: Assessing Honolulu's 'Bill 7' Infill/Workforce Housing Program,"](#) University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization, p. 16.

This amendment is critical to facilitating the construction of mixed-use, walkable areas for the eventual residents of these homes. Policy GD-1.1 of the Primary Urban Center Development Plan is to “Create mixed-use TOD neighborhoods with meaningful character and a sense of place.” Its policy GD-2.1 is likewise to “Support mixed-use infill development and increased bus service along key underutilized commercial corridors.”⁷

Third, Grassroot objects to the inclusion of off-street parking requirements for Bill 7 projects, as written in the current CD2. Chair Tupola’s proposed CD2 amendment, however, would modify the existing language by stating that homebuilders are “encouraged to provide off-street parking.”

In general, Grassroot recommends extending the sunset date of the Bill 7 program beyond 2030. Because of delays in obtaining financing and permits, a four year window could doom many beneficial projects. Making this program permanent would be best, but extending the sunset date to 2040 would at least give homebuilders more certainty to plan for future projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

⁷ [“Primary Urban Development Center Development Plan,”](#) Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting, April 2025, p. 18.

Island Structural Contracting
842 Mapunapuna Street
Honolulu Hi, 96819
808-843-2443

September 17, 2026

Councilmember Andria Tupola

Chair, Committee on Housing
Honolulu City Council

Members of the Committee on Housing

Re: Strong Support for Bill 18 (CD2)

Aloha Chair Tupola and Members of the Housing Committee:

Island Structural Contracting has completed or currently has under construction more than 10 projects under Bill 7, giving us firsthand experience with both the opportunities and the challenges of delivering affordable workforce housing through this program.

With each successive project, however, the economics have become increasingly difficult. Construction costs continue to rise due to inflation, labor shortages, higher material costs, and other market pressures. At the same time, elevated interest rates have increased financing costs and placed additional pressure on project feasibility.

For housing advocates and policymakers, the measure of success should not simply be how many projects are approved. The more important question is whether those projects can secure financing, obtain permits, begin construction, and ultimately deliver completed units to working families.

If project economics continue to deteriorate, Honolulu risks slowing—or even halting—the production of Bill 7 housing at precisely the time our community needs more housing, not less. A program can only achieve its intended purpose if the projects it encourages remain financially viable and can actually be built.

Bill 18 (CD2) provides an important opportunity to strengthen the financial feasibility of Bill 7 projects and help ensure that the program continues producing affordable workforce housing at the scale originally envisioned.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge Chair Tupola and the members of the Housing Committee to advance **Bill 18 (CD2)**. Timely action is important to maintaining the momentum created by Bill 7 and ensuring that developers and contractors can continue delivering meaningful numbers of affordable workforce-housing units for Honolulu residents.

Thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to addressing Honolulu's housing needs.

Sincerely,



Ryan Dennis

Island Structural Contracting LLC