

**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA PĀKA A ME NĀ HANA HO'ONANEA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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October 19, 2026

The Honorable Andria Tupola, Chair
and Members
Committee on Housing, Homelessness and Parks
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Tupola and Councilmembers:

SUBJECT: Opposition to Bill 57 (2026) – Relating to Outdoor Playcourts

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) respectfully opposes Bill 57 (2026), Relating to Outdoor Playcourts in its original form as well as in the proposed CD1 version.

While DPR understands the desire of O'ahu residents using outdoor courts to have all outdoor courts repaired and replaced on a schedule, the same is true for O'ahu residents using every other recreational amenity and supporting infrastructure at O'ahu parks and botanical gardens, including but not limited to:

playgrounds; gymnasiums; recreation buildings; comfort stations; adult exercise equipment; walking paths; lighting for athletic fields, buildings, parking lots and walkways; beach park showers; parking lots; campgrounds; drinking fountains; shooting range; archery ranges; baseball and softball infields, backstops, dugouts and batting cages; athletic field irrigation and turf; street, garden and park tree pruning; firebreak management; fencing; picnic pavilions, tables, benches and arbors; and swimming pools.

Bill 57 proposed to place into law the requirement for the department to develop a repair and replacement schedule for outdoor courts alone, thereby placing outdoor courts at a higher priority than all the other important recreational amenities listed above, and many other unlisted ones. We appreciate the Council's effort to amend the Bill after the original hearing. However, while the proposed CD1 version of the Bill eliminates the requirement of creating a replacement schedule for outdoor courts, it continues to effectively prioritize this one recreational amenity over all others by directing extensive information and actions specific to outdoor courts and the maintenance thereof.

We doubt it is the Council's intent to neglect the equally essential needs of this above list of recreational amenities, but that will be the inadvertent result of Bill 57 (2026).

DEPT. COM. 655(26)

To illustrate this point, allow us to list a few examples of competing needs for Council:

1. DPR is in the process of moving towards an asset management approach to scheduling maintenance and replacement of large assets. As the Council knows, we began with an inventory of all 500 park building roofs, and now have a general schedule for replacement and repair of roofs. During the FY27 budget process, as we received the roof inventory, we shared with the Council the decades of backlogged replacement, which necessitated DPR to redirect nearly all of the MSS current expenses budget to replacing roofs in critical shape to avoid shutting down entire buildings to recreational users. We would not want a schedule for outdoor court replacement to effectively require precedence of a court job over a gymnasium roof, thereby shutting a facility down and leaving it vulnerable to increasing damage due to deferred maintenance.
2. Often critical needs emerge due to unanticipated emergencies that affect public health and safety, which require immediate attention at the expense of planned repairs or replacements. Two examples are (1) the collapse of the seawalls fronting Kapi'olani, Mākālei and Lē'ahi Beach Parks, leaving these areas vulnerable to permanent loss of land; and (2) the shutdown of the Koko Head Shooting Complex which required several upgrades for public safety be completed prior to reopening the sole outdoor shooting range on the island.

DPR is not recommending the Council impose a requirement for a repair and replacement schedule for all recreational assets. Part of the Executive role is to annually balance the needs of repairs and replacements within the operating budget, and make the best call to allocate existing resources between competing needs, and remain flexible to respond to unanticipated emergency repairs or replacements due to unanticipated events. DPR and the Executive Branch make these determinations based on volume of use, availability of alternative recreational amenities nearby, existing contracts to conduct the work, public health and safety, and any increased costs due to deferred action.

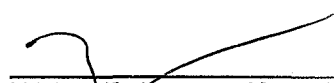
With all due respect to the intent of Bill 57, DPR opposes the Bill and the proposed CD1 and asks that it be deferred.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at (808) 768-3001.

Respectfully,


Laura Thielen
Director

APPROVED:


Krishna E. Jayaram, Managing Director
Office of the Managing Director