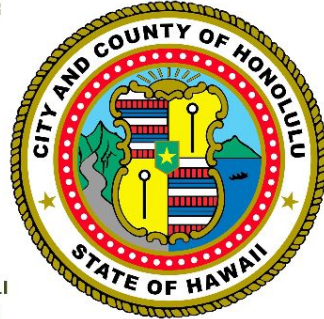


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ESTHER CITY COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 3

KIA'ĀINA



ĀHUIMANU | HE'EIA | HA'IKŪ | KĀNE'OHE | MAUNAWILI
KAILUA | OLOMANA | ENCHANTED LAKE | WAIMĀNALO

May 22, 2023

**Prioritizing Local Families over
Commercial Activities at our City Parks**



In March 2023, [Bill 19 \(2023\)](#) was introduced at the request of the City Administration. According to the [Department of Parks and Recreation](#), Bill 19 attempts to establish simpler standards, limitations, and procedures to regulate commercial activities at all City parks with an end goal of furthering the primary purpose of City parks – to serve recreational needs of the public and preserve its resources for the future. The measure regulates recreational stops (tour buses that enter parks), commercial filming and special event filming, and other commercial activities separately. Of note the bill includes:

- Restrictions on commercial activity in parks on weekends and holidays,
- Limitations on commercial activities such as time, place, and number of permits per park, and

- Amendments to remove park specific and geography based commercial activity bans, including existing bans in Kailua, Waimānalo, and the North Shore.

I oppose Bill 19's efforts to repeal current restrictions on commercial activities on the Windward side and the North Shore. While I believe that other provisions of Bill 19 have the potential to provide relief for other parks, including in Council District 3, I nevertheless introduced a [proposed CD1](#) to retain the restrictions currently in place at Kailua, Waimānalo, and North Shore beach parks, hoping to shift the Council's focus on how the measure can provide relief to other communities across the island.

The Parks, Enterprise Services & Culture & the Arts Committee, chaired by Councilmember Augie Tulba, heard Bill 19 for discussion at the committee's April and May meetings. At both meetings, I emphasized the concerns of Kailua and Waimānalo residents, in particular, those of Hawaiian Home Lands beneficiaries, who are concerned about the impacts of permitting commercial activities at City-managed beach parks in Waimānalo that are located on Hawaiian Home Lands, including Waimānalo, Kaiona, Kaupō, and Makapu'u beach parks. The City manages these beaches through a license from the Hawai'i State Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, which require the City to limit commercial activities. I have also noted the concerns of Kailua residents, who have experienced positive impacts from the prohibitions at Kailua and Kalama beach parks, and worry that Bill 19 would roll back progress that has been made.

I will continue to advocate that Bill 19 be modified to include my CD1 or that the administration start over with new legislation that takes into account the feedback from the hearings and grandfather the current restrictions in place on

the Windward side and the North Shore.

For those interested in learning more about our shoreline parks, please refer to the [fact sheet](#), and [maps](#) provided by DPR with general information on beach parks across the island. The maps are particularly to the current discussions regarding recreational stops, which are only allowed at beach parks.

Addressing Concerns About the Kailua Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant



I participated in a press conference led by Mayor Rick Blangiardi with city and state officials to address recent reports related to the Kailua Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant.

After a period of excessive enterococcus bacteria levels in the Kailua Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant effluent in late April and early May 2023, laboratory tests of daily effluent samples have shown that enterococcus in the Plant effluent have remained well within permit limits since May 5, 2023. Although these levels have remained low, the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Environmental Services (ENV) has continued to monitor the levels and update the State Department of Health daily on effluent test results. ENV has also been conducting daily shoreline monitoring for the bacteria, *Clostridium perfringens*.

Public health and safety is a priority of mine and I support the City's continued monitoring of effluent at the plant and the shoreline. Moreover, I have been working closely with the Mayor's office and ENV and will continue to support the over \$44 million in Bill 12, the CIP FY24 budget, for the Kailua Regional Waste Water Treatment Plant. The FY23 budget already includes funding—\$11 million—for an Ultra Violet Disinfection Facility that has been in the works for years, to target enterococcus within the effluent, and further mitigate the possibility of exceedance occurrences. The design will be 95% complete as of June 1, 2023, with an anticipated construction completion date of December 2025.

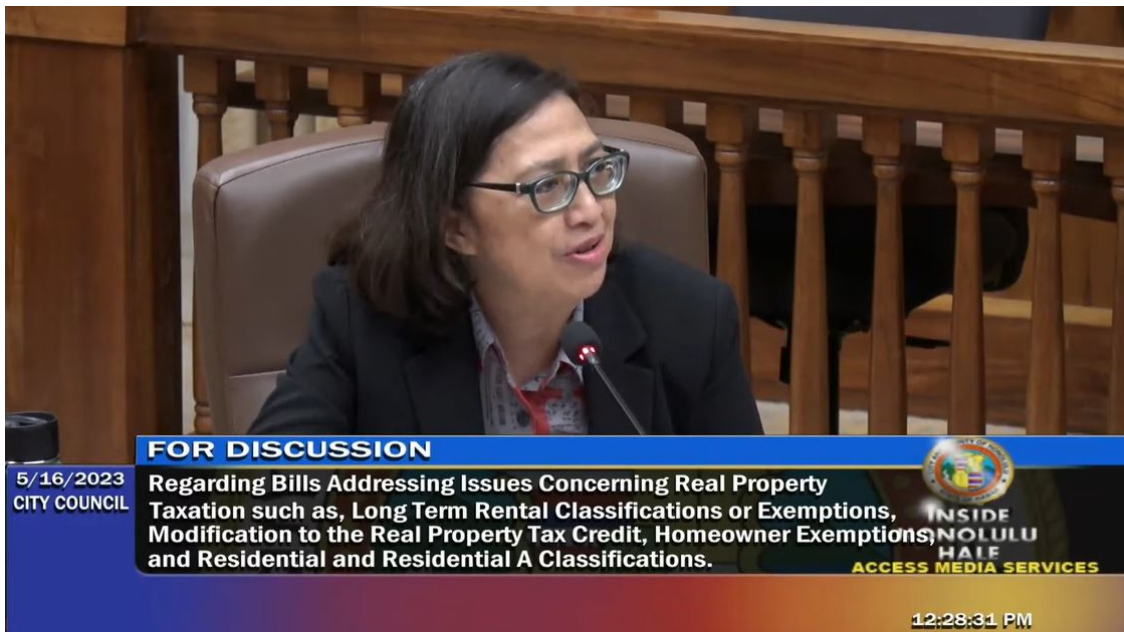
Despite reporting in the news, the State Department of Health (DOH) attended a press conference with Mayor Rick Blangiardi and other City officials on May 18, 2023, and State Director of Health Dr. Kenneth Fink clarified that “[t]he City fully complied with notification requirements during the exceedance period, including timely notifications to the DOH regarding exceedances with lab results and the postings of signs.”

I support City officials and the work they are doing to help ensure public safety

and am confident they will continue to work with the DOH and take necessary steps to keep people safe.

Relatedly, the U.S. Marine Corps' Water Reclamation Facility, which is overdue for an upgrade, is also in District 3. Recent failures of the Marine Corps' facility have led to numerous unauthorized discharges of wastewater into the ocean. I support U.S. Congresswoman Jill Tokuda's effort to seek \$227,350,000 to fund a compliance upgrade for the facility, including a parallel redundant water treatment system and wrote a letter supporting the upgrade.

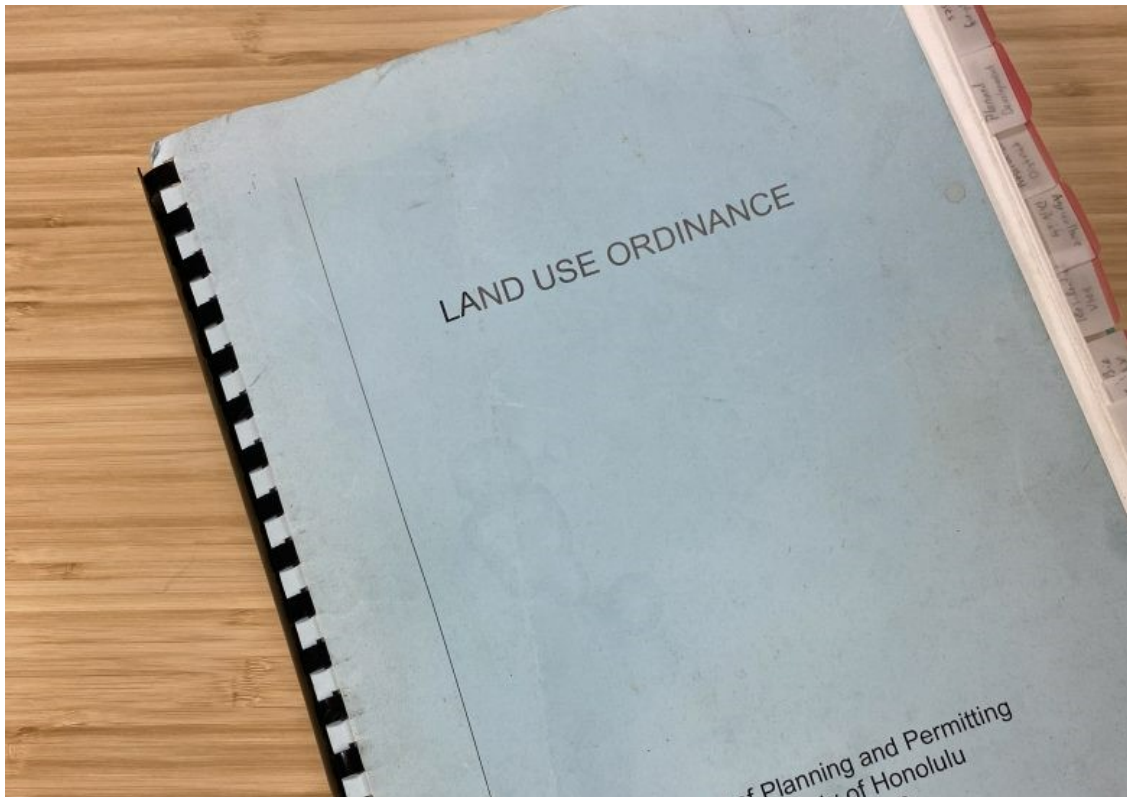
Easing Real Property Tax Burdens for O'ahu Homeowners



In recognition of the sharp increases in real property tax assessments on residential properties, on April 19, 2023, the Honolulu City Council established a Permitted Interaction Group to investigate relevant matters through the passage of [Resolution 23-40](#). The Group consists of Councilmember Radiant Cordero, the current chair of the Budget Committee, Council Chair Tommy Waters, Councilmember Weyer, and myself. Addressing the impacts of increased residential property tax liability has been a priority of mine since I became a councilmember and I am grateful that the Group will be making findings and recommendations relating to the City's real property tax structure, including bills that are pending before the Budget Committee, such as measures that amend existing income-based property tax credits (e.g. [Bill 37 CD1](#)), and home exemptions (e.g. [Bill 40 CD1](#)). I am also supportive of the Group's discussion on bills to generate revenue to offset tax relief policies and meet the growing demand for City and County of Honolulu services, as well as measures to overhaul the existing residential property tax structure. I anticipate the Group will present its written report to the Council of its findings and recommendations within the next two months so that the Council can move forward on much needed relief for its residential property owners.

Additionally, I am also supportive of providing immediate property tax relief, such as through one time property bills before the Council—[Bill 14](#), [Bill 26](#), and [Bill 31](#).

Status Update on Overhauling the City's Land Use Ordinance



Credit: Stewart Yerton at Civilbeat

As Chair of the Committee on Planning and the Economy (P&E), I began including Bill 10 (2022), CD1, which would amend the use regulations of the City's Land Use Ordinance, on P&E Committee meeting agendas starting on March 2, 2023. At each meeting I have prioritized proposed amendments to Bill 10 by use type, which started with Industrial uses at the meeting on March 2, 2023 and continued with Commercial uses at the meeting on April 6, 2023.

At the meeting on May 25, 2023, I will continue to prioritize Commercial use amendments to the latest [proposed CD2](#). My additional proposed amendments to commercial uses can be found [here](#). In response to a request by the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP), further action will be paused on Bill 10 after May 25th. I will be working closely with the DPP to determine next steps, and plans for amendments to Public, Civic, and Institutional uses,

Residential uses, Agricultural uses, and Miscellaneous uses in the future.

The City Council launched a new website page for Bill 10 to help ease public navigation of scheduling for Bill 10 and current proposed drafts, which you can find [here](#).

FY24 Executive Operating and Capital Budget



Photo Credit: Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden

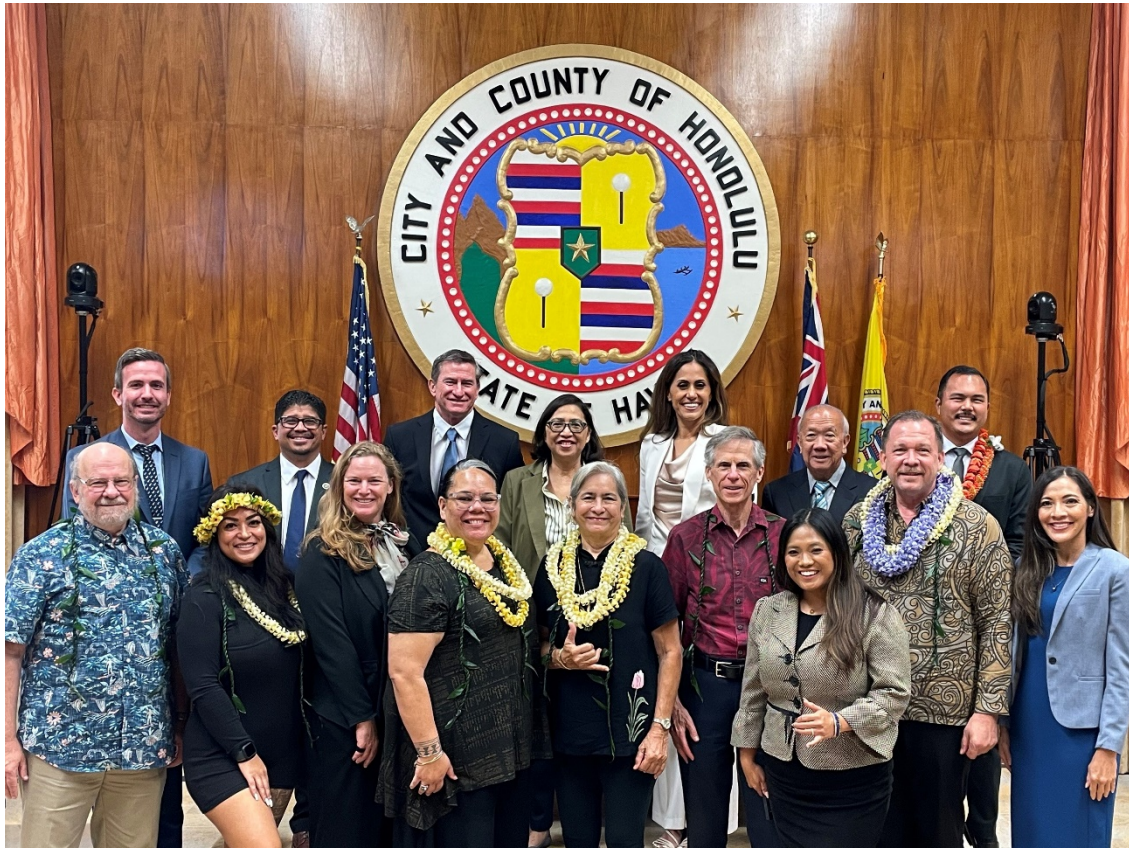
As we approach the end of the City Council's annual budget process, I wanted to provide an update on the latest developments. The FY24 budget bills, [Bill 11\(2023\)](#) and [Bill 12\(2023\)](#) are in their final stages and are expected to pass final reading at the upcoming full City Council meeting on June 7, 2023.

Recently, the Committee on Budget held a special budget meeting on May 15, 2023 to discuss the amendments and priorities of each councilmember. It was a productive meeting, and I am pleased to share my requested amendments for the FY24 budget, which would further strengthen administrative budgetary priorities for Council District 3 communities and the City and County of Honolulu as a whole:

- \$2 million for storm drainage best management practices at Ka‘elepulu Pond
- \$750,000 for improvements to parks in Council District 3
- \$125,000 for the purchase and installation of a lifeguard tower at Kalama Beach Park and funding for salaries to be assigned at the new Lifeguard Station
- \$85,000 for an ombudsman to investigate complaints, including in particular for complaints about the Liquor Commission
- At least \$100 million for the acquisition of land, and the development and construction of affordable housing, \$25 million for housing prioritized for households experiencing homelessness, and \$10 million for the acquisition of land, and the development and construction of homeless services facilities that may provide housing, hygiene, and other related services.
- Appropriation of City Transient Accommodation Tax for capital improvement projects at Ho‘omaluhia Botanical Garden and Kailua Boat Ramp.

I look forward to continuing to advocate for Council District 3, and working with the City’s Administration on implementation once the final budgets have been passed.

Oahu Historic Preservation Commissioners Appointed



Pictured with the Honolulu City Council are new OHPC Commissioners (front, left to right): Richard Douglas Davis, Nanea Lo, Kai E. White, M. Mehanaokala Hind, Mahealani Cypher, Glenn E. Mason (red), and Hailama V. K. K. Farden (green, long sleeve). Not pictured are Thomas Dye and Kehaunani Abad.

For the first time in more than 30 years, the O‘ahu Historic Preservation Commission is finally being stood up with an inaugural commission of nine highly qualified experts, all with specializations in historic preservation-related

disciplines. At least four of the nine have expertise in Native Hawaiian culture and three in archaeology. Amongst its powers, the commission has been given the important task of establishing an inventory of historic properties and archaeological sites within the City and County of Honolulu. The commission will receive staff support from the City's Department of Planning and Permitting, which has already dedicated a staff with an archaeology background.

On May 17th, the City Council confirmed Mayor Blangiardi's appointees including: Kehaunani Abad, Mahealani Cypher, Richard Douglas Davis, Thomas Dye, Hailama V. K. K. Farden, M. Mehanaokala Hind, Nanea Lo, Glenn E. Mason and Kai E. White. Congratulations to the new commissioners, and mahalo to the mayor and my colleagues on the City Council for their support to preserve and protect our island's historic sites and places.

See Civil Beat's article on the newly formed O'ahu Historic Preservation Commission [here](#).

\$8 Million for Agricultural Grants Program



[The Agricultural Grants Program](#) which I advocated for in the FY 2022 budget cycle, is administered through the City's Office of Economic Revitalization (OER), and uses federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to help address financial impacts on local farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic. After the release of the grant applications in 2022, OER is preparing to announce the 65 recipients of the first round of Agricultural Grants from the City and County of Honolulu.

Recently, the City and County of Honolulu's American Rescue Plan Act State & Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (ARPA-SLFRF) Committee, of which I am a member, approved the reprogramming of \$8,000,000 in ARPA-SLFRF funds for another round of Agricultural Grant awards, dedicated to food systems. These grants will fund local organizations that make up a food value chain, including food producers such as farmers, ranchers, or fishermen, as well as distributors or manufacturers. The Food System Grant program is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in an effort to better serve local families and reduce dependence on imported food.

Recognizing Alice Pualeilani Kana'e Hewett and Frank Kawaikapuokalani Hewett



Mahalo nui loa to Aunty Alice Pualeilani Hewett (center) & Frank Kawaikapuokalani Hewett for their significant, decades-long contributions to the He'eia and Kāne'ohe communities and the preservation and perpetuation of Hawaiian history and culture. On behalf of the City and County of Honolulu, I recently presented the Hewetts with an Honorary Certificate. Pictured with the Hewetts from left to right are Hailama Farden, Rocky Kaluhiwa, Councilmember Kia'aina, and Jorene Hewett.

Click [here](#) to watch the honorary certification presentation.

Sewer Improvements on Oneawa Street in Kailua

Traffic Control Details



Photo Credit: Department of Environmental Services

Anticipated construction will occur from late May 2023 through December 2023 during the night beginning at 8 p.m. until 5:30 a.m., Sunday through Thursday, except holidays. Sewer service will not be interrupted

and noise mitigation measures will be in place. Driveway access for residents will be provided.

The City's Department of Environmental Services, Wastewater Engineering & Construction, together with the Mocon Corporation and the Limtiaco Consulting Group, will be conducting sewer improvements on Oneawa Street in Kailua. For additional information, contact Eric Arakawa, Construction Manager, the Limtiaco Consulting Group, at (808) 687-8737 or eric.a@tlcgohawaii.com; Angel Briones, Contractor Project Manager, the Mocon Corporation, at (661) 3039-0487 or angel@moconcorp.com.

District 3 Gets New Youth Commissioner



I am pleased to announce the appointment of Puali'i Ann Zidek as the new Council District 3 Honolulu Youth Commissioner, who will replace Pāhonu Coleman who left the post earlier this year for family kuleana off-island.

Daughter of Laurie Ann Lee-Zidek and Jeffrey Zidek, and a resident of Kāne'ohe, Puali'i will be graduating from Kamehameha Schools – Kapālama this May, where she has served as treasurer on both the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council and Advocacy Club, editor of the KEY Club which coordinates volunteer opportunities for students, and board member of the Speech and Debate Club. Puali'i is also 2023 National Merit Scholar Award recipient. She

will start her collegiate journey at Stanford University later this year.

The Honolulu Youth Commission is made up of fifteen commissioners appointed by the Mayor and the Honolulu City Council. The Youth Commission provides those aged 14 to 24 with the opportunity to serve their communities and have a presence in local government. The commission advises the council and mayor on the effects of policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs and budgets concerning the children and youth of the City.

Community Outreach



One of the most important jobs as your Councilmember is to make sure that you are able to reach me with your inquiries, identify issues, or to share your concerns. You can either email me at ekiaaina@honolulu.gov or call me at (808) 768-5003. You may also want to follow me on my [Facebook page](#).

If you want to contact City agencies directly, you can also utilize the City's 311 mobile application, which provides a free, simple, and intuitive platform empowering people to report potholes, broken streetlights, cracked sidewalks, illegal dumping, vandalized/broken signs and more via your smartphone. Please note that this app serves as a tool for residents to request City services and report non-emergency issues, which will then be reviewed by the appropriate City department and assigned. You can also access this service through the City's website [here](#), or call the City's information hotline at: (808) 768-CITY (2489).

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Councilmember Esther Kia'āina, District 3

City and County of Honolulu
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 768-5003
E-mail: ekiaaina@honolulu.gov

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