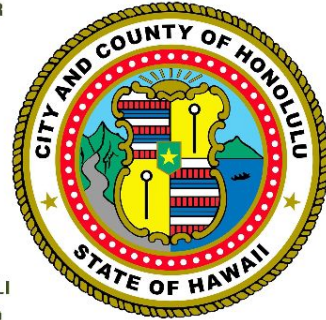


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ESTHER CITY COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 3

KIA'ĀINA



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

February 28, 2023

Honolulu City Council 2023 Leadership



In attendance at the City Council's inauguration on January 3, 2023, were Neighborhood Board Chairs, Bill Hicks (Kailua), Mo Radke (Kāne'ohe), and Kimeona Kane (Waimānalo).

As the City Council welcomed three new members to the City Council (Councilmembers Matt Weyer, Valerie Okimoto, and Tyler Dos Santos-Tam), Councilmember Tommy Waters and I retained our leadership roles as Chair and Vice-Chair of the City Council, respectively, at our inaugural meeting on January 3. Councilmember Radiant Cordero is our new Floor Leader.

My new committee assignments are as follows:

- Chair of the Committee on Planning and the Economy
 - Vice Chair of the Committee on Housing, Sustainability and Health
 - Member of the Budget, Zoning, and Transportation, and Executive Matters & Legal Affairs Committees
-

To learn more about our membership and the workings of the City Council, please visit:

<https://www.honolulucitycouncil.org/>

Kāneʻohe's Adela's Country Eatery Takes the No. 5 Spot on Yelp's Top 100 List



Congratulations to Millie Chan, Adela Visitacion and their team at Adela's Country Eatery in Kāneʻohe for being named to Yelp's Top 100 Places to Eat in the United States. Adela's took the No. 5 spot and is one of three Hawai'i restaurants to be named the best in the country. On behalf of the City and County of Honolulu, I recently presented Adela's with an Honorary Certificate to commemorate this national recognition.

Windward City Park Improvements Underway



Hünānāniho Beach Park



Souza Dairy Park

In the FY 2023 Budget, I secured \$500,000, and Council Chair Waters added an additional \$100,000 to the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) budget to be used for improvements to parks on the Windward side. Mahalo to the DPR staff for their hard work in identifying areas that were in most need of improvements, and their continued efforts in maintaining our beautiful parks. See below the list of projects:

1. Souza Dairy Neighborhood Park Comfort Station Roof: \$27,573
- *Completed*
 2. Hünānāniho Beach Park Comfort Station Roof: \$35,597 - *Completed*
 3. Waimānalo Beach Park Ballfield Parking Lot: \$130,631 - *In Process*
 4. Waimānalo Beach Park Canoe Halau Parking Lot: \$77,261 - *In Process*
 5. Kawainui RC Model Airplane Parking Lot: \$157,252 - *In Process*
 6. 'Aikahi Neighborhood Park Comfort Station Roof - *Pending*
 7. Kalāheo Neighborhood Park Comfort Station Roof - *Pending*
-

Legislative Priority Updates



[Bill 41, CD2 \(2022\)](#) - Shoreline Setbacks & [Bill 42, CD2 \(2022\)](#) - Special Management Area Permits: After robust discussion in the Committee on Planning and the Economy, which I chair, the Honolulu City Council unanimously passed Bill 41, CD2 and Bill 42, CD2 on third and final reading. Both bills head to the Mayor's desk for signature.

Mahalo to the Department of Planning and Permitting, the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency, the Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program, the University of Hawai'i's School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology, and community stakeholders for the mana'o that they provided on both bills. It was important to me that we work with all stakeholders, as well as the City Administration, to provide amendments that would mitigate impacts that these important policies will have on shoreline 'ohana, particularly those with multigenerational ties to these places.

Bill 41, CD2 would update the City's shoreline setback laws by incorporating amendments made by Act 16 to the State Coastal Zone Management law and

implementing a new erosion-rate-based shoreline setback formula. We have already seen significant impacts of coastal erosion, shoreline hardening, and sea level rise to our public beaches and existing properties and structures, and these policies are necessary to mitigate further losses and public health and safety. The Committee made changes to respond to community concerns that allow requests to amend a lot's erosion hazard rate, provide more certainty for landowners to ensure they can build a 1,500 square foot footprint home on their property within the shoreline setback area (3,000 square feet if two stories), allow more repairs for nonconforming structures, and push back the effective date to July 1, 2024 to provide more time for planning.

Bill 42, CD2 would update the City's existing Special Management Area (SMA) laws and improve existing controls on development on the shoreline impacted by coastal hazards like storm surges and shoreline erosion, which now applies to lots not directly on the shoreline. Consistent with state law it would also clarify when an activity or action is considered development. Additionally, it will formalize best practices already in use by the City in its review of SMA permits and modernize our SMA procedures. Amendments were made in response to community concerns, including exempting landowners who are moving their homes mauka and no longer requiring county required environmental assessments or environmental impact statements for single family and two family dwellings that trigger an SMA major permit.

Bill 57, CD1 (2022) – Carrying of Concealed Firearms: Bill 57 would prohibit the carrying of firearms in sensitive places, on the premises of private businesses or charitable organization's without express consent (e.g. signage), and without a license. Bill 57 passed second reading by the Honolulu City Council on February 22, 2023 and is scheduled for a hearing by the Committee on Executive Matters and Legal Affairs on February 28, 2023 at 1 p.m. Hawai'i has, up until recently, limited concealed carry to exceptional cases where applicants could prove a special need. As a result of a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, more people in Hawai'i are now eligible for concealed carry permits, however, current state and City and County laws do not restrict where licensees can carry concealed guns. Accordingly, while I respect the constitutional right to carry concealed

weapons for the purpose of self-defense, I believe we must balance that right with public safety, particularly of our most vulnerable, to the extent that the constitution allows us to do so. I think Bill 57 goes a long way to promoting public safety, and I am looking forward to a discussion at the EMLA hearing on my [proposed CD2](#), which would add three new places to the definition of sensitive place, including hospitals and other medical facilities, shelters or residential facilities serving persons experiencing homelessness or victims of domestic violence, and bars that serve “alcohol” or “intoxicating liquor.”

Bill 10 (2022) – related to the Land Use Ordinance: The Honolulu City Council’s Committee on Planning & the Economy, which I chair, will be hearing the [CD2 version of Bill 10](#) that was approved by the Zoning and Planning Committee on October 20, 2022, on March 2, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Bill 10 updates the City’s Land Use Ordinance (LUO), which was adopted over 30 years ago, through replacing, revising, and updating the use regulations, including the Master Use Table, use standards, and use definitions. To encourage a robust dialogue and input by the committee members and the public on each use category in the LUO, the Committee will prioritize bill amendments by use category. The committee will begin by reviewing Industrial uses, followed by Commercial uses at the April 6th hearing. Other uses that will be considered at subsequent hearings include Public, Civic, and Institutional uses, Residential uses, Agricultural uses, and Miscellaneous uses.

Budget Committee Evaluates Real Property Tax Bills



Councilmember Radiant Cordero, Chair of the Budget Committee

I share the concerns that constituents have brought to my attention regarding the impacts of increasing property tax liability, especially our kūpuna on fixed incomes, as well as renters and landlords impacted by increasing rents. Addressing the impacts of increased property tax liability has been a legislative priority of mine, and I am grateful that the Budget Committee, which is chaired by Councilmember Radiant Cordero, and of which I am a member, heard three of my bills on February 28. These measures are related to the real property tax credit and the real property tax home exemption, which aim to lower property tax costs for

homeowners:

- **[Bill 37 \(2022\)](#) - Tax Credits:** increase the income eligibility from \$60,000 to \$70,000, to be eligible for a real property tax credit that would result in homeowners paying no more than 3% of their income to their real property taxes.
- **[Bill 38 \(2022\)](#) - Tax Credits:** to promote dialogue, I also introduced Bill 38 which increases the income eligibility of the real property tax credit from a combined income of \$60,000 to 80% of Honolulu's area median income (AMI) established for a two-person household in Honolulu that would result in homeowners paying no more than 3% of their income to their real property taxes.
- **[Bill 40 \(2022\)](#) - Home Exemption Increase:** increases the standard real property tax home exemption from \$100,000 to \$110,000 and the real property tax home exemption for those 65 years or older from \$140,000 to \$150,000.

I am hoping that after understanding more about the City's projected fiscal obligations and tax collections for the next few years we will have sufficient information to determine whether we can further increase the home exemption and consider other real property tax relief options.

If you have not already or if you recently acquired a new home, I encourage homeowners to apply for the City and County of Honolulu's home exemption by going to the [City and County's Real Property Assessment Division's website](#) and following their instructions. The deadline for home exemptions is every year on September 30th.

City Soliciting Input for Kailua Boat Ramp Improvement Project



KAILUA BOAT RAMP IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT
PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL PLAN | FEBRUARY 2023



PRELIMINARY
NOT TO BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

From now until March 31, 2023, the City will be seeking public input via an online survey regarding the proposed long-term improvement project to the Kailua Boat Ramp. The Kailua Boat Ramp, which is the only man made watercraft launch facility managed by the City, has undergone a number of repairs since its construction in 1962. It was closed by the Administration in early February 2021 due to hazardous conditions. The survey, and additional information regarding the improvement project can be found by visiting www.kailuaboatramp.com

Strengthening Federal Collaboration in Washington, D.C.



From left to right, Vice-Chair Esther Kia'aina, Nani Coloretti, Deputy Director, U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Shalanda Young, Director, U.S. Office of Management and Budget, and Chair Tommy Waters.

Council Chair Tommy Waters and I attended the National Association of Counties 2023 Legislative Conference, in Washington D.C. from February 11-15, where almost 2,000 county officials gathered to coordinate on policy issues that affect our communities. The conference provided an opportunity to learn more about legislative and policy ideas to address some of the City and County of Honolulu's most pressing issues (e.g. affordable housing, the opioid epidemic, economic revitalization, aging infrastructure), collaborate with other counties on federal policies (e.g. farm bill), learn more about how counties can strategically access and

use funding in the American Rescue Plan Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, and the Inflation Reduction Act, and to hear from and ask questions of the Biden Administration.

In addition to the U.S. Secretary of Treasury Janet Yellen, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, U.S. Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra, and Senior Advisors to the President, the U.S. President Joe Biden himself addressed the attendees of the NACO 2023 legislative conference. The featured speakers spoke in detail about provisions of key federal legislation and other policy efforts that directly affect and empower counties, availability of competitive grants that counties can apply for, as well as other key resources to address county needs.

The Chair and I also used this time in Washington D.C. to strengthen relationships with Hawai'i congressional delegation members and their staff, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs staff, leadership at the U.S. Department of the Interior, leadership at the White House Office of Management and Budget, the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, the President's Asian American and Pacific Islander Liaison, Ambassadors to the Compact of Free Association nations, and staff at the Department of Defense (DOD) Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program. During these meetings we advocated to further important policies and funding priorities to benefit the people of the City and County of Honolulu, including funding for Red Hill, funding for communities impacted by DOD installations, increased funding for affordable housing, access by COFA communities to earn retirement and other basic governmental benefits, and allocation of a leadership position to specifically focus on policies that directly affect Native Hawaiians.

Community Outreach



Mahalo to the Pōhākupu community for their patience regarding the building of the Wendy's wall. Mahalo to the Mayor, the Managing Director and Cotti Foods for making it happen. Work on the wall began on January 25, 2023.

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).

Councilmember Esther Kia'āina, District 3

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