

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Senator Laura Thielen

DISTRICT 25: KAILUA - WAIMANALO - HAWAI'I KAI



Aloha  
Kailua!

The 2017 session is in full swing, where over a thousand bills are vetted in less than four months.

I'm including a few bills in this newsletter that are currently moving through the legislature to help keep you updated. If any of these topics or any other topics matter to you, now is the time to weigh in on any bills. Don't wait, act before the legislature makes any final decisions.

You can search bills, receive email notifications on bill progress and submit testimony online at: <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/>.



If the bill you are tracking does not have a hearing scheduled, email your legislator and the legislators of the committee the bill has been referred to request a hearing.

Please feel free to contact me about any legislation that is important to you or for any questions regarding how to navigate the website.

## RAIL SURCHARGE

The Senate began with four different scenarios to fund rail, all of which extend the surcharge, and three that extend it indefinitely. In addition, all counties were offered the opportunity to raise funds by establishing a surcharge. Now, SB1183, the rail bill, is being narrowed to one option which extends the tax to 2042 contingent on the City meeting requirements and does not allow the other counties to raise the GET.

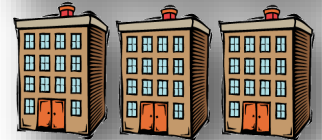


I voted **no** on the "rail tax", because the City hasn't shown how it will contain costs in the future. Both House and Senate are moving forward, so the debate will continue. There is no consensus yet, and will come down to the wire at the end of session.

## AFFORDABLE AND WORKFORCE HOUSING

Coldwell Banker issued a report naming Hawaii the priciest state to buy a home in 2016. The average price of \$905,000 is about \$325,000 more than the next most expensive state.

## HOUSING



Affordable housing for people from **all levels of society** is fundamental for healthy communities to thrive. SB591 proposes to raise two billion dollars through government backed bonds in hopes of making a real difference and to meet the housing demands of 64,000 new units by 2025.

Other measures being considered to combat our housing crisis are; authorizing state land around rail stops to be used for affordable housing, requiring development of affordable housing in conjunction with development of fair market value housing, and providing financial incentives for private contractors to build affordable rentals.

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# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

25th Senatorial District: Kailua, Waimanalo, and Hawaii Kai

February 2017

## BILLS TO WATCH

**RED HILL** Twenty underground fuel tanks at Red Hill, constructed 70+ years ago, are reported to have leaked large amounts of diesel “jet fuel” – just 100 feet above Oahu’s primary drinking water aquifer. Senate Bill 1259 requires the tanks to be upgraded to conform with current federal regulations. It’s important for our state to take initiative, as protecting our drinking water may not be a priority for the current EPA.

**DOE** Senate Bill 683 establishes a surcharge on residential investment property and visitor accommodations to fund public education. This is a bill to put a proposed Constitutional Amendment on the 2018 election ballot – so voters can decide if we should tax property to support education.

**AQUARIUM FISH COLLECTING** The Senate is considering SB1240 that will require DLNR to propose legislation by 2019 for sustainable collection practices of near shore aquatic life and limits on collection.

**PRESCRIPTIVE AUTHORITY** Senate Bill 384 would give clinical psychologist prescriptive authority, for certain psychotropic drugs. The bill died in the House last year at the end of session.

**DRONES** Several legislators, including myself introduced bills this year to regulate the use of commercial and recreational drones. States are allowed to regulate drones under federal law—including to protect privacy. Unfortunately the Senate has not passed any of these bills, and we will see if the House will forward any to us.

**TRAFFIC SAFETY** Traffic fatalities in Hawaii increased by 20% last year. Plus, we have the highest rate in the nation of pedestrian fatalities of seniors. Bills addressing the primary causes of these accidents, such as speed, alcohol and distracted driving are moving forward. The legislature proposes to increase penalties for traffic infractions such as: SB663 speeding in school or construction zones; SB664 speed; SB659 DUI; SB363 mobile device; SB364 seat belt; SB494 alcohol monitoring for repeat offenders; and, SB221 red light imaging.

### Community “Talk Story” Meeting

Tuesday: March 14 at 6:00-7:30pm

Kailua Intermediate School

Please join Senator Thielen, Representative Thielen, Representative Lee and Councilmember Anderson to discuss the 2017 Legislative Session and Honolulu City Council issues.



### WE ARE HERE TO SERVE YOU.

Office staff: Zachary Espino, Connor Hummel, Eliza Wilcox, Natalia Hussey-Burdick, Jennifer Barra, and Michael Biechler.

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