
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE COUNTIES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. Section 46-1.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§46-1.5 General powers and limitation of the counties.

Subject to general law, each county shall have the following powers and shall be subject to the following liabilities and limitations:

(1) Each county shall have the power to frame and adopt a charter for its own self-government that shall establish the county executive, administrative, and legislative structure and organization, including but not limited to the method of appointment or election of officials, their duties, responsibilities, and compensation, and the terms of their office;

(2) Each county shall have the power to provide for and regulate the marking and lighting of all buildings and other structures that may be obstructions or hazards to aerial navigation, so far as may be necessary or



proper for the protection and safeguarding of life,
health, and property;

(3) Each county shall have the power to enforce all claims
on behalf of the county and approve all lawful claims
against the county, but shall be prohibited from
entering into, granting, or making in any manner any
contract, authorization, allowance payment, or
liability contrary to the provisions of any county
charter or general law;

(4) Each county shall have the power to make contracts and
to do all things necessary and proper to carry into
execution all powers vested in the county or any
county officer;

(5) Each county shall have the power to:

(A) Maintain channels, whether natural or artificial,
including their exits to the ocean, in suitable
condition to carry off storm waters;

(B) Remove from the channels, and from the shores and
beaches, any debris that is likely to create an
unsanitary condition or become a public nuisance;
provided that, to the extent any of the foregoing



1 work is a private responsibility, the
2 responsibility may be enforced by the county in
3 lieu of the work being done at public expense;

4 (C) Construct, acquire by gift, purchase, or by the
5 exercise of eminent domain, reconstruct, improve,
6 better, extend, and maintain projects or
7 undertakings for the control of and protection
8 against floods and flood waters, including the
9 power to drain and rehabilitate lands already
10 flooded;

11 (D) Enact zoning ordinances providing that lands
12 deemed subject to seasonable, periodic, or
13 occasional flooding shall not be used for
14 residence or other purposes in a manner as to
15 endanger the health or safety of the occupants
16 thereof, as required by the Federal Flood
17 Insurance Act of 1956 (chapter 1025, Public Law
18 1016); and

19 (E) Establish and charge user fees to create and
20 maintain any stormwater management system or
21 infrastructure; provided that no county shall



1 charge against or collect user fees from the
2 department of transportation in excess of
3 \$1,500,000 in the aggregate per year; provided
4 further that no services shall be denied to the
5 department of transportation by reason of
6 nonpayment of the fees;

7 (6) Each county shall have the power to exercise the power
8 of condemnation by eminent domain when it is in the
9 public interest to do so;

10 (7) Each county shall have the power to exercise
11 regulatory powers over business activity as are
12 assigned to them by chapter 445 or other general law;

13 (8) Each county shall have the power to fix the fees and
14 charges for all official services not otherwise
15 provided for;

16 (9) Each county shall have the power to provide by
17 ordinance assessments for the improvement or
18 maintenance of districts within the county;

19 (10) Except as otherwise provided, no county shall have the
20 power to give or loan credit to, or in aid of, any



1 person or corporation, directly or indirectly, except
2 for a public purpose;

3 (11) Where not within the jurisdiction of the public
4 utilities commission, each county shall have the power
5 to regulate by ordinance the operation of motor
6 vehicle common carriers transporting passengers within
7 the county and adopt and amend rules the county deems
8 necessary for the public convenience and necessity;

9 (12) Each county shall have the power to enact and enforce
10 ordinances necessary to prevent or summarily remove
11 public nuisances and to compel the clearing or removal
12 of any public nuisance, refuse, and uncultivated
13 undergrowth from streets, sidewalks, public places,
14 and unoccupied lots. In connection with these powers,
15 each county may impose and enforce liens upon the
16 property for the cost to the county of removing and
17 completing the necessary work where the property
18 owners fail, after reasonable notice, to comply with
19 the ordinances. The authority provided by this
20 paragraph shall not be self-executing, but shall
21 become fully effective within a county only upon the



1 enactment or adoption by the county of appropriate and
2 particular laws, ordinances, or rules defining "public
3 nuisances" with respect to each county's respective
4 circumstances. The counties shall provide the
5 property owner with the opportunity to contest the
6 summary action and to recover the owner's property;

7 (13) Each county shall have the power to enact ordinances
8 deemed necessary to protect health, life, and
9 property, and to preserve the order and security of
10 the county and its inhabitants on any subject or
11 matter not inconsistent with, or tending to defeat,
12 the intent of any state statute where the statute does
13 not disclose an express or implied intent that the
14 statute shall be exclusive or uniform throughout the
15 State;

16 (14) Each county shall have the power to:

17 (A) Make and enforce within the limits of the county
18 all necessary ordinances covering all:

19 (i) Local police matters;

20 (ii) Matters of sanitation;

21 (iii) Matters of inspection of buildings;



- 1 (iv) Matters of condemnation of unsafe
2 structures, plumbing, sewers, dairies, milk,
3 fish, and morgues; and
4 (v) Matters of the collection and disposition of
5 rubbish and garbage;
6 (B) Provide exemptions for homeless facilities and
7 any other program for the homeless authorized by
8 part XVII of chapter 346, for all matters under
9 this paragraph;
10 (C) Appoint county physicians and sanitary and other
11 inspectors as necessary to carry into effect
12 ordinances made under this paragraph, who shall
13 have the same power as given by law to agents of
14 the department of health, subject only to
15 limitations placed on them by the terms and
16 conditions of their appointments; and
17 (D) Fix a penalty for the violation of any ordinance,
18 which penalty may be a misdemeanor, petty
19 misdemeanor, or violation as defined by general
20 law;



1 (15) Each county shall have the power to provide public
2 pounds; to regulate the impounding of stray animals
3 and fowl, and their disposition; and to provide for
4 the appointment, powers, duties, and fees of animal
5 control officers;

6 (16) Each county shall have the power to purchase and
7 otherwise acquire, lease, and hold real and personal
8 property within the defined boundaries of the county
9 and to dispose of the real and personal property as
10 the interests of the inhabitants of the county may
11 require, except that:

12 (A) Any property held for school purposes may not be
13 disposed of without the consent of the
14 superintendent of education;

15 (B) No property bordering the ocean shall be sold or
16 otherwise disposed of; and

17 (C) All proceeds from the sale of park lands shall be
18 expended only for the acquisition of property for
19 park or recreational purposes;

20 (17) Each county shall have the power to provide by charter
21 for the prosecution of all offenses and to prosecute



for offenses against the laws of the State under the
authority of the attorney general of the State;

(18) Each county shall have the power to make
appropriations in amounts deemed appropriate from any
moneys in the treasury, for the purpose of:

(A) Community promotion and public celebrations;

(B) The entertainment of distinguished persons as may
from time to time visit the county;

(C) The entertainment of other distinguished persons,
as well as, public officials when deemed to be in
the best interest of the community; and

(D) The rendering of civic tribute to individuals
who, by virtue of their accomplishments and
community service, merit civic commendations,
recognition, or remembrance;

(19) Each county shall have the power to:

(A) Construct, purchase, take on lease, lease,
sublease, or in any other manner acquire, manage,
maintain, or dispose of buildings for county
purposes, sewers, sewer systems, pumping
stations, waterworks, including reservoirs,



1 wells, pipelines, and other conduits for
2 distributing water to the public, lighting
3 plants, and apparatus and appliances for lighting
4 streets and public buildings, and manage,
5 regulate, and control the same;

6 (B) Regulate and control the location and quality of
7 all appliances necessary to the furnishing of
8 water, heat, light, power, telephone, and
9 telecommunications service to the county;

10 (C) Acquire, regulate, and control any and all
11 appliances for the sprinkling and cleaning of the
12 streets and the public ways, and for flushing the
13 sewers; and

14 (D) Open, close, construct, or maintain county
15 highways or charge toll on county highways;
16 provided that all revenues received from a toll
17 charge shall be used for the construction or
18 maintenance of county highways;

19 (20) Each county shall have the power to regulate the
20 renting, subletting, and rental conditions of property
21 for places of abode by ordinance;



- 1 (21) Unless otherwise provided by law, each county shall
- 2 have the power to establish by ordinance the order of
- 3 succession of county officials in the event of a
- 4 military or civil disaster;
- 5 (22) Each county shall have the power to sue and be sued in
- 6 its corporate name;
- 7 (23) Each county shall have the power to:
- 8 (A) Establish and maintain waterworks and sewer
- 9 works;
- 10 (B) Implement a sewer monitoring program that
- 11 includes the inspection of sewer laterals that
- 12 connect to county sewers, when those laterals are
- 13 located on public or private property, after
- 14 providing a property owner not less than ten
- 15 calendar days' written notice, to detect leaks
- 16 from laterals, infiltration, and inflow, any
- 17 other law to the contrary notwithstanding;
- 18 (C) Compel an owner of private property upon which is
- 19 located any sewer lateral that connects to a
- 20 county sewer to inspect that lateral for leaks,



infiltration, and inflow and to perform repairs
as necessary;

(D) Collect rates for water supplied to consumers and
for the use of sewers;

(E) Install water meters whenever deemed expedient;
provided that owners of premises having vested
water rights under existing laws appurtenant to
the premises shall not be charged for the
installation or use of the water meters on the
premises;

(F) Take over from the State existing waterworks
systems, including water rights, pipelines, and
other appurtenances belonging thereto, and sewer
systems, and to enlarge, develop, and improve the
same; and

(G) For purposes of subparagraphs (B) and (C):

(i) "Infiltration" means groundwater, rainwater,
and saltwater that enters the county sewer
system through cracked, broken, or defective
sewer laterals; and



1 (ii) "Inflow" means non-sewage entering the
2 county sewer system via inappropriate or
3 illegal connections;

4 ~~[(24) (A) Each county may impose civil fines, in addition~~
5 ~~to criminal penalties, for any violation of~~
6 ~~county ordinances or rules after reasonable~~
7 ~~notice and requests to correct or cease the~~
8 ~~violation have been made upon the violator. Any~~
9 ~~administratively imposed civil fine shall not be~~
10 ~~collected until after an opportunity for a~~
11 ~~hearing under chapter 91. Any appeal shall be~~
12 ~~filed within thirty days from the date of the~~
13 ~~final written decision. These proceedings shall~~
14 ~~not be a prerequisite for any civil fine or~~
15 ~~injunctive relief ordered by the circuit court;~~

16 ~~(B) Each county by ordinance may provide for the~~
17 ~~addition of any unpaid civil fines, ordered by~~
18 ~~any court of competent jurisdiction, to any~~
19 ~~taxes, fees, or charges, with the exception of~~
20 ~~fees or charges for water for residential use and~~
21 ~~sewer charges, collected by the county. Each~~



1 ~~county by ordinance may also provide for the~~
2 ~~addition of any unpaid administratively imposed~~
3 ~~civil fines, which remain due after all judicial~~
4 ~~review rights under section 91-14 are exhausted,~~
5 ~~to any taxes, fees, or charges, with the~~
6 ~~exception of water for residential use and sewer~~
7 ~~charges, collected by the county. The ordinance~~
8 ~~shall specify the administrative procedures for~~
9 ~~the addition of the unpaid civil fines to the~~
10 ~~eligible taxes, fees, or charges and may require~~
11 ~~hearings or other proceedings. After addition of~~
12 ~~the unpaid civil fines to the taxes, fees, or~~
13 ~~charges, the unpaid civil fines shall not become~~
14 ~~a part of any taxes, fees, or charges. The~~
15 ~~county by ordinance may condition the issuance or~~
16 ~~renewal of a license, approval, or permit for~~
17 ~~which a fee or charge is assessed, except for~~
18 ~~water for residential use and sewer charges, on~~
19 ~~payment of the unpaid civil fines. Upon~~
20 ~~recordation of a notice of unpaid civil fines in~~
21 ~~the bureau of conveyances, the amount of the~~



~~civil fines, including any increase in the amount of the fine which the county may assess, shall constitute a lien upon all real property or rights to real property belonging to any person liable for the unpaid civil fines. The lien in favor of the county shall be subordinate to any lien in favor of any person recorded or registered prior to the recordation of the notice of unpaid civil fines and senior to any lien recorded or registered after the recordation of the notice. The lien shall continue until the unpaid civil fines are paid in full or until a certificate of release or partial release of the lien, prepared by the county at the owner's expense, is recorded. The notice of unpaid civil fines shall state the amount of the fine as of the date of the notice and maximum permissible daily increase of the fine. The county shall not be required to include a social security number, state general excise taxpayer identification number, or federal employer identification number~~



1 ~~on the notice. Recordation of the notice in the~~
2 ~~bureau of conveyances shall be deemed, at such~~
3 ~~time, for all purposes and without any further~~
4 ~~action, to procure a lien on land registered in~~
5 ~~land court under chapter 501. After the unpaid~~
6 ~~civil fines are added to the taxes, fees, or~~
7 ~~charges as specified by county ordinance, the~~
8 ~~unpaid civil fines shall be deemed immediately~~
9 ~~due, owing, and delinquent and may be collected~~
10 ~~in any lawful manner. The procedure for~~
11 ~~collection of unpaid civil fines authorized in~~
12 ~~this paragraph shall be in addition to any other~~
13 ~~procedures for collection available to the State~~
14 ~~and county by law or rules of the courts;~~

15 ~~(C) Each county may impose civil fines upon any~~
16 ~~person who places graffiti on any real or~~
17 ~~personal property owned, managed, or maintained~~
18 ~~by the county. The fine may be up to \$1,000 or~~
19 ~~may be equal to the actual cost of having the~~
20 ~~damaged property repaired or replaced. The~~
21 ~~parent or guardian having custody of a minor who~~



1 ~~places graffiti on any real or personal property~~
2 ~~owned, managed, or maintained by the county shall~~
3 ~~be jointly and severally liable with the minor~~
4 ~~for any civil fines imposed hereunder. Any such~~
5 ~~fine may be administratively imposed after an~~
6 ~~opportunity for a hearing under chapter 91, but~~
7 ~~such a proceeding shall not be a prerequisite for~~
8 ~~any civil fine ordered by any court. As used in~~
9 ~~this subparagraph, "graffiti" means any~~
10 ~~unauthorized drawing, inscription, figure, or~~
11 ~~mark of any type intentionally created by paint,~~
12 ~~ink, chalk, dye, or similar substances;~~

13 ~~(D) At the completion of an appeal in which the~~
14 ~~county's enforcement action is affirmed and upon~~
15 ~~correction of the violation if requested by the~~
16 ~~violation, the case shall be reviewed by the~~
17 ~~county agency that imposed the civil fines to~~
18 ~~determine the appropriateness of the amount of~~
19 ~~the civil fines that accrued while the appeal~~
20 ~~proceedings were pending. In its review of the~~



1 ~~amount of the accrued fines, the county agency~~
2 ~~may consider:~~

3 ~~(i) The nature and egregiousness of the~~
4 ~~violation;~~

5 ~~(ii) The duration of the violation;~~

6 ~~(iii) The number of recurring and other similar~~
7 ~~violations;~~

8 ~~(iv) Any effort taken by the violator to correct~~
9 ~~the violation;~~

10 ~~(v) The degree of involvement in causing or~~
11 ~~continuing the violation;~~

12 ~~(vi) Reasons for any delay in the completion of~~
13 ~~the appeal; and~~

14 ~~(vii) Other extenuating circumstances.~~

15 ~~The civil fine that is imposed by administrative~~
16 ~~order after this review is completed and the~~
17 ~~violation is corrected shall be subject to~~
18 ~~judicial review, notwithstanding any provisions~~
19 ~~for administrative review in county charters;~~

20 ~~(E) After completion of a review of the amount of~~
21 ~~accrued civil fine by the county agency that~~



~~imposed the fine, the amount of the civil fine
determined appropriate, including both the
initial civil fine and any accrued daily civil
fine, shall immediately become due and
collectible following reasonable notice to the
violation. If no review of the accrued civil fine
is requested, the amount of the civil fine, not
to exceed the total accrual of civil fine prior
to correcting the violation, shall immediately
become due and collectible following reasonable
notice to the violator, at the completion of all
appeal proceedings; and~~

~~(F) If no county agency exists to conduct appeal
proceedings for a particular civil fine action
taken by the county, then one shall be
established by ordinance before the county shall
impose the civil fine;]~~

(24) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, each
county may impose and collect civil fines, in addition
to criminal penalties, for violations of county
ordinances or rules in accordance with this part.



1 (A) Each county may adopt ordinances and rules
2 providing for the imposition of civil fines for
3 violations of county ordinances and rules;
4 provided that no civil fine may be imposed
5 without written notice of the fine and the
6 reasons for the fine to the violator.

7 (B) No civil fine imposed under this part may be
8 collected until the opportunity for a hearing
9 under chapter 91 has expired or been exhausted.
10 If no county agency exists to conduct appeal
11 proceedings for a particular civil fine action
12 taken by the county, then one shall be
13 established before the county shall impose the
14 civil fine. A request for a hearing to contest
15 the civil fine shall be filed within thirty days
16 from the date of service of the written notice of
17 the civil fine and such notice must include
18 notice of the cited person's rights to appeal the
19 civil fine decision.

20 (C) An appeal shall not stay any provision in an
21 order, including provisions imposing civil fines.



1 However, after the completion of an appeal in
2 which the county's enforcement action is
3 affirmed, the county shall review the total daily
4 finest imposed during the pendency of the appeal
5 for appropriateness and may reduce the daily
6 finest accrued during this period based on:

7 (i) The nature and egregiousness of the
8 violation;

9 (ii) The duration of the violation;

10 (iii) The number of recurring and other similar
11 violations;

12 (iv) Any effort taken by the violator to correct
13 the violation;

14 (v) The degree of involvement in causing or
15 continuing the violation;

16 (vi) Reasons for any delay in the completion of
17 the appeal; and

18 (vii) Other extenuating circumstances, including
19 the violator's ability to pay the fines.

20 (D) If a person liable for daily fines imposed by a
21 county corrects the violation for which the fines



1 are imposed, the county shall review the total
2 daily fines appropriateness and adjust the total
3 daily fines for the violation based on:

4 (i) The nature and egregiousness of the
5 violation;

6 (ii) The duration of the violation;

7 (iii) The number of recurring and other similar
8 violations;

9 (iv) Any effort taken by the violator to correct
10 the violation;

11 (v) The degree of involvement in causing or
12 continuing the violation;

13 (vi) Reasons for any delay in the completion of
14 the appeal;

15 (vii) Other extenuating circumstances, including
16 the violator's ability to pay the total fine
17 imposed.

18 (E) Each county may, by ordinance, provide for the
19 addition of any unpaid civil fines to any taxes,
20 fees, or charges, with the exception of fees or
21 charges for water for residential use and sewer



1 charges, collected by the county. The ordinance
2 shall specify the administrative procedures for
3 the addition of the unpaid civil fines to the
4 eligible taxes, fees, or charges and may require
5 hearings or other proceedings. After the unpaid
6 civil fines are added to the taxes, fees, or
7 charges as specified by county ordinance, the
8 unpaid civil fines shall be deemed immediately
9 due, owing, and delinquent and may be collected
10 in the same manner as the taxes, fees, or charges
11 to which they are attached; provided that the
12 fines will not be considered part of the taxes,
13 fees, or charges to which they are attached and
14 will not be given priority over senior mortgages,
15 liens, or judgments that can be collected through
16 the applicable collections process.

17 (F) Each country, by ordinance, may condition the
18 issuance or renewal of a license, approval, or
19 permit for which a fee or charge is assessed,
20 except for water for residential use and sewer
21 charges, on payment of the unpaid civil fines.



1 (G) Upon recordation of a notice of unpaid civil
2 finances in the bureau of conveyance or land court,
3 the amount of the civil fines, including any
4 increase in the amount of the fine which the
5 county may assess, shall constitute a lien upon
6 all real property or rights to real property
7 belonging to any person liable for the unpaid
8 civil fines. The notice of unpaid civil fines
9 shall state the amount of the unpaid fine as of
10 the date of the notice and maximum permissible
11 daily increase of the fine. Fines properly
12 noticed by stating the maximum permissible
13 increase of the fine shall be attached under the
14 county lien and shall be deemed effective as of
15 the date on which the lien was recorded. The
16 lien in favor of the county shall be subordinate
17 to any lien in favor of any person recorded or
18 registered prior to the recordation of the notice
19 of unpaid civil fines and senior to any lien
20 recorded or registered after the recordation of
21 the notice. The lien shall continue until the



1 unpaid civil fines are paid in full or until a
2 certificate of release or partial release of the
3 lien, prepared by the county at the owner's
4 expense, is recorded. The county shall not be
5 required to include a social security number,
6 state general excise taxpayer identification
7 number, or federal employer identification number
8 on the notice.

9 (H) After a county records a notice of unpaid civil
10 fines in the bureau of conveyances or land court,
11 the county may collect any unpaid fines secured
12 by the county lien by foreclosing on the lien in
13 a manner similar to that provided under chapter
14 667; provided that this power shall become
15 effective upon the county's adoption of
16 ordinances or rules necessary to carry this power
17 into effect; provided further that the counties
18 shall adhere to section 667-3 in providing for
19 the application of proceeds upon foreclosure of
20 the county lien.



1 (I) Each county may impose civil fines upon any
2 person who places graffiti on any real or
3 personal property owned, managed, or maintained
4 by the county. The fine may be up to \$1,000 or
5 may be equal to the actual cost of having the
6 damaged property repaired or replaced. The
7 parent or guardian having custody of a minor who
8 places graffiti on any real or personal property
9 owned, managed, or maintained by the county shall
10 be jointly and severally liable with the minor
11 for any civil fines imposed hereunder. Any such
12 fine may be administratively imposed after an
13 opportunity for a hearing under chapter 91, but
14 such a proceeding shall not be a prerequisite for
15 any civil fine ordered by any court. As used in
16 this subparagraph, "graffiti" means any
17 unauthorized drawing, inscription, figure, or
18 mark of any type intentionally created by paint,
19 ink, chalk, dye, or similar substances;

20 (25) Any law to the contrary notwithstanding, any county
21 mayor, by executive order, may exempt donors, provider



1 agencies, homeless facilities, and any other program
2 for the homeless under part XVII of chapter 346 from
3 real property taxes, water and sewer development fees,
4 rates collected for water supplied to consumers and
5 for use of sewers, and any other county taxes,
6 charges, or fees; provided that any county may enact
7 ordinances to regulate and grant the exemptions
8 granted by this paragraph;

9 (26) Any county may establish a captive insurance company
10 pursuant to article 19, chapter 431; and

11 (27) Each county shall have the power to enact and enforce
12 ordinances regulating towing operations."

13 SECTION 2. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
14 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

15 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.
16

INTRODUCED BY: 

JAN 23 2026



H.B. NO. 1861

Report Title:

County Powers; Civil Fines; Lien; Non-judicial Foreclosure

Description:

Authorizes counties to sell property through non-judicial foreclosure as a way to collect unpaid civil fines, subject to certain conditions.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

