

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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KE KIA'ĀINA



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Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
CURT T. OTAGURO
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

Thursday, March 19, 2026

3:01 PM

State Capitol, 224

HB1739, HD2
RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

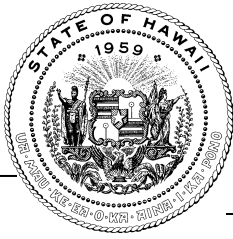
Senate Committees on Water Land Culture & the Arts,
Energy & Intergovernmental Affairs and Housing

The Department of Transportation (DOT) supports House Bill 1739, House Draft 2, HD2, which proposes to amend Hawaii Revised Statutes to require that transit-supportive densities be permitted within county-designated transit-oriented development (TOD) areas and transit-oriented development infrastructure improvement program areas. The bill further prohibits counties from enacting ordinances or zoning provisions that would restrict such densities and preempts any inconsistent local land use regulations.

By establishing a statewide baseline that permits transit-supportive densities in county-designated TOD zones, HB 1739 HD2 ensures that local land use controls do not undermine State-level transportation planning and infrastructure investments. This alignment between land use policy and transportation investment is consistent with best practices recognized at both the federal and state levels, including guidance from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regarding the integration of land use and transit planning as a component of capital investment grant programs.

Furthermore, this bill supports Hawaii's energy security and sustainability commitments. Encouraging higher-density, transit-accessible development reduces vehicle miles traveled, decreases greenhouse gas emissions, and promotes more equitable access to transportation for residents across all income levels. These outcomes are directly aligned with the Department's ongoing Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan and its long-term goal of achieving zero emissions in the transportation sector by 2045.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

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Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, HOUSING,
AND WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Thursday, March 19, 2026

3:01 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224

in consideration of
HB 1739, HD 2
RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT.

Chairs Wakai, Chang, and Lee, Vice Chairs Chang, Hashimoto, and Inouye, and Members of the Committees.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) supports the intent and provides **comments with concerns** on HB 1739, HD 2, which would amend Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 46 to allow the development of transit-supportive densities in county-designated transit-oriented development areas and prohibit the adoption or enforcement of any land use control that would restrict the adoption of transit-supportive densities as defined in HRS Section 206E-246.

OPSD strongly supports higher density around rail and transit stations and transit hubs to support transit ridership and promote mixed-use development and additional housing in proximity to transit hubs. However, we have **concerns** about the bill as written—primarily that the counties have not had the opportunity to adopt ordinances that would conform to the standards now being imposed. OPSD recognizes that to conform to transit-supportive densities in county-designated transit-oriented development areas, counties may require time for adoption of these new standards. Therefore, OPSD recommends an effective date for this measure to be January 1, 2030. OPSD also recommends moving the statutory language for definitions and standards that are in HRS Sections 206E-246 and 226-63 to HRS Chapter 46 to provide for a uniform reference and framework for TOD in that chapter.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING
KA 'OIHANA HO'OLĀLĀ A ME NĀ PALAPALA 'AE
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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RICK BLANGIARDI
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DAWN TAKEUCHI APUNA
DIRECTOR
PO'O

BRYAN GALLAGHER, P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

REGINA MALEPEAI
2ND DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O KUALUA

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS, HOUSING, AND WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

March 19, 2026
Conference Room 224

TO: The Honorable Glenn Wakai Chair, The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair, The Honorable Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice
Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing

The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair, The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

RE: COMMENTS ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1739, HD 2, RELATING TO TRANSIT-
ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) **offers comments with serious concerns** on House Bill No. 1739, HD 2, which requires transit-supportive densities be allowed, and prohibits land use controls that are inconsistent with the definition in any county-designated TOD area.

Act 159 (Session Laws 2025) incentivized counties to designate "transit-supportive densities." Conversely, House Bill No. 1739, HD 2, appears to mandate "transit-supportive densities" by prohibiting any "county ordinance, rule, regulation, development standard, zoning provision, or other land use control" that would restrict the development of such "transit-supportive densities."

The City and County of Honolulu's TOD regulatory framework was developed with exhaustive community outreach, consultant input and staff analyses followed by City Council public deliberations. DPP continues to update the regulations based on our permitting experience, as well as the adopted City and County of Honolulu TOD plan recommendations, which consider the different land use contexts, from suburban to urban, along the rail transit corridor.

The Honorable Glenn Wakai Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair
The Honorable Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Housing
The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
Hawai'i State Senate
House Bill No. 1739, HD 2
March 19, 2026
Page 2

While the City is very much interested in streamlining and deregulating within the housing and affordable housing sectors, especially in TOD areas, the current language of this Bill would require significant restructuring of the existing regulatory framework, likely causing critical delays and confusion implementing our TOD plans, which translates into increased time-induced costs that burden project affordability.

Conversely, Act 159 currently provides critical flexibility to ensure that updates to achieve “transit-supportive densities” do not inadvertently undermine the overall TOD framework and, consequently, the success of TOD.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to our continued work together.

Very truly yours,



Dawn Takeuchi Apuna
Director

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
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Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
Arryl Kaneshiro



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawaii 96766

March 17, 2026

**TESTIMONY OF KIPUKAI KUALII
COUNCIL VICE CHAIR, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL**

ON

HB 1739, HD 2, RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Senate Committee on Housing

Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Thursday, March 19, 2026

3:01 p.m.

Conference Room 224

Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Wakai, Chair Chang, Chair Lee, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1739, HD 2, Relating to Transit-Oriented Development. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I fully support HB 1739, HD 2, which amends Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 46 to allow counties to adopt transit-supportive densities for county-designated transit-oriented development (TOD) zones and prohibit the adoption of any land use control that would restrict the adoption of transit-oriented densities. This measure promotes more efficient land use and supports the creation of complete, connected, and accessible communities around the islands that benefit working residents. By allowing higher densities in TOD zones, Hawai'i will be aligning with best practices in other states where housing supply has proliferated near public transit, thereby expanding affordability and reducing reliance on personal vehicles.

Mahalo for your commitment and thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1739, HD 2. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

KIPUKAI KUALII
Council Vice Chair, Kaua'i County Council

RM:ss



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**The Thirty-Third State Legislature
Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs
Senate Committee on Housing
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
Thursday, March 19, 2026
Conference Room 224
3:01 p.m.**

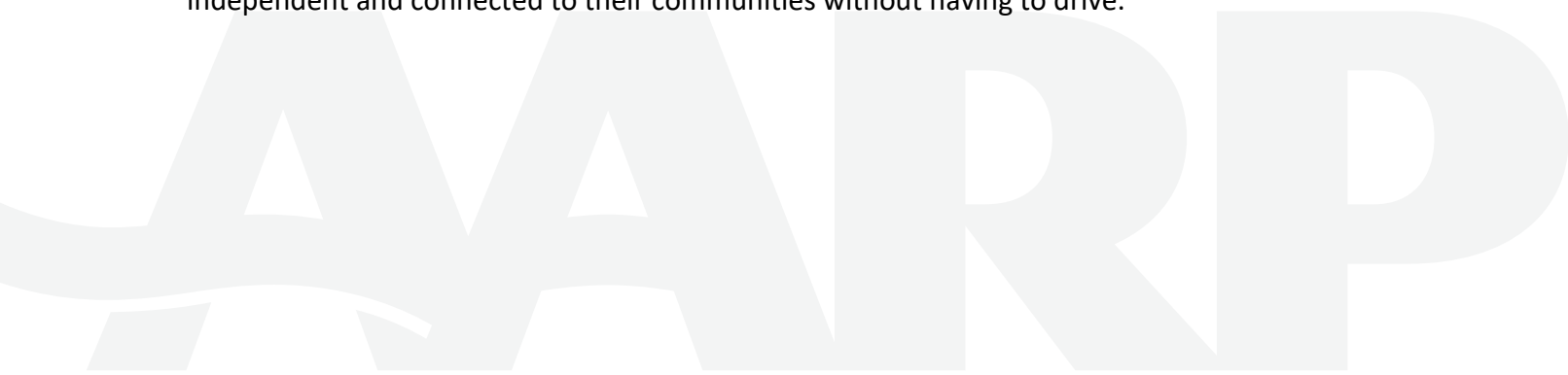
TO: The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair
The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Support for H.B. 1739, HD2 Relating to Transit-Oriented Development

Aloha Chairs Wakai, Chang and Lee, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Keali'i López, and I serve as State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan social impact organization dedicated to empowering people age 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. We advocate for policies that promote health security, financial stability, and personal fulfillment. On behalf of AARP's more than 135,000 members in Hawai'i, we strongly support H.B. 1739, H.D.2.

H.B. 1739, HD2 takes a crucial step toward addressing Hawai'i's housing and transportation challenges by allowing transit-supportive densities within county-designated TOD areas and TOD infrastructure improvement program areas. By appropriately limiting conflicting county land-use controls in these areas, the bill reinforces the state's TOD framework and helps ensure that investments in transit are supported by land-use policies that promote housing opportunity near high-capacity transit.

AARP supports transit-oriented development because it expands housing choice near transit and essential services, reduces transportation costs and dependence on automobiles, and increases walkability, safety, and accessibility. For older adults in particular, TOD supports aging in place by providing location-efficient housing options that allow residents to remain independent and connected to their communities without having to drive.



We also appreciate that H.B. 1739, HD2 preserves essential accessibility protections. While the bill removes minimum parking mandates in TOD areas, it explicitly maintains accessible parking requirements, ensuring that people with mobility challenges, including many older adults continue to have their access needs met as land-use policies are modernized.

We encourage the State to provide technical assistance to counties that may need support implementing the TOD framework effectively. In addition, we reiterate the importance of complementary guardrails to ensure TOD delivers meaningful benefits for older adults and local communities. While H.B. 1739, HD2 is principally a land-use preemption measure, TOD success depends on parallel policies that promote housing affordability, universal design and accessibility features beyond parking, anti-displacement protections for long-term residents, and safe, age-friendly design. These elements are especially critical for older adults and residents on fixed incomes.

In conclusion, H.B. 1739, H.D.2 represents a meaningful opportunity to better align housing, transportation, and land-use policy in a way that supports independence, accessibility, and community stability for Hawai'i's aging population. For these reasons, AARP strongly supports H.B. 1739, H.D.2, and respectfully urges the Senate Committees to pass the measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Gemma G. Weinstein, President

Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President

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March 17, 2026

Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair

Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Housing

Senator Stanley Chang, Chair

Senator Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

**Testimony in opposition to HB1739_HD2 Relating to Transit-Oriented Development
Hearing on March 19, 2026, 3:01pm**

Chair Wakai, Chair Chang, Chair Lee and Members of the Committees,

UNITE HERE Local 5 represents working people throughout Hawaii's hotel, food service, and health care industries.

We **oppose** HB1739_HD2. It fundamentally conflicts with long-established public policy principles and creates uncertainty within well-established regulatory frameworks.

- Counties are granted the authority to regulate zoning and building. HB1739_HD2 undermines that long-established authority.
- County councils and residents fully understand the housing crisis facing our islands, and the important role transit-oriented development (TOD) plays. HB1739_HD2 would effectively strip residents of their long-standing right to shape development at the county level through elected council members.
- State and county policymakers use incentives and disincentives to guide responsible development. This bill eliminates the county's ability to impose any meaningful guardrails in TOD areas, rendering elected representatives powerless to represent their constituents against development interests.
- There are better options to streamline desirable developments in Honolulu instead of what HB1739_HD2 offers. Many of those ideas are being considered now at the county and state levels.

It is inconsistent to grant counties the implicit power to designate TOD areas and approve TOD projects under state policy, only for the state to take away the county's power to regulate those TOD areas as proposed in HB1739_HD2.

- HB1739_HD2 relies on HRS206E(i) definition of "Transit-supportive density", which is too simple and broad to use as policy guidance. The extent of relevant state statutory guidance under HRS206E(i) appears to be a few sentences about floor area ratios.

- Amendments to HRS-206E was removed in HB1739_HD2. HRS206E appears to be the operative statute that defines "Transit-supportive density" but 206E relates to the pockets of authority under the HCDA, not counties.
- What is stopping the county from redesignating those TOD areas in response to HB1739_HD2?
- Eliminating county oversight of developments in TOD areas appears to leave a big vacuum of oversight. Who will make decisions on project permitting, and under what development guidelines, if not the county that historically fulfills that role in every other area of the island?

HB1739_HD2 complicates the long-established rules, practices, and powers of elected councilmembers to determine development in their jurisdictions; leaving a serious gap in development policy in important TOD areas. We urge you to reconsider the intent and impacts of HB1739_HD2 and defer the bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB1739 HD2 – Relating to Transit Oriented Development
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture & the Arts, Energy & Intergovernmental Affairs, and
Housing
Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 3:01PM Conf. Rm. 415 and via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Wakai, Chair Chang, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and members of the committee;

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB 1739 HD2**, prohibiting counties from enacting an ordinance, rule, regulation, development standard, zoning provision, or other land use control that would restrict the development of transit-supportive density in county-designated transit-oriented development (TOD) areas.

HB 1739 would ensure that state-designate TOD zones actually deliver the walkable, mixed-use, and mixed-income neighborhoods envisioned in state and county plans, rather than being undermined by project-by-project discretionary upzoning requests or other discretionary barriers. By prohibiting counties from adopting ordinances, development standards, or other land use controls that conflict with or effectively negate TOD zoning in these areas, the bill aligns local regulation with the substantial public investment already made in rail and bus rapid transit infrastructure. When state agencies and counties upzone for TOD and commit public funds to infrastructure, but later layer on restrictive standard or ad hoc conditions that reduce feasible density or delay approvals, the result is fewer homes, higher per-unit costs, and missed opportunities to house local workers near jobs and transit.

This aligns with the goals of Honolulu's Department of Housing and Land Management's (DHLM) most recent strategic plan which identified barriers like zoning and land use regulation as a regulatory barrier to building densely along the rail corridor.¹ It would also support the goals for Ka'ahumanu Ave, the identified TOD corridor in Maui County,² and would support similar goals in TOD identified areas in Lihue, Kauai and the Keohokalole Highway in Hawaii County. This bill affirms that counties cannot undermine adopted TOD zoning through conflicting ordinances or standards, while still allowing them to apply generally applicable health, safety, and infrastructure provisions so long as those provisions do not nullify TOD entitlements. This is essential to delivering more housing near transit for residents, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and making efficient use of the billions of dollars in public investments for infrastructure around TOD corridors.³

¹ <https://www4.honolulu.gov/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-347776/2025-2028%20Strategic%20Housing%20Plan.pdf>

² <https://mauimpo.org/kaahumanu-action-plan>

³ https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/lud/02PROJ/OPSDTODInfra_2022/3.Deliverable3_20230908_HawaiiTODInfraFin-FullFinal.pdf



HAWAII APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB1739 HD2 – Relating to Transit Oriented Development
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture & the Arts, Energy & Intergovernmental Affairs, and
Housing
Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 3:01PM Conf. Rm. 415 and via Videoconference

We respectfully urge you to pass HB1739 HD2.



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

March 19, 2026

Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs
Senate Committee on Housing
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SUPPORT for HB 1739 HD2 - RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Aloha Chairs Wakai, Chang & Lee, Vice Chairs Hashimoto & Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of HB 1739 HD2**, which supports smart, transit-oriented growth by reinforcing the connection between housing, community services, and high quality public transportation. When homes are located near frequent and reliable transit, residents have better access to jobs, grocery stores, schools, health care, and recreation without relying on long and costly car trips.

This bill helps ensure that areas planned around major transit investments can **fully function as complete, connected communities**. Allowing appropriate housing density near transit supports ridership, makes public investments more efficient, and gives residents more choices in how they live and move. It also helps local workers live closer to where they work and meet their daily needs, reducing traffic congestion and transportation costs.

As Hawai'i works to address its housing shortage and improve mobility, aligning housing opportunities and community services with our transit system is essential. HB 1739 HD2



Hawai'i YIMBY
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advances this goal by promoting development patterns that strengthen neighborhoods, support sustainability, and make the most of our public transit investments.

Hawai'i YIMBY (*Yes In My Backyard*) is a volunteer-led grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting bold and effective solutions for Hawai'i's devastating housing crisis. Our members are deeply concerned about Hawai'i's chronic and worsening housing shortage, which has caused home prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushes thousands of kama'āina out to the mainland or into homelessness every single year.

We ask your support for this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Damien Waikoloa

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Huey Kwik

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY



March 19, 2026, 3:01 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

To: Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Sen. Chris Lee, Chair
Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Relations

Sen. Glenn Wakai, Chair
Sen. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Housing

Sen. Stanley Chang, Chair
Sen. Troy Hashimoto, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1739 HD2 — RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and other Committee Members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [HB1739 HD2](#), which would require that transit-supportive densities be allowed in all county-designated transit-oriented development areas and prohibit counties from restricting the development of transit-supportive densities.

Practically, this legislation would allow larger buildings to be built near Honolulu's Skyline rail stops as well as other county TOD zones — and it would thus be a step toward expanding housing opportunities in those areas.

[Act 159 \(2025\)](#) defined "transit-supportive densities" as properties with floor area ratios of at least 4, 6 or 7 — depending on how close the structure would be to the rail line. Additionally, under that law, the permits for these projects must be approved without a public vote by a planning commission or a county council.

That law tied certain state funding to the legalization of denser buildings near the Skyline rail or in any county-designated TOD zone. This bill, on the other hand, would explicitly require that all such construction be allowed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii



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TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF H.B. 1739

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Avalon Development Company submits this testimony in **strong support of H.B. 1739, HD 1.**

H.B. 1739 is a necessary and appropriate measure to ensure that county-designated transit-oriented development (TOD) areas deliver the outcomes they were created to achieve. The State and counties have made significant public investments in rail, bus, and related transit infrastructure with the express intent of supporting compact, walkable, and housing-rich communities. However, those investments are too often undermined when TOD zones are later constrained by zoning provisions, development standards, or discretionary processes that restrict density and delay housing delivery.

As numerous stakeholders have noted, transit-oriented development only functions when transit-supportive density is actually allowed. A TOD designation without corresponding zoning capacity produces fewer homes, higher per-unit costs, reduced transit ridership, and a diminished return on public infrastructure spending. H.B. 1739 provides essential clarity by ensuring that once a county designates a TOD area, transit-supportive densities may not be nullified by conflicting land use controls.

From a development and housing production perspective, regulatory uncertainty and discretionary downzoning are among the most significant contributors to project delay and escalating costs. These delays directly impact housing affordability and feasibility. By aligning zoning with adopted TOD policies, H.B. 1739 creates predictability and consistency—allowing housing projects near transit, employment centers, and essential services to move forward more efficiently.

Importantly, this bill does not eliminate counties' ability to plan or apply generally applicable health, safety, and infrastructure standards. Rather, it ensures that TOD designations are implemented in good faith and are not effectively undone through subsequent regulation. This alignment between planning, zoning, and public investment is critical to addressing Hawai'i's housing shortage and maximizing the value of our transit systems.

For these reasons, Avalon Development Company urges the Committee to PASS H.B. 1739, HD 1.

Respectfully submitted

Avalon Development Company



Queen's Court
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Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee.
testifying on behalf of Avalon Development Company in strong support of H.B. 1739, H.D. 1.

This bill ensures that transit-oriented development areas actually deliver the housing and ridership outcomes they were created to support. Public investments in transit only work when zoning allows transit-supportive density. Regulatory uncertainty and discretionary downzoning delay projects and drive up costs.

H.B. 1739 provides needed clarity and predictability while preserving county health and safety authority. We respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure. Mahalo.

HB-1739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 11:23:39 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/19/2026 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB1739, a critical bill that ensures our counties actually deliver on the promise of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). This legislation prohibits counties from enacting any ordinance, rule, or zoning provision that restricts the development of transit-supportive densities in designated TOD areas. In plain language: if we are going to invest billions in public transit, we must allow people to live near it.

The Promise and the Problem

Transit-Oriented Development is built on a simple, powerful idea: concentrate housing, jobs, and services around transit stations so that people can walk, bike, and ride instead of driving. Done right, TOD reduces traffic, cuts emissions, lowers household transportation costs, and creates vibrant, walkable communities.

But TOD only works if we actually build **density**. A transit station surrounded by single-family homes, parking lots, and low-rise commercial strips does not reduce car dependence; it simply adds a train stop to a car-dependent landscape. The housing crisis is not solved, the climate benefits are not realized, and the public investment in transit is squandered.

What HB1739 Does

HB1739 ensures that counties cannot quietly undermine TOD by maintaining low-density zoning along transit corridors. It requires that transit-supportive densities—meaning enough housing units and people to actually support transit ridership—be allowed as of right in any county-designated TOD area. It prevents the use of zoning restrictions to effectively veto the very development TOD is meant to encourage.

This is not about mandating what gets built; it is about removing artificial barriers that prevent it from being built. Counties can still plan, design, and guide development. What they cannot do is designate a TOD area on paper while maintaining zoning that makes genuine transit-oriented development impossible.

Why Density Matters

Low land-use density around transit stations does two things: it makes housing more expensive, and it defeats the purpose of TOD. When we restrict supply near high-opportunity transit corridors, we push housing into car-dependent fringe areas, increasing both costs and emissions. When we allow density, we create more homes where people want to live, support local businesses, and build the ridership that makes transit systems viable and sustainable.

A Matter of Consistency and Good Faith

Counties have spent years planning TOD districts, often with extensive community engagement and significant state investment. HB1739 simply asks that those plans be backed up by zoning that makes them real. It holds counties accountable to their own stated goals and ensures that the promise of TOD is not hollowed out by restrictive land use controls.

HB1739 is a smart, necessary, and long-overdue step toward aligning our land use policies with our transit investments, our climate goals, and our housing needs. I urge you to pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/18/2026 11:18:50 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/19/2026 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelene Tenno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB1739 HD2 with comments

I have concerns relating to potential conflicts with the C&C Honolulu's existing framework for Transit Oriented areas.

Conflicts often result in delays and increased costs.

We want the affordable housing especially near the rail, we want those residential units to be truly long term owner occupant affordable. And of utmost importance, critical to our growing aging population and with that making the house aging in place friendly.

Thank you for allowing the submission of this testimony

Raelene Tenno