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Stadium Authority Chair

Michael R. Yadao
Stadium Authority Executive Director



Statement of
MICHAEL R. YADAO
Stadium Authority
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
01:11 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
S.B. 2353
RELATING TO OUTDOOR SIGNAGE.

Chair DeCoite and Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Committee.

The Stadium Authority supports Senate Bill 2353, which allows the display of outdoor advertising devices, including digital outdoor signage devices, within the Stadium Development District with the authorization of the Stadium Authority.

S.B. 2353 is a vital step in ensuring the long-term financial viability and vibrancy of the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District (NASED). The ability to authorize and manage digital outdoor signage provides the Stadium Authority with a diversified and sustainable revenue stream. By allowing modern, high-quality digital displays, we can offer local and national partners premium placement. This stimulates the local economy and aligns the NASED with industry standards for professional sports and entertainment venues globally. Modern digital signage is not just for advertising; it serves as a tool for public announcements, wayfinding, and emergency alerts. Controlled, well-regulated signage contributes to a dynamic "live-work-play" environment that attracts residents and tourists alike.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-2353

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:15:29 PM

Testimony for EDT on 2/17/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jillian Anderson	Testifying for Waikiki Neighborhood Board	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Waikiki Neighborhood Board **OPPOSES** SB2353, and on behalf of our community, urges its deferral by the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.

In 1927, Hawaii was the first state in the nation to ban billboards in an effort to preserve our landscape's natural beauty. While times have changed, the erection of billboards of both of digital and non-digital varieties would only ramp up our district's commercialization. We thank you for your consideration to defer this measure and keep Waikiki's billboard laws in line with the rest of the state.

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Andrew Kawano
*Honolulu Dept. of Budget
and Fiscal Services*

Robert Finley
Waikiki Neighborhood Board

Testimony in Support of SB 2353

Chair Decoite and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Trevor Abarzua**, and I serve as President of the **Waikiki Business Improvement District**. On behalf of the **Waikiki community**, I respectfully offer our **strong support** for Senate Bill 2353.

Waikiki is one of Hawai'i's most iconic and heavily visited destinations, welcoming millions of residents and visitors each year. SB 2353 creates an opportunity to thoughtfully modernize how we communicate in high-traffic public spaces by allowing the installation of **digital signage within the Waikiki Special District**.

Importantly, this bill would enable the deployment of **multi-purpose digital kiosks** that serve far more than an advertising function. These kiosks can be equipped with:

- **Public safety features**, including security cameras that the Honolulu Police Department can link to for situational awareness and incident response;
- **Emergency preparedness and real-time public information** during natural disasters, missing persons alerts, or other crises; and
- **Community and visitor messaging**, providing wayfinding, cultural and community event information, and updates on what is happening in Waikiki.

This represents a meaningful step forward in **modernizing how we communicate with people in the public right-of-way**. Waikiki is a world-class destination, and our public communication infrastructure should reflect that. Cities and high-pedestrian downtown districts such as **Berkeley, San Francisco, Miami, and other major urban centers** have already embraced smart, integrated digital kiosks to improve safety, wayfinding, visitor experience, and community engagement. SB 2353 allows Waikiki to move into that same modern era while still respecting local design standards and community values through county-level implementation.

In closing, SB 2353 supports public safety, enhances emergency preparedness, improves communication with residents and visitors, and helps Waikiki remain competitive with other premier, high-traffic pedestrian destinations around the country. I respectfully urge your favorable consideration of this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your continued leadership on behalf of our communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Trevor Abarzua

President, Waikiki Business Improvement District

Mahalo,



Trevor Abarzua



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Keeping Hawai'i clean,
green and beautiful
since 1912

February 15, 2026

STRONG OPPOSITION TO SB2353 -- RELATING TO OUTDOOR SIGNAGE

Dear Chair and Members of the Committees,

The Outdoor Circle submits this testimony in strong and unequivocal opposition to SB2353.

For nearly a century, Hawai'i has maintained some of the strongest billboard and outdoor advertising restrictions in the nation. Those protections were not accidental. They were enacted deliberately — and reaffirmed over decades — because prior Legislatures recognized that our scenic roadways, shoreline districts, and public view planes are not commercial platforms.

SB2353 represents a significant departure from that long-established legal framework.

This bill would require that digital outdoor advertising devices — engineered specifically to capture and redirect attention — be allowed in Waikiki, and it would expand authorization for those same devices within the Stadium Development District.

Digital billboards are designed to distract. Their economic value depends on diverting motorists' and pedestrians' attention away from the roadway and toward commercial messaging. The more successful they are at capturing attention, the greater the safety risk they pose.

Waikiki is one of the most pedestrian-dense and traffic-complex districts in the State. The Stadium Development District is a major public civic area integrated into surrounding roadways and neighborhoods. Introducing flashing, electronically changing digital advertising into both contexts raises serious and well-documented safety concerns.

But this bill does more than create safety risks.

It overrides Honolulu's existing land use regulations. It mandates permissibility where local law has exercised restraint. And, when viewed alongside recent measures such as SB2004, it continues a trajectory toward increasing commercialization of public civic districts.

The Legislature is not being asked to modernize a minor regulation. It is being asked to weaken decades of carefully constructed law protecting Hawai'i's visual landscape.

For the reasons set forth below — including safety, visual integrity, light impacts, home rule, and precedent — we urge you to HOLD this bill.

1. The Safety Risks Are Clear and Documented

This is not speculation. An exhaustive compendium of more than 40 studies conducted worldwide — commissioned by the California Department of Transportation Legal Department — confirms what common sense already tells us: digital billboards increase driver distraction and elevate safety risk.

We respectfully direct the Committee to the following:

<https://www.scenic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Billboard-Safety-Study-Compendium-10-16-2020.pdf>

<https://www.scenic.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/billboard-safety-study-compendium-updated-february-2018.pdf>

As these reports conclude summarizing decades of research:

“The more that commercial digital signs succeed in attracting the attention of motorists... the more they represent a threat to safety along our busiest streets and highways.”

Waikīkī is one of the busiest and most complex roadway environments in Hawai‘i. Introducing devices designed to pull attention away from driving and pedestrian awareness creates measurable risk in a city with an already-high pedestrian fatality rate.

Safety concerns alone warrant sufficient reason to not advance this bill.

2. This Bill Overrides Honolulu’s Existing Sign Regulations — Deliberately

Honolulu’s Land Use Ordinance (Article 7 – Sign Regulations) is not casual or incidental. It is the product of decades of planning decisions balancing commercial activity, district character, pedestrian safety, scenic preservation, and illumination control.

Those regulations address:

- Maximum sign area
- Height limits
- Illumination type and intensity
- District-specific standards
- Sign placement relative to roadways
- Pedestrian and motorist visibility

Waikīkī, in particular, has long been treated as a district requiring tailored regulation. Its shoreline setting, density, pedestrian activity, and international visibility justify that care.

S.B. 2353 does not simply add flexibility. It uses mandatory language — “shall be allowed” — which forces the City and County of Honolulu to revise its land use ordinance to permit digital outdoor advertising that it has chosen not to authorize. The bill’s use of “notwithstanding any law to the contrary” language makes clear that existing statutory prohibitions and local standards are intended to yield.

This is a clear instance of state preemption of local land use authority.

Land use regulation is one of the core functions of county authority. When the Legislature mandates permissibility in a specific district, it removes the very discretion that local zoning is designed to exercise.

This is especially consequential in Waikīkī, where district character has been carefully shaped over time.

This is not simply signage reform. It is a state override of local land use authority in one of the most sensitive districts in Hawai‘i.

3. “Shall Be Allowed” Changes the Policy Architecture

This bill does not require someone to construct a digital billboard.

But it does something equally significant: it creates a statutory entitlement to allow them.

For nearly a century, Hawai‘i’s billboard framework has operated on a prohibition model with narrow, defined exceptions. That structure reflects an underlying principle — that off-premise commercial advertising is generally incompatible with the State’s scenic and public safety priorities.

S.B. 2353 shifts that structure in a targeted district.

Once the Legislature mandates that a category of advertising “shall be allowed,” the policy architecture changes:

- The presumption shifts from restraint to permissibility.
- The burden shifts from the advertiser to the regulator.
- The exception becomes embedded in statute rather than evaluated locally.

These structural shifts matter because they create precedent. Once the Legislature converts prohibition into entitlement in one district, it becomes easier to argue for similar statutory mandates elsewhere.

This is how incremental erosion occurs — not in a single sweeping repeal, but through district-by-district carve-outs.

4. Distraction Is the Business Model

The bill defines digital outdoor signage to include displays that:

- Change electronically
- Flash, flicker, or revolve
- Alter light intensity
- Use programmable LED panels

These features are not incidental. They are the selling point.

Those characteristics are not neutral technological upgrades. They are designed to increase noticeability, engagement, and retention of advertising content. In a commercial context, that is precisely the point.

But in a roadway and pedestrian context, that same feature becomes a known safety hazard.

Attention is a finite cognitive resource. In environments like Waikīkī — where drivers must navigate:

- Tour buses
- Pedestrian crossings
- Unfamiliar visitors
- Bicycles and scooters
- Narrow turning lanes
- Constant curbside activity

— any additional competing stimulus increases cognitive load.

The economic model of digital billboards depends on successfully diverting attention. That is what advertisers pay for.

In a district defined by ocean views, skyline, pedestrians, and constant movement, adding dynamic commercial displays increases competition and cognitive load.

It is difficult to reconcile that model with a district that already struggles with congestion, pedestrian conflict, and situational awareness challenges.

Distraction is not an unintended consequence. It is the product being sold.

5. Light Impacts and Visual Degradation

Digital billboards do not exist in isolation.

Even if a single installation appears modest, cumulative impact is real. Multiple lighting installations in a compact district create:

- Escalating brightness competition
- Increased nighttime skyglow
- Light spill into adjacent properties
- Pressure for larger or more dynamic displays
- Visual fragmentation of the skyline
- Visual glare
- Cumulative visual clutter

Waikīkī is a shoreline district. The relationship between ocean, skyline, and night sky is part of its character.

Digitally changing displays alter that character — not just during the day, but at night, when contrast is greatest and light effects are most pronounced.

There is also extensive literature linking excessive artificial lighting to:

- Disruption of wildlife navigation
- Impacts on migratory birds
- Circadian rhythm disruption in humans
- Degradation of astronomical observation conditions

Urban districts are not exempt from cumulative light impact.

When the State simultaneously discusses light stewardship in other contexts but authorizes flashing digital commercial displays here, it creates a policy inconsistency.

6. Hawai'i's Billboard Ban Has Been a Strategic Choice — and It Works

Hawai'i's billboard prohibition is not an accident of history. It was a deliberate policy choice rooted in the recognition that scenic integrity is a public asset.

That policy has:

- Preserved open view planes
- Reduced roadside clutter
- Enhanced visitor experience
- Differentiated Hawai'i from mainland jurisdictions

The absence of billboard saturation is frequently cited by residents and visitors as distinctive.

Once digital advertising is embedded into Waikīkī's statutory framework, the distinction narrows.

Preserving a globally recognized, uncluttered shoreline district has always been in Hawai'i's interests. Courts have also recognized scenic preservation as substantial governmental interests that justify our signage law restrictions.

Visitors come to experience Hawai'i's natural and built environment — not the level of advertising saturation and signage clutter common in many other places.

7. This Bill Targets Honolulu Alone

The population threshold in this bill applies only to the City and County of Honolulu. This is not a uniform statewide adjustment. It is targeted.

Article VIII of the Hawai'i Constitution recognizes county authority over local matters, including land use and zoning. Honolulu has exercised that authority through its Land Use Ordinance, including tailored regulations for Waikiki.

S.B. 2353 substitutes a state mandate for that local judgment.

Preemption is not inherently unconstitutional. But it is significant — especially when it overrides carefully developed local standards in a highly sensitive district.

The Legislature should exercise caution before displacing local land use discretion in a manner that creates long-term visual and safety implications.

8. The Stadium Development District Expansion Must Be Viewed in Context — Including SB2004

The portion of SB2353 that expands authorization for digital outdoor signage within the Stadium Development District cannot be treated as a minor addition.

It must be viewed in the context of recently-introduced legislation, including SB2004 and related measures — specifically including naming rights to public facilities.

Taken together, these measures reflect a clear policy trajectory: increasing commercialization of public civic assets.

That trajectory matters.

Historically, advertising within Hawai'i's stadiums has been limited and carefully confined — typically interior-facing, event-based, and controlled in scope. The distinction has always been important: activity inside a ticketed venue during an event is fundamentally different from outward-facing, permanent commercial advertising embedded into the surrounding district.

SB2353 moves beyond interior event signage. Nothing in the bill confines these digital signage allowances to interior-facing installations, nor does it limit their visibility beyond the facility itself.

By incorporating digital outdoor signage into the statutory framework governing the Stadium Development District — and by defining it broadly to include electronically changing displays — this bill normalizes the idea that public civic districts are appropriate platforms for ongoing digital advertising infrastructure.

That shift has several important implications:

First, visibility extends beyond the venue.

Stadium districts are not sealed environments. They are integrated into surrounding roadways, neighborhoods, and development corridors. Digital outdoor signage in these districts can be visible to motorists and the general public beyond event attendees.

Second, it reinforces incremental commercialization.

SB2004 and related legislation already expanded commercial activity within stadium properties. Each measure may appear limited when viewed alone. But cumulatively, they alter the character and governing assumptions of public infrastructure.

The pattern becomes clear:

- Authorize naming rights.
- Expand sponsorship flexibility.
- Introduce digital advertising allowances.

Each step makes the next easier.

Third, it changes the balance between civic purpose and revenue generation.

Public stadiums exist first as civic infrastructure — gathering places, athletic facilities, and community assets.

Revenue considerations are legitimate, but they do not override long-standing public policy regarding visual restraint and roadway safety.

Embedding digital outdoor advertising into the statutory framework of the Stadium Development District signals that commercial display is not incidental — it is an intended feature of the district.

Fourth, cumulative impact matters.

Waikīkī plus Stadium District plus future redevelopment zones creates a framework in which digital outdoor advertising becomes normalized in high-profile public districts. Once normalization occurs, opposition to further expansion weakens.

This is how long-standing policy frameworks are gradually altered — not through a single sweeping repeal, but through incremental statutory carve-outs.

Conclusion

S.B. 2353 asks this Legislature to weaken nearly a century of deliberate public policy protecting our roadways, shoreline districts, and public view planes from intrusive commercial advertising.

It asks whether this Legislature will introduce into Waikīkī — one of the most pedestrian-dense and traffic-complex districts in the State — devices specifically engineered to distract motorists and pedestrians, despite decades of documented safety research demonstrating the risks.

It asks whether flashing, electronically changing digital displays should receive statutory protection not only in Waikīkī but also within public civic districts such as the Stadium Development District — continuing a recent pattern of expanding commercialization of public infrastructure, including through measures such as SB2004.

It also raises a serious structural concern. This bill overrides Honolulu's carefully constructed sign regulations and compels the City and County to permit what it has deliberately chosen

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to restrict. Article VIII of the Hawai'i Constitution recognizes county authority over local matters, including land use and zoning. SB2353 substitutes a state mandate for local judgment in districts where local regulation has been thoughtful and intentional.

The safety risks are well-documented.
The negative visual impacts are predictable and real.
The cumulative commercialization is accelerating.
The erosion of local authority is real.

Hawai'i's billboard protections did not happen by accident. They exist because prior Legislatures understood that scenic integrity is a public trust — and that once surrendered to commercial spectacle, once surrendered to commercial spectacle, it is difficult to restore.

This bill is not modernization. It is commercialization — and it continues a trajectory that moves Hawai'i away from restraint and toward normalization of excessive and unnecessary digital advertising in our most visible public spaces.

For reasons of safety, visual integrity, light stewardship, economic identity, home rule, and long-standing public policy, The Outdoor Circle urges you in the strongest possible terms to HOLD SB2353.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration of this testimony,



Winston Welch
Executive Director

February 16, 2026

The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Subject: Testimony: SB2353, Relating to Outdoor Signage
Hearing: February 17, 2026, at 1:11 PM, Conference Room 229

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and Members of the Committee:

Stanford Carr Development supports SB2353, which authorizes the display of outdoor advertising devices, including digital signage, within the Stadium Development District with the approval of the Stadium Authority.

Currently, the Honolulu Land Use Ordinance (§21-7.30) prohibits flashing signage, which in ROH §21-7.20 includes digital signs. These restrictions significantly limit the ability to effectively market and activate the stadium redevelopment. Allowing well-regulated digital signage and sponsorship opportunities will promote the project's long-term financial sustainability and attract private sector investment and partnerships.

Signage, advertising, and naming rights are standard features in modern stadiums and entertainment districts nationwide. They serve as essential revenue tools to maintain facilities, support events, and minimize reliance on public funding—all while enhancing the community and visitor experience.

SB2353 achieves a thoughtful balance between preserving Hawaii's unique visual character and enabling contemporary strategies that make this important public project viable and self-sustaining.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide strong testimony in support of SB2353.

Sincerely,



Stanford S. Carr

SB-2353

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:32:30 AM

Testimony for EDT on 2/17/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Harding	Testifying for The Outdoor Circle	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: COMPLETE OPPOSITION to SB2353 related to “Digital outdoor signage displays”

Aloha,

As the President of the Outdoor Circle, I stand in strong opposition to this measure and ask that it not be advanced.

This bill proposes allowing for implementation of digital outdoor signage displays within the Waikiki Special District and the Stadium Development District.

It overrides Honolulu’s existing land use regulations and mandates permissibility where local law has exercised restraint.

The Legislature is not being asked to modernize a minor regulation. It is being asked to weaken decades of carefully constructed law protecting Hawai‘i’s visual landscape.

Hawaii residents have overwhelmingly opposed measures such as this, and I urge you to not allow this measure to advance.

Sincerely,

Diane Harding, The Outdoor Circle President



February 17, 2027

Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

As president of Scenic America – the nation’s only 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated solely to preserving and promoting America’s scenic beauty – I write in strong opposition to Senate Bill 2353. This bill is a direct and deliberate assault on Hawaii’s century-old prohibition on outdoor advertising and an unprecedented authorization of digital billboards in the heart of Waikīkī.

For more than 40 years, Scenic America has championed policies that protect and enhance the beauty and character of our communities and the great outdoors. A key focus of our work is establishing clear limits on the spread of outdoor billboard advertising. We take this mission seriously – in one instance pursuing a case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where we prevailed.

SB 2353 would explicitly legalize outdoor advertising devices – including digital and LED billboards – in Waikīkī, one of the world’s most widely recognized and iconic locations. Furthermore, it would compel counties to implement this policy, stripping local governments of their authority to say no. This is not permissive legislation; it is a heinous mandate that strips away local voices.

Hawaii is one of four states that have completely banned outdoor advertising. Its longstanding ban on outdoor advertising is a courageous stance against shortsighted commercialism – a stance that recognizes the astounding value of the state’s natural beauty and the importance of smoothly integrating its urban settings with its pristine landscapes. The ban acknowledges that the state’s aesthetics do so much more to promote the health and vitality of its citizens, its unique culture, and even its economy than outdoor advertising could ever hope to contribute. **SB 2353 abandons that legacy outright.**

If Hawaii were to open the door to any outdoor advertising, it would become extraordinarily difficult to close. In 1927, Hawaii passed legislation to protect its neighborhoods, its night sky, and its public realm. Passing this legislation would move the state in the opposite direction – and not because residents asked for it.

Scenic America’s research shows that this bill is part of a broader, coordinated effort by the outdoor advertising industry to dismantle strict billboard regulations across the country. Special sign districts were originally conceived as containment tools – narrow, negotiated exceptions within otherwise strong billboard bans. Today, those mechanisms are being repurposed to authorize and proliferate new digital signage that would never survive under citywide codes.

This pattern is already playing out elsewhere. In Los Angeles, sign districts and development agreements are being used to propose hundreds of new digital billboards around stadiums and entertainment venues. In Santa Monica, current proposals would introduce large-format digital signage into the downtown core, overturning longstanding sign controls. In Pittsburgh, a so-called “North Shore Entertainment District” was approved to permit new digital signage near sports venues through similar exception-based logic. In each case, narrow carve-outs became vehicles for widespread visual commercialization.

Waikīkī must not become the next example.

Waikīkī is not an ordinary commercial district. It is the symbolic front door to Hawaii. Legalizing digital outdoor advertising there would permanently alter the visual, cultural, and environmental character of a location that is central to the state’s identity. Our experience has shown that, once installed, advertising billboards and signs do not quietly disappear. They normalize commercial visual clutter and invite rapid expansion of outdoor advertising.

SB 2353 asks the Legislature to trade Hawaii’s global identity, environmental integrity, and local control for short-term advertising revenue that benefits a narrow set of private interests. That is a trade Hawaii has wisely refused for a century. We urge the committee to reject Senate Bill 2353 in its entirety.

If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at mark.falzone@scenic.org.

Sincerely,



Mark Falzone
President, Scenic America

SB-2353

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:58:53 AM

Testimony for EDT on 2/17/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
G L Hutchinson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PLease keep extra signage out of Hawaii- it is a slippery slope

I go to Florida enough to know it is a DISASTER to let more signage in...

I strongly oppose this bill.

STOP polluting Hawaii. Do not let it start.

Thank you fo your attention to this important matter!

SB-2353

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:09:11 AM

Testimony for EDT on 2/17/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jack O'Neill	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jack O'Neill and I strongly oppose SB2353.

Current law appropriately limits billboards and digital advertising in order to protect public safety, reduce visual clutter, and preserve the character of our communities. Our scenic landscapes and community character are not commodities. This bill undermines these protections, expanding digital signage and moves us in the wrong direction. This is not what people want.

Mahalo, Jack O'Neill

LATE

SB-2353

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:49:05 PM

Testimony for EDT on 2/17/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Lloyd	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Absolutely oppose.

SB-2353

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:28:25 PM

Testimony for EDT on 2/17/2026 1:11:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline Wah	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am OPPOSED to SB 2353.

We are bombarded with advertising 24/7, please do not add to the mental and visual clutter we already experience by allowing digital outdoor signage. We live in a beautiful state ~ please help keep it that way ~ vote NO to SB 2353. Thank you!

LATE

SB-2353

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:38:01 AM

Testimony for EDT on 2/17/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB2353.

Gregory Misakian