

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

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 7TH FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-8000 • FAX: (808) 768-6041 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov/dpp

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



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 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

February 17, 2026
Conference Room 225

TO: 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 SENATE BILL NO. 2423, RELATING TO ZONING

The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) **offers comments** on Senate Bill No. 2423, which prohibits the counties from imposing certain lot requirements and dwelling specifications for parcels of land located within the urban district for purposes of subdivision, development, or the issuance of a building permit, with certain exemptions.

The DPP supports the goals of facilitating efficient urban design and housing production. As drafted, the Bill reads that the minimum lot size for any parcel of land in the State Land Use Urban District would be 1,200 square feet with maximum lot dimensions of 30 feet wide and 40 feet deep. Open space would be limited to 30 percent of the lot.

Respectfully, we do not believe these standards are appropriate for all zoning districts. For example:

- As drafted, the Bill applies to all industrial, commercial, and apartment districts, and those lands in the county agricultural districts. Lots of 1,200 square feet may be too small to accommodate uses within these zoning districts.
- A maximum 30 percent open space allowance in county agricultural and country districts contradicts the purpose and objective of those districts.

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
Hawai'i State Senate
Senate Bill No. 2423
February 17, 2026
Page 2

Minimum lot area standards ensure that each lot is large enough to be minimally developed with all the necessary features to support land use policies of the City (e.g., safe, affordable, efficient). Infrastructure needs to be located where the lot meets the street, which is typically the lot's minimum dimension.

In our experience, many people prioritize driveways and parking area designs first, and fit the infrastructure in later. The maximum driveway per lot is 24 feet, so on a 30-foot-wide lot, 80 percent of the frontage could foreseeably be driveway. In the public right-of-way, infrastructure needs include bus stops, street trees, streetlights, sidewalks, storm water catchments, fire hydrants, street signs, sidewalk ramps, street parking, and bike lanes, as applicable. If lots are too narrow, there will be inadequate space within the right-of-way to accommodate these elements as they will likely interfere with driveways.

If the street frontage is reduced to 30 feet and infrastructure cannot service the site, the lots may be undevelopable. Minimum dimensions should comfortably accommodate the features necessary to develop individual lots and the greater neighborhood and community.

We recommend that if a minimum lot dimension is required of the counties, it should not be less than 60 feet, which is wide enough to support desirable development in most zoning districts. Some areas could be designed for smaller lot widths (e.g. if shared parking lots or back alleys are available), but the counties should be able to make those determinations, as appropriate.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify and we are prepared to meet and work with the Legislature on changes that will facilitate lot sizes that work best for county infrastructure, our residents and their communities.

Very truly yours



Dawn Takeuchi Apuna
Director

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
Arryl Kaneshiro



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

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

February 13, 2026

**TESTIMONY OF FELICIA COWDEN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL**

ON

SB 2423, RELATING TO ZONING

Senate Committee on Housing

Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

1:00 p.m.

Conference Room 225

Via Videoconference

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

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2423, Relating to Zoning. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council and the Public Safety & Human Services Committee Chair.

I recognize the need and existing pattern of clustering small homes in shared lands, sometimes contrary to permitting requirements, due to the result of higher housing costs brought on by minimum lot sizes and similar requirements in urban areas. These conditions exist because there is a clear need for more housing. The condominium property regime (CPR) process is cumbersome and circumvents necessary county policies for creating effectively small neighborhoods. Therefore, I support the intent of SB 2423 to prohibit the counties from imposing various lot requirements and dwelling specifications within the urban district, with certain exemptions.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2423. 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,

FELICIA COWDEN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

RM:sf



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

February 17, 2026

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

RE: SUPPORT for SB 2423 - RELATING TO ZONING

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

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **strong support of SB 2423**.

Hawai'i is facing a worsening housing shortage driven by limited land, rising construction costs, and regulations that make it difficult to build homes that local families can afford. Large minimum lot sizes, excessive setback requirements, and mandatory parking standards restrict how much housing can be built in urban areas and push development toward more expensive housing types. As a result, many residents are priced out of homeownership or forced to leave their communities altogether.

SB 2423 takes a practical step toward addressing this crisis by allowing smaller homes on smaller lots in the urban district. By reducing minimum lot size, setback, and parking requirements, this bill allows land to be used more efficiently and lowers the cost of producing new homes. Research and real-world experience show that these types of zoning reforms increase housing supply by making it feasible to build entry-level and workforce housing that would otherwise be prohibited.

Importantly, SB 2423 maintains critical health, safety, and environmental protections and includes exemptions for hazard-prone areas. It also allows neighborhoods to petition to retain stricter standards if there is strong local support. This balanced approach respects



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

community input while removing outdated rules that contribute to scarcity and high prices.

Allowing smaller homes on smaller lots will help create attainable starter homes, expand housing choices, and support local families who want to live and work in Hawai'i.

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



Feb. 17, 2026, 1 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

To: Senate Committee on Housing

Sen. Stanley Chang, Chair

Sen. Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Sen. Chris Lee, Chair

Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2423 — RELATING TO ZONING

Aloha chairs, vice chairs and other members of the committees,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [SB2423](#), which would prohibit the counties from requiring minimum lot sizes larger than 1,200 square feet and place other limitations on required setbacks, lot widths, lot depths, open spaces and maximum building heights. These prohibitions would be applicable only to parcels in the state's urban district.

SB2423 would also allow counties to create a process through which landowners could exempt themselves from the bill's requirements.

This legislation would be a major step toward reducing housing costs for Hawaii residents. Allowing smaller lots in urban areas would reduce land costs, which can represent as much as 75% of the cost of buying a single-family home.¹

¹ Eric Pape, "[Living Hawaii: It's The Land That Really Drives Up Honolulu's Home Prices](#)," Honolulu Civil Beat, Nov. 13, 2015.

In Hawaii, each county currently sets its own minimum lot sizes. For residential zones, Hawai'i County's smallest minimum lot size is 7,500 square feet; Maui and Kauai both have their smallest minimum lot size set at 6,000 square feet; and Honolulu's smallest is 3,500 square feet.²

Considering Hawaii's extremely high land costs, imposing minimum lot sizes contributes to housing prices that few local families can afford.

Consider this example: A vacant 6,000-square-foot lot in Honolulu is valued at \$1.2 million. Under current lot-size rules, only one house could be built on it. But allowing that land to instead support four fee-simple houses on 1,500-square-foot lots would greatly reduce the land cost per house.

For a potential homebuyer, reducing the land cost from \$1.2 million to \$300,000 could mean the difference between being able to afford a mortgage or not. The houses built on those smaller lots would also be smaller, and therefore cost less, than a single home built on the 6,000 square foot lot.

Cities across the United States that have experimented with decreasing minimum lot sizes have seen an increase in the construction of smaller, less expensive homes. This is also not a new concept.

Back in 1998, Houston, Texas, reduced its minimum lot-size requirement for parts of the city from 5,000 square feet to 1,400 square feet, and it applied the change to most other areas in 2013. A 2023 study showed that the homes built on these smaller lots were markedly more affordable — valued at almost 40 percent less than other single-family homes.³ Other research also indicates that large minimum lot sizes contribute to higher housing costs.⁴

Houston does allow individual neighborhoods to opt out of the minimum lot-size requirement through a process that is similar to the one outlined in this legislation.

As such, SB2423 strikes a balance between expanding housing opportunities for Hawaii residents while allowing homeowners to have a say regarding what gets built in their neighborhoods.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

² Jonathan Helton, "[How to facilitate more homebuilding in Hawaii](#)," Grassroot Institute of Hawaii policy brief, December 2023.

³ Alex Horowitz and Tara Roche, "[Lot-Size Reform Unlocks Affordable Homeownership in Houston](#)," Pew Charitable Trusts, Sept. 14, 2023.

⁴ Patrick Tuohey, "[Why minimum lot size reform should be on every city's housing agenda](#)," Better Cities Project, Dec. 15, 2025.



1001 Bishop Street #625 | Honolulu, HI 96813
866-295-7282 | aarp.org/hi | hiaarp@aarp.org |
[Twitter.com/aarphawaii](https://twitter.com/aarphawaii) | facebook.com/aarphawaii

The Thirty-Third Legislature
Senate Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and on Housing
Tuesday, February 17, 2026
Conference Room 225
1:00 p.m.

TO: The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Strong Support for S.B. 2423 Relating to Zoning

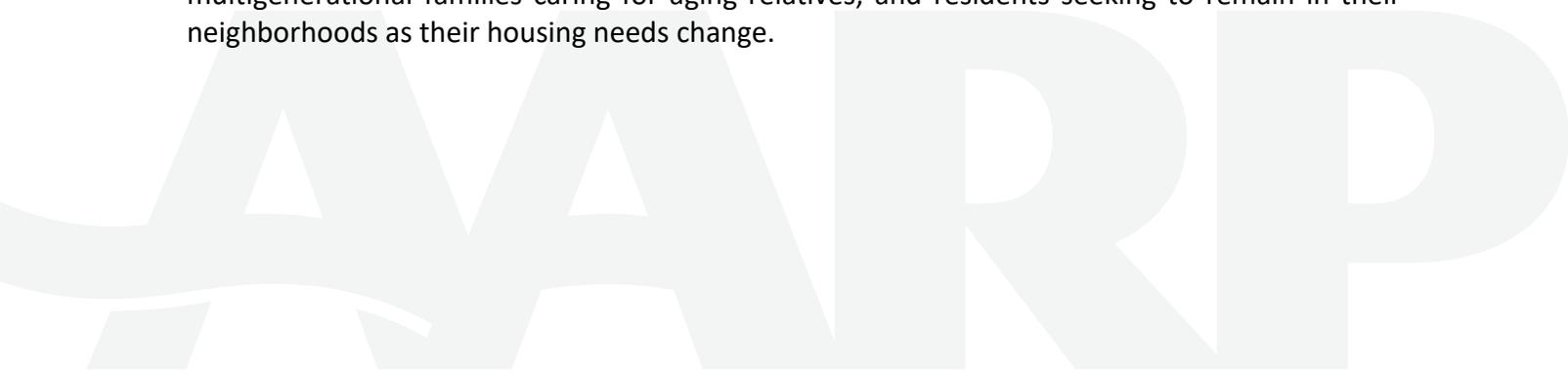
Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Chang, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Keali'i López, and I serve as the State Director of AARP Hawai'i. On behalf of our more than 135,000 members statewide, we appreciate the opportunity to testify **in strong support of S.B. 2423.**

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social impact organization dedicated to empowering people age 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. Central to that mission is access to **stable, affordable housing**, which is essential for older adults to **age with dignity, remain independent, and stay connected to their communities.**

S.B. 2423 takes a targeted and thoughtful approach to one of the less visible—but highly consequential drivers of housing cost: **excessive minimum lot size and design requirements in urban districts.** By prohibiting counties from imposing minimum lot sizes larger than 1,200 square feet, along with unreasonable width, depth, setback, parking, and open-space requirements, the bill **restores flexibility that has been gradually eroded from local housing markets.** Importantly, the measure also prevents blanket prohibitions on dwellings of three stories or less, enabling **more efficient and appropriate use of already urbanized land.**

For older adults, these reforms matter. Smaller, fee-simple lots can reduce development costs and open a pathway to **true starter homes, downsizing options, and intergenerational living arrangements.** These housing types are especially critical for kūpuna on fixed incomes, multigenerational families caring for aging relatives, and residents seeking to remain in their neighborhoods as their housing needs change.



At the same time, S.B. 2423 **carefully preserves public health, safety, and environmental protections**. The bill includes explicit exemptions for lands in special management areas, flood hazard areas, tsunami evacuation zones, shoreline areas, and other designated hazard areas. Counties retain full authority over wastewater, water supply, stormwater management, fire protection, and life-safety standards. These provisions ensure that **increased flexibility does not come at the expense of safety or environmental stewardship**.

Equally important, the bill **respects community input**. The neighborhood petition process, allowing at least 75 percent of property owners in a defined area to opt to retain or reestablish otherwise prohibited requirements, subject to notice and public hearing **provides a meaningful mechanism for local voices to be heard** while avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

In sum, S.B. 2423 advances Hawai'i's housing goals by **lowering unnecessary regulatory barriers in urban areas**, encouraging modest and attainable housing options, and doing so **without weakening environmental safeguards or local health and safety authority**. For AARP members and for residents across generations, this bill represents a **practical step toward more affordable, age-friendly communities**.

For these reasons, AARP Hawai'i respectfully supports S.B. 2423 and urges the Committees to **pass this measure**. The bill strikes an appropriate balance between increasing housing affordability, preserving safety and environmental protections, and respecting community input, while helping ensure that **older adults and families can continue to live, age, and thrive in their communities**.

Mahalo for your consideration.

February 17, 2026

TO: Chair Lee and Members of the Senate Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
Committee
Chair Chang and Members of the Senate Housing Committee
RE: SB 2423, Relating to Zoning

Dear Chair Lee, Chair Chang, and Committee Members,

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a nonprofit dedicated to creating opportunities for Hawai'i's next generation by ending the workforce housing shortage.

We urge the House Committee on Housing to advance Senate Bill 2423.

Current regulations create inconsistencies and add complexity to the housing approval process, contributing to higher costs. By focusing on parcels within the state-designated urban land use district, the bill targets areas already designated for development. This is a prudent way to accommodate growth without impacting agricultural or conservation lands, aligning with the spirit of the Land Use Law of 1961.

By limiting additional lot requirements and dwelling specifications, this bill has the potential to streamline the subdivision, development, and permitting process, directly supporting our mission to expand housing opportunities for Hawai'i residents.

The bill recognizes the importance of community input by allowing for a petition process. This mechanism provides neighborhoods and subdivisions with a structured way to request the establishment or retention of specific requirements, ensuring that local concerns can still be addressed when warranted.

We are grateful for your careful consideration of Senate Bill 2423.

Thank you,



Lee Wang
Executive Director
Housing Hawai'i's Future
lee@hawaiisfuture.org

hawaiisfuture.org



Perry Arrasmith
Director of Policy
Housing Hawai'i's Future
perry@hawaiisfuture.org



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

LATE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SB2423 – Relating to Zoning
Joint Senate Committee on Water & Land and Housing
Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 1:00PM Conf. Rm. 225 and via Videoconference

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of SB2423** relating to zoning. Minimum lot reform is a practical way to create more homes that local families afford, while also advancing climate and equity goals. SB2423 would allow smaller fee-simple lots in appropriate urban areas that already have infrastructure, giving home builders an opportunity to produce modest homes instead of only large, high cost lots.

Research from the University of Connecticut's "Minimum Lot Size Reduction & Resilience brief shows that large minimum lot sizes constrain housing supply, inflate land costs, and push development outward, leading to higher infrastructure costs and car dependent communities.¹ The same brief finds that reducing minimum lot sizes in the right locations supports denser, more affordable housing near jobs and transit, lowers transportation-related emissions, and strengthens "social resilience" by fostering more connected walkable communities.²

Big-lot zoning is also an equity problem: oversized minimum lots act as a barrier to homeownership and help entrench "historic racial and economic injustice by keeping lower-income households out of opportunity-rich neighborhoods. National research produced by Better Cities finds that strict minimum lot size rules drive up prices, suppress infill, and operate as a quiet exclusionary tool that benefits wealthier homeowners while shutting out lower-income families.³ Higher, more restrictive minimum lot sizes are correlated with home price increases and increased rent prices.

SB2423 offers a reasonable, standards based way to undo some of the high minimum lot size mandates by right-sizing minimum lot sizes in the urban district while preserving tools like setback, height limits, and lot coverage.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2423.

¹ <https://resilientconnecticut.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3830/2024/09/Min-Lot-Size-5-18-24.pdf>

² <https://resilientconnecticut.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3830/2024/09/Min-Lot-Size-5-18-24.pdf>

³

<https://better-cities.org/community-growth-housing/why-minimum-lot-size-reform-should-be-on-every-citys-housing-agenda/>

SB-2423

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 5:37:46 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

Working- and middle-class families are being **CRUSHED** by the housing affordability crisis. We are losing the best and the brightest who cannot afford to call Hawaii home. This must end. We must use **EVERY** tool in the toolkit to mitigate this crisis. I **STRONGLY** urge this committee to **SUPPORT** this bill!

SB-2423

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 7:06:53 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support the INTENT of

2423 SB RELATING TO ZONING.

TO INCLUDE DHHL AND KEEP TO THE SF OF 1,200-1,500 and to include on each floor
coined operated laundry room.

Cost of Paradise, SQUEEZE residents to leave, SMALL SF will SQUEEZE residents to leave.

LATE

SB-2423

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:25:15 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Kauwe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB2068 — Strong Testimony (Support Intent, Opposed Until Action Is Taken)

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

My name is Rebecca Kauwe. I support the intent of SB2068 to study and maximize housing development. However, I must **oppose the bill until firm tenant-centered protections and accountability requirements are added.**

Development Without Accountability Fails Tenants

New units mean nothing if tenants end up in:

- unsafe buildings
- unmanaged or under-managed properties
- environments where drug activity goes unaddressed
- properties with unclear ownership or licensing

This is how the revolving door of homelessness begins.

Mass Turnover Reflects Mismanagement

Properties without transparency and enforcement experience:

- rapid staff turnover
- tenants moving out en masse
- failure to maintain basic safety or sanitation
- unstable communities

These are predictable outcomes when management accountability is missing.

Laws Not Being Followed

- **HRS 521-42** (habitability)
- **HRS 521-51** (privacy)
- **HRS 521-67** (owner disclosure)
- **HRS 521-74** (anti-retaliation)

Without enforcement, development alone **cannot protect residents**.

Tenants Need Guaranteed Rights

- Health and safety protections
- Privacy protections
- Fair access to amenities
- Clear lines of responsibility
- Immediate recourse for violations

Action Required

- Add enforcement mechanisms tied to public funding
- Require ownership/management transparency
- Expand assistance acceptance to increase availability
- Make tenant rights foundational to any development plan

Conclusion

I support SB2068's intent, but **oppose its passage** until tenant protections and accountability measures are included to prevent further displacement and instability.

Mahalo,
Rebecca Kauwe

SB-2423

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:53:55 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose SB2423.

Gregory Misakian