

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

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GOVERNOR

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Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

Wednesday, March 4, 2026  
9:40 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

in consideration of  
**SB 2981**  
**RELATING TO LAND USE**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** SB 2981 which prohibits minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development or redevelopment projects located within a transit-oriented development infrastructure improvement program area. Removing parking minimums removes financial, infrastructure and land barriers in transit-oriented development areas should agencies and developers see parking requirements as a hinderance to housing production or other projects. This measure may encourage those living within half mile of the transit stations to commute using public transit and reduce the demand and cost for vehicle ownership.

The removal of parking minimums is in alignment with the State's Transit-Oriented Development Council's Strategic Plan to encourage more public transit ridership, walking, biking, etc. This will help create more housing, compact development, walkable neighborhoods, and a mixed-use community centered around transit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



## Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

### Committee on Judiciary

March 4, 2026 at 9:40AM

Conference Room 016

**SB 2981**

**Relating to Parking**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports SB 2981**, which would, beginning 7/1/2027, prohibit minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district, and require each county to amend or repeal any charter provision, ordinance, code, standard, or administrative procedure that imposes a minimum off-street parking requirement by 7/1/2027.

This bill is consistent with several goals of the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan including support for active and public transportation, promoting an equitable transportation system, and improving air quality and protecting environmental and cultural assets.<sup>1</sup> Prohibiting minimum off-street parking requirements for new development in an urban district can help reduce housing costs for residents, increase transportation choices, reduce transportation emissions and traffic congestion, and improve resident quality of life.

Optimizing parking supply, coupled with encouraging density and mixed land use in strategic areas and enabling and providing multiple modes of active and shared transportation can improve livability of neighborhoods and reduce the cost of living for residents. Excessive parking on the other hand, reduces walkability of a neighborhood, promotes sprawl, and leads to car-oriented development patterns.

Right sizing parking supply is particularly important to help the State and County address cost of living and equity concerns as well as meet [the State's codified carbon net-negative goal](#) and [requirements in the Navahine Settlement](#). The bill is consistent with strategies and actions identified in other regional plans, including the [Honolulu Urban Core Parking Master Plan](#), [Climate Action Plan](#), [Honolulu Transportation Demand Management Plan](#), and [Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction Plan for Honolulu Transportation](#)

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<sup>1</sup> [https://oahumpo.org/?wpfb\\_dl=2215](https://oahumpo.org/?wpfb_dl=2215)

[Systems, Investing in Transportation Choices](#), and [Drivers of Vehicle Miles Traveled and Priority Reduction Strategies](#).

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a long-range (25-year horizon) metropolitan transportation plan, referred to as the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), which encourages and promotes a safe and efficient transportation system to serve the mobility needs of people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, and takes into consideration resiliency needs, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
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ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of  
LEAH LARAMEE  
Climate Change Coordinator on behalf of  
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission  
Co-Chair Ryan K. P. Kanaka'ole**

**Before the Senate Committee on  
JUDICIARY**

**Wednesday, March 4, 2026  
9:40 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016**

**In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 2981  
RELATING TO LAND USE**

Senate Bill 2981 proposes to prohibit minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district and requires each county to amend or repeal any charter provision, ordinance, code, standard, or administrative procedure that imposes a minimum off-street parking requirement by 7/1/2027. **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure.**

The Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 departments, committees, and counties with the purpose of promoting ambitious, climate-neutral, culturally responsive strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Parking mandates subsidize the cost of parking by providing an excess of free and low-cost parking space, incentivizing drivers to take more trips by car. This drives development that is unsafe and sprawling, making travel by walking and biking challenging and perpetuating the choice of driving a car over healthier and more sustainable modes of travel. Car centric development is not only a significant contributor to climate change but also exacerbate the impacts of climate change such as urban heat island effects and flooding and run off from intensifying weather events.

Parking policy also is a fairness issue as low-income residents often subsidize infrastructure that tends to benefit wealthier car owners. Parking minimums increase construction costs and reduce the availability of much needed housing. Communities that have eliminated parking minimums

have seen benefits including economic growth and healthier, more livable communities that prioritize fair access to community resources while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment 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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HOPE PO'O

REGINA MALEPEAI  
2<sup>ND</sup> DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O KUALUA

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

March 4, 2026  
Conference Room 016

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair, and The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL NO. 2981, RELATING TO LAND USE

The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) **offers comments** on House Bill No. 1919, which prohibits minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district, and requires each county to amend or repeal any charter provision, ordinance, code, standard, or administrative procedure that imposes a minimum off-street parking requirement.

The City and County of Honolulu adopted Ordinance 20-41 in December of 2020, which eliminated parking requirements across broad swaths of urban Honolulu, in TOD areas, and in places with good access to transportation that were envisioned to be walkable, bikeable, or otherwise accessible through sustainable transportation options. Further, Ordinance 20-41 generally reduced parking minimums island-wide to support denser, more sustainable development. Through that process, which involved extensive research, public outreach, stakeholder engagement, and debate, we tailored our parking reforms to maximize impact while minimizing friction for residents.

We have found, and continue to experience, that in places that lack good, accessible public transportation or places that were not envisioned to be dense and walkable, minimum parking requirements are still necessary and desired by the community. Nevertheless, our parking reforms created numerous incentives and options to reduce parking requirements, in the places where it was required, by providing alternative access. Where parking minimums do exist, several mechanisms to reduce parking requirements are available, including off-site, joint-use, or shared parking plans, bike share, bicycle parking, car share, and unbundling.

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Hawai'i State Senate  
Senate Bill No. 2981  
March 4, 2026  
Page 2

We believe the City and County of Honolulu has reformed and modernized parking in a way that is best for our communities, and we respectfully request the Legislature recognize and honor our parking reforms to date. We are always open to further parking discussions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Very truly yours,



Dawn Takeuchi Apuna  
Director

March 4, 2026

**The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair**

Senate Committee on Judiciary  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

**RE: Senate Bill 2981, Relating to Land Use**

**HEARING: Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 9:40 a.m.**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, Members of the Committee:

My name is Lyndsey Garcia, Director of Advocacy, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawaii and its over 10,000 members. HAR **supports the intent** of Senate Bill 2981, which beginning 7/1/2027, prohibits minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district. Requires each county to amend or repeal any charter provision, ordinance, code, standard, or administrative procedure that imposes a minimum off-street parking requirement by 7/1/2027.

A study by Hawai'i Appleseed found that providing parking can increase the cost of a single affordable rental unit by over \$55,000, and up to \$77,000 for market-rate, for-sale units.<sup>1</sup> Instead of requiring minimum parking, this measure allows projects the flexibility to account for the specific needs of the community, which can vary based on factors like walkability and access to transit or other transportation options. As such, this measure can help to reduce overall costs for much needed housing projects while still allowing developers to build parking they find fits the needs and demands of the consumer.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

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<sup>1</sup> Seitz, Gilliam & Heim. (October 1, 2025). Stalled. How Parking Mandates Drive Up Housing Costs. <https://hiappleseed.org/publications/stalled-parking-mandates-housing-costs>



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
Wednesday, March 4, 2026 — 9:40 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2981, Relating to Land Use.**

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono supports SB 2981**, which prohibits minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district; requires each county to amend or repeal any charter provision, ordinance, code, standard, or administrative procedure that imposes a minimum off-street parking requirement by 7/1/2027.

**Land Use**

By requiring minimum parking mandates for development, our state is prioritizing parking over many of our most critical issues — housing, food, and jobs. Land used for these parking mandates accumulates project by project across our communities, and Hawai'i has plenty of parking. There are 4.5 million parking spaces across the state of Hawai'i. This is equal to 1.5 billion square feet, or 53 square miles. That's 35 Waikiki neighborhoods, or 3-4 spaces for every vehicle in Hawai'i. In a state with finite land resources, we must ask whether the best use of that land is for parking — an important consideration.

**Costs**

The high cost of building parking makes housing more expensive for all residents — including those who rent, those who own, and even those without cars who still pay for parking they'll never use. Ulupono's "[The Costs of Parking in Hawai'i](#)" report, published in 2020, documents the costs of building parking. Construction costs range from \$4,200 per space in a surface lot to \$60,400 per space in a free-standing parking garage. These construction and ongoing carrying costs are passed on to Hawai'i residents, businesses, and visitors through higher rents and housing prices, regardless of their use. That's between \$226 and \$511 per unit added to the cost of monthly rent, or an additional \$100,000 per 2-

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*

bedroom house or condo purchase in Honolulu.<sup>1</sup> It's worth noting that these numbers are likely much higher now given the past few years of inflation.

[Sightline Institute](#) illustrated how significantly parking mandates can alter a developer's plans. With current parking mandates in Portland, Oregon, the most profitable proposal is for high-cost townhomes in the range of \$700,000. Removing the requirement allows the developer to propose mixed-income \$280,000 condominiums.<sup>2</sup> The implications this has on the feasibility of creating more affordable housing is clear and could be duplicated here by allowing the market to dictate parking, not government. Similar tradeoffs likely occur here regularly as well. There are numerous examples of transit-oriented projects all over the state in which the number of parking stalls is higher than the units being provided or land area dedicated to commercial/educational uses.<sup>3</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Vice President of Government Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ulupono.com/news-listing/report-reveals-the-hidden-costs-of-parking-in-hawaii/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sightline.org/2019/10/02/in-mid-density-zones-portland-has-a-choice-garages-or-low-prices/>

<sup>3</sup> Liliha mixed use center, Mayor Wright Homes, Kahului Civic Mixed-Use Complex to name a few but many more exist across the state.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 9:40AM  
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference**

**RE: SB2981 Relating to Land Use**

Aloha e Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports Senate Bill 2981 (SB2981), which prohibits minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district. Requires each county to amend or repeal any charter provision, ordinance, code, standard, or administrative procedure that imposes a minimum off-street parking requirement.

SB2981 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Economic Action. This bill promotes housing production and affordability by removing an arbitrary and uniformly applied parking. According to Housing Hawaii's Future, the average cost to build a single parking stall is \$68,000. This cost, when multiplied by a whole lot of stalls, significantly increases the cost to produce housing. This raises the costs for the home purchaser without guaranteeing that this parking infrastructure will be optimized.

Further, the mandated utilization of limited acreage for parking limits the acreage that can be allocated to producing more housing stock. The resultant effect is less housing available for purchase set at higher prices due to limited stock and the cost of constructing parking, raising cost of living in the state. The Chamber believes that maximizing housing stock at lower prices must be prioritized in order to meet housing demand and keep Hawaii's local workforce from choosing outmigration. Rather than imposing minimums, the Chamber recommends that the decision for parking supply be left to the market demand perceived by developers.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 2981. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony in Support for SB2981 - Relating to Land Use  
Committee on Judiciary (JDC)  
Wednesday, March 4th, 2026 at 9:40AM**

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Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the JDC committee,  
Mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in support of SB2981**, which would remove barriers to affordable housing by prohibiting minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district.

Hawai'i Appleseed supports the proposed legislation for numerous reasons, including that:

1. **Parking mandates are costly and counterproductive.** A 2020 study from the Ulupono Initiative found that the cost to build parking in high-rise buildings (with podium-style parking) for affordable and mixed-income rentals in Honolulu's urban core costs up to \$55,000 per unit.<sup>1</sup> Adjusted for inflation, this cost now exceeds \$68,000 per unit. These expenses do not come out of thin air—they are baked into the overall cost of development, reducing the number of affordable units that can be built and increasing the cost of rent or sale for local families. According to the 2020 study from Ulupono Initiative, for a single person renting a small studio in urban Honolulu, parking could add up \$410 per month to their rent – even if they don't own a vehicle.<sup>2</sup>
2. **More parking does not mean more housing security.** Individuals living in affordable housing are less likely to own cars, and data shows that lower-income residents often prioritize affordable rents and proximity to transit, jobs, and schools over parking availability. Moreover, mandating more parking means reducing the number of affordable homes that can be built on a given parcel due to land and cost constraints. For example, imagine that a high-rise building of 200 mixed-income rental units was being planned in Honolulu. If one parking stall was built for every two units, in today's dollars, this would add a whopping \$6.8 million to the cost of the project.
3. **Eliminating parking mandates aligns with national best practices and local priorities.** Across the country, over 90 jurisdictions have eliminated or significantly reduced parking minimums, recognizing that such mandates hinder housing production and promote sprawl.<sup>3</sup> In 2020, the Honolulu City Council removed parking minimums for new housing and commercial development in the urban core and transit oriented development (TOD) areas through Ordinance 20-41. Recent analysis from Hawai'i Appleseed shows that permitted parking within housing developments in TOD areas on O'ahu approved from 2010–2025 decreased by over 12

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<sup>1</sup> Ulupono Initiative, "The Costs of Parking in Hawai'i," Prepared by PBR Hawai'i, August, 2020.

<https://ulupono.com/media/ivcfs2pu/the-cost-of-parking-in-hawaii-report-2020-08.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Parking Reform Network, "Parking Mandates Map," January 6, 2025.

<https://parkingreform.org/resources/mandates-map/>

percent following passage of Ordinance 20-41, with the greatest reductions in parking made by affordable housing developers.<sup>4</sup>

4. **Eliminating parking mandates advances the state’s climate and equity goals.** We cannot meet our climate commitments or equity objectives if we continue to design our neighborhoods around car storage instead of people. Forcing developers to build more parking locks residents into car dependency and undermines investment in walking, biking, and public transit infrastructure. It also disproportionately harms lower-income residents who are the least likely to benefit from car-centric policies.

In summary, SB2981 represents a common-sense reform that will help reduce the cost of housing and allow communities and developers to respond to actual needs rather than the outdated, one-size-fits-all approach of parking mandates.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



Abbey Seitz

Director of Transportation Equity

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

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<sup>4</sup> Seitz, A., Gilliam, T., and Heim, A, “Stalled: How Parking Mandates Drive Up Housing Costs,” Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, October 2025.  
[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/601374ae84e51e430a1829d8/t/68f15c7cbf563d6a7080bf8f/1760648316670/Stalled\\_FINAL.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/601374ae84e51e430a1829d8/t/68f15c7cbf563d6a7080bf8f/1760648316670/Stalled_FINAL.pdf).



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

March 4, 2026

Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: SUPPORT for SB 2981 - RELATING TO LAND USE**

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

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **strong support of SB 2981**.

Hawai'i is facing a severe housing shortage, and every unnecessary cost added to housing construction makes that problem worse. SB 2981 addresses one of the most expensive and outdated requirements driving up housing costs: mandatory minimum parking. Each required parking stall can cost tens of thousands of dollars to build, costs that are ultimately passed on to renters and homebuyers. At a time when families are already struggling to afford housing, these added costs do real harm.

**SB 2981 asks us to choose people over parking.** Instead of forcing builders to meet arbitrary parking minimums, this bill **allows parking to be right-sized** based on actual needs. The money saved by eliminating unnecessary parking can be used to lower rents, reduce purchase prices, or build additional homes. In many cases, the land currently reserved for excess parking could be used to create more housing units, helping to address the shortage directly.

Importantly, **this bill does not ban parking** or prevent it from being built. Developers will still provide parking where it makes sense for residents, businesses, and communities. SB 2981 simply removes rigid minimums that do not reflect local conditions, changing transportation patterns, or the needs of modern households. Accessible parking and disability requirements remain fully protected.



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

By allowing flexibility, SB 2981 supports affordable housing, smaller homes, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and mixed-use development. These are exactly the kinds of projects Hawai'i needs to house local families, seniors, and workers. Requiring excessive parking only makes these projects harder and more expensive to build.

SB 2981 is a practical reform that prioritizes housing affordability and efficient land use.

**Choosing people over parking means choosing homes over empty stalls and families over unnecessary costs.**

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





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**The Thirty-Third Legislature  
Senate Committees on Judiciary  
Wednesday, March 4, 2026  
Conference Room 016  
9:40 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director  
RE: Support for S.B. 2981 Relating to Land Use

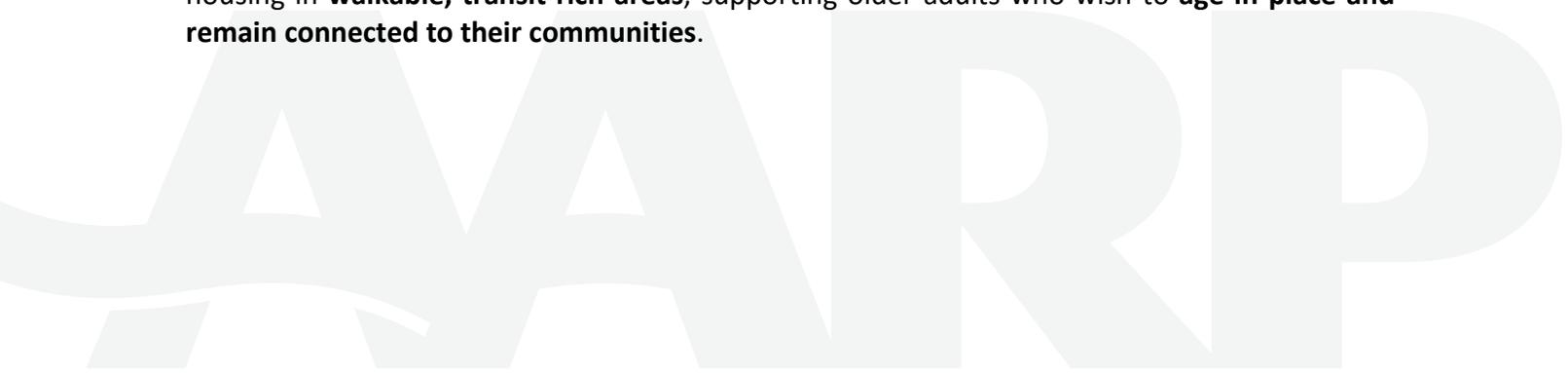
Aloha Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committees:

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, thank you for the opportunity to testify **in strong support of S.B. 2981.**

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**, a prerequisite for health, financial security, and the ability to **age with dignity in one's own community.** S.B. 2981 directly advances these goals by modernizing land use policy in ways that better reflect how Hawai'i residents live, move, and age today.

S.B. 2981 would prohibit minimum off-street parking requirements for any **new development located in an urban district**, beginning July 1, 2027. The measure would preempt conflicting county laws, ordinances, codes, or standards and require counties to amend or repeal those provisions by that date. These reforms address long-standing, outdated parking mandates that often **undermine walkability, discourage multimodal transportation, and consume valuable land** that could otherwise be used for housing or community-serving purposes.

For older adults in particular, these impacts are significant. Many residents **drive less or stop driving altogether** as they age, making proximity to reliable transit, safe sidewalks, and essential services increasingly important. Reducing unnecessary parking mandates can help facilitate more housing in **walkable, transit-rich areas**, supporting older adults who wish to **age in place and remain connected to their communities.**



Just as importantly, S.B. 2981 would help advance the production of more **affordable housing options statewide**. Minimum parking requirements substantially increase construction costs especially for residential projects and those costs are passed **on to renters, homebuyers, and small businesses**. By eliminating blanket parking mandates, this measure allows parking decisions to be **responsive to actual community needs and project-specific conditions**, rather than rigid, one-size-fits-all standards.

At a time when Hawai'i faces a **severe housing shortage and rising costs of living**, S.B. 2981 represents a **practical, targeted, and forward-looking step** toward a more affordable and age-friendly future. For these reasons, AARP Hawai'i respectfully urges the Senate Committee on Judiciary to **pass S.B. 2981**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your continued leadership on this critical issue.



*Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer*

*Gemma G. Weinstein, President*

*Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President*

March 2, 2026

Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Sen. Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Sen. Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

**Testimony With Comments re: SB 2981**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

UNITE HERE Local 5 represents 10,000 working people in the hotel, food service and health care industries across Hawaii. We note the egregious traffic situation in Hawai'i and the need to get cars off the road. At the same time, we note that solutions to this problem must involve real, working alternatives, such as an enhanced bus system or promotion of other means of transportation. We note that affordable housing development is not sufficient in amount or in actual affordability to meet people's needs. At the same time, we feel the solution to this problem is to require more from developers, especially when they receive a benefit of any sort from the government.

In that regard, we would recommend that this bill be amended to create some alternative requirements for developers that contribute to the transit solution rather than just a ban on off-street parking minima. Alternatively, it should be amended to put some requirements on affordability of units in projects with reduced off-street parking.

As currently written, the bill could be used to significantly reduce developers' construction costs and allow them to build greater dwelling or transient unit density, without requiring anything in return, and thus provides benefit to the industry. Will the industry pass on those benefits to our communities? Maybe, maybe not – this bill can require that they do, and in this crucial moment, such a requirement is necessary.

Thank you.

March 4, 2026

TO: Chair Rhoads and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: Senate Bill 2981, Relating to Land Use

Dear Chairs Rhoads and Committee Members,

**We strongly support Senate Bill 2981.** If builders need to build parking to meet community needs, they build it. If a homeowner or renter needs parking, they look for housing opportunities with parking. Through Senate Bill 2981, we remove waste and added cost from this naturally occurring dynamic.

**Parking minimums are a major, avoidable cost that raises rents and home prices.**

Decades of modern analysis show that off-street parking mandates add very large amounts to the per-unit cost of new housing, conservatively in the tens of thousands of dollars per stall (the cost of an average stall in Honolulu is **\$68,000**), and local analyses often estimate **\$70k–\$100k** per unit when parking is overbuilt.<sup>1</sup>

The City and County of Honolulu and other localities have already moved to remove or loosen parking requirements for certain projects (for example, Ordinance 19-8 eliminated many parking requirements for qualified rental housing projects), and those reforms have shown how policy change can unlock housing without jeopardizing neighborhood character.

Removing arbitrary minimums lets builders meet real demand rather than paying to store vehicles people may not own or use. Local governments, project applicants, and neighborhoods retain the ability to propose, negotiate, and supply parking in ways that match actual community needs. **Let's advance SB 2981.**

Thank you,



Lee Wang  
Executive Director  
Housing Hawai'i's Future  
[lee@hawaiisfuture.org](mailto:lee@hawaiisfuture.org)



Perry Arrasmith  
Director of Policy  
Housing Hawai'i's Future  
[perry@hawaiisfuture.org](mailto:perry@hawaiisfuture.org)

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<sup>1</sup> For figures, see <https://tinyurl.com/mswb7hwr>  
**hawaiisfuture.org**

March 4, 2026, 9:40 a.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Conference Room 016 and Videoconference

**To: Senate Committee on Judiciary**  
**Sen. Karl Rhoads, Chair**  
**Sen. Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair**

**From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii**  
**Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns**

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2981 — RELATING TO LAND USE

Aloha chair, vice chair and other committee members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [SB2981](#), which would prohibit off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district.

This bill would help reduce housing prices and remove some of the regulatory barriers to construction.

Research has shown that parking mandates increase housing costs because the costs of constructing parking garages or spaces and acquiring land for parking are passed on to homebuyers and renters.<sup>1</sup>

Cities that have reduced or eliminated required parking see less parking built, which frees up land for new and expanded homes and businesses.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [“The Costs of Parking in Hawai’i,”](#) prepared by PBR & Associates for the Ulupono Initiative, August 2020, p. 3; C. J. Gabbe and Gregory Pierce, [“Hidden Costs and Deadweight Losses: Bundled Parking and Residential Rents in the Metropolitan United States,”](#) Housing Policy Debate, Vol. 27, Issue 2, Aug. 8, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Abbey Seitz, Trinity Gilliam and Arjuna Heim, [“Stalled: How parking mandates drive up housing costs,”](#) Hawai’i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, October 2025, pp. 16-17; and Daniel Baldwin Hess and Brendan Flowers, [“Developer Response to the Removal of Minimum Parking Requirements in Buffalo,”](#) Transportation Research Journal, Volume 2677, Issue 12, May 10, 2023; C. J. Gabbe, Gregory Pierce and Gordon Clowers, [“Parking policy: The effects of residential minimum parking requirements in Seattle,”](#) Land Use Policy, Vol. 91, February 2020

Parking mandates also have hidden costs. Space dedicated to parking cannot be used to expand housing and can make it difficult to create walkable communities.

Moreover, parking mandates can frustrate renovation and rebuilding. In many areas of the state, an old building that does not meet current parking rules cannot be retrofitted to a new use without having to purchase land to add the required parking.

A planned bowling alley on Lanai encountered this problem. In that case, construction was delayed as the owners of the lot tried to figure out how to provide more parking.<sup>3</sup>

In Lahaina, owners of historic-zoned buildings destroyed by the 2023 wildfires could have been required to add parking spaces as part of the rebuilding process, but the Maui County Office of Recovery issued a directive waiving those rules.<sup>4</sup> Paving more of Lahaina just to provide parking would have made it impossible to recreate its walkable, historic aesthetic.

The Legislature can help address the housing crisis by removing burdensome and unnecessary barriers to growth such as parking mandates. We urge you to pass SB2981.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas  
Director of Strategic Campaigns  
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

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<sup>3</sup> Ahry McGurik, "[Lanai bowling alley saga shines light on county's cumbersome parking mandates](#)," The Maui News, Oct. 30, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Josiah Nishita and John Smith, "[Recovery Coordination Directive No. 4](#)," Maui Office of Recovery, Dec. 9, 2025.



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**OUR MISSION**

To support and advance public policies that make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

**OUR VISION**

Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai'i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai'i can thrive.

---

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HolomuaCollaborative.org

**Committee:** Senate Committee on Judiciary  
**Bill Number:** SB2981, Relating to Land Use  
**Hearing Date and Time:** March 4, 9:40am, Room 016  
**Re:** Testimony of Holomua Collaborative – Support

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB2981, Relating to Land Use. This bill would prohibit counties imposing minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district

Hawai'i remains in a severe housing crisis. Skyrocketing home prices leave many local families struggling to secure safe, attainable places to live. The median single family home price in Hawai'i now exceeds \$1,000,000, while the median for a condominium is nearly \$650,000, creating an impossible barrier for most residents. As a result, many local families are being forced to leave in search of more affordable options elsewhere. Between July 2024 and July 2025, an average of 11 people left Hawai'i *each day*.<sup>1</sup> More Native Hawaiians now live outside Hawai'i than within it, representing a staggering loss of our culture, traditions, and the very essence of what makes Hawai'i home.

In October 2025, a survey<sup>2</sup> on the day-to-day financial experience of local workers suggested that this crisis continues to reach alarming levels. When nearly 3,200 local workers were asked if they might need to move to a less expensive state, only 25 percent answered a definitive “no”, which is a decrease from 31 percent in 2024. Meanwhile, 75 percent said “yes” or were “unsure”, representing an increase from 69 percent in 2024. Additionally, more than half of respondents cited housing costs as the primary driver of their high cost of living.

The high cost of living and limited housing options have led essential members of our workforce, including teachers, firefighters, and health care workers, to consider relocating. This exodus deepens our state's labor shortages and diminishes the quality of life for all residents. Each local worker and family we lose to the continent contributes to the erosion of our economy, our culture, and our community.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Estimates, released January 2026; and calculations by the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, Hawai'i State Data Center.

[https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/census/popestimate/2025/state-pop/2025\\_daily\\_est\\_state.pdf](https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/census/popestimate/2025/state-pop/2025_daily_est_state.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 2025 Hawai'i Affordability Survey - <https://holomuacollective.org/survey-25/#3>

SB2981 addresses a critical, yet often overlooked, driver of these high housing costs: outdated government mandates that require a fixed number of parking stalls for every new home. While these requirements were originally intended to manage street congestion, they have evolved into a significant financial barrier that makes housing development prohibitively expensive. In Hawai'i, the cost of constructing a single parking stall in a structured garage can range from \$50,000 to over \$80,000. When developers are forced to build more parking than the market or the specific site requires, that massive capital expense is not absorbed by the developer; it is passed directly to the local family through higher rents or a higher mortgage. For many working families, the "cost" of these mandated stalls can mean the difference between qualifying for a home or being priced out of the islands entirely.

Beyond the direct construction costs, parking minimums also limit the number of housing units that can be built on a single lot. By requiring significant square footage be dedicated to cars rather than people, we are effectively choosing to house vehicles over our neighbors. This is particularly damaging for infill development and affordable housing projects near transit hubs, where residents may not even own a vehicle but are still forced to pay for the "bundled" cost of a parking space they do not use. Removing these mandates does not mean parking will disappear; it simply allows homebuilders and homeowners to determine the right amount of parking based on the actual needs of the residents and the unique constraints of the site.

By passing SB2981, we can take a tangible step toward reducing the cost of housing production and making the dream of homeownership more attainable for the 75 percent of local workers who are currently questioning their future in Hawai'i. We must prioritize people over pavement if we hope to stem the tide of residents leaving for the mainland.

I urge you to support SB2981.

Sincerely,

Matthew Prellberg  
Policy & Communications Director

**COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

February 25, 2026

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN  
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL  
ON  
SB 2981, RELATING TO LAND USE  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Wednesday, March 4, 2026  
9:40 a.m.  
Conference Room 016  
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2981, Relating to Land Use. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

SB 2981, which prohibits minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district, is a thoughtful approach to increase parking flexibility in developments, promote alternative transit options, and lower the cost of rent and home sales prices. By allowing parking decisions to be made on a case-by-case basis rather than through a uniform approach, community input can be considered by developers so that parking supply more accurately matches demand. As a result of less surplus parking, this supports added housing production, better land use decisions, and more pedestrian-friendly urban areas.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2981. 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](mailto:cokcouncil@kauai.gov).

Sincerely,

**ADDISON BULOSAN**  
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

RM:sf

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Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

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Director of Council Services  
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services  
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
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[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

February 28, 2026

TO: Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Nohelani U'u-Hodgins  
Councilmember

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nohelani U'u-Hodgins".

DATE: Wednesday, March 4, 2026  
9:40 a.m., Conference Room 016

SUBJECT: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2981, RELATING TO LAND USE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to prohibit minimum off-street parking requirements beginning 7/1/2027 for any new development in an urban district and requires each county to amend or appeal any charter provision, ordinance, code, standard, or administrative procedure that imposes a minimum off-street parking requirement by 7/1/2027.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

Minimum parking mandates often increase construction costs without reflecting transportation requirements or neighborhood conditions. By requiring a fixed number of parking stalls regardless of context. These rules can make housing and mixed-use projects more expensive and less feasible. Those added costs are ultimately passed on to residents and businesses through higher rents and prices.

Allowing parking decisions to be made on a case-by-case basis gives flexibility to developers and communities to better match real demand. This is especially important in urban areas where residents may rely more on walking, biking, and transit, and where land is limited and valuable. Reducing unnecessary parking construction can help support more housing production, more efficient land use, and more vibrant, pedestrian-focused neighborhoods.

February 28, 2026

Page 2

SB 2981 supports adaptive reuse and smaller-unit types by removing regulatory barriers that can prevent older buildings from being converted into productive housing. By easing these constraints, this bill helps unlock underused buildings for housing, reduces redevelopment costs, shortens project timelines, and limits unnecessary demolition and new construction. This encourages more efficient use of existing infrastructure and expands affordable housing options.

Thank you for your consideration.

**SB-2981**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 2:58:50 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/4/2026 9:40:00 AM

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 writing in **strong support of SB2981**, which prohibits minimum off-street parking requirements for any new development in an urban district and requires counties to amend or repeal conflicting regulations by July 1, 2027. This bill is a bold, necessary step toward untethering housing production from costly, outdated mandates that have distorted our communities for decades.

**Parking mandates make housing more expensive and limit how much housing can be built.** When the government requires a fixed number of parking spaces per unit—regardless of location, transit access, or actual need—it drives up construction costs and consumes land that could otherwise become homes. These requirements are not neutral; they are subsidies for car storage that everyone pays for, whether they drive or not.

**SB2981 applies this reform broadly across all urban districts.** Unlike narrower bills that exempt only certain project types, this legislation removes parking mandates for *any* new development within urban areas. This sends a clear signal: in places already served by infrastructure, transit, and jobs, we will stop forcing developers to build parking that residents may not want or need. The result is more flexibility, more homes, and more efficient use of land.

**The cost of building parking is passed down to homeowners and renters—even if they don't own a car.** Structured parking can cost \$50,000 or more per space to construct. Those costs are folded into rents and sale prices, meaning that families who rely on transit, biking, or walking are effectively subsidizing parking they do not use. SB2981 ends this hidden tax on housing.

**Reducing parking mandates helps reduce car dependency and encourages investment in better alternatives.** When we stop requiring abundant free parking with every new development, we create conditions where pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure become more viable and more valued. Municipalities are incentivized to invest in mobility options that serve everyone—not just those who drive. Over time, this shift can reduce traffic, lower emissions, and make our communities more connected and livable.

**The 2027 deadline ensures counties act with urgency but not without time.** Counties have two years to review and revise their codes, charters, and ordinances. This is a reasonable

transition period that respects local control while establishing a clear statewide direction. No more studies. No more delays. Just action.

SB2981 does not prohibit parking altogether. It simply removes the government mandate, allowing developers and residents to decide how much parking is actually needed. That is flexibility. That is freedom. And that is a step toward a more affordable, sustainable Hawai'i.

I urge you to pass this bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-2981**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 6:05:32 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/4/2026 9:40:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jonathan Huynh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I support this bill because it proposes to prohibit minimum off-street parking requirements for new developments within designated urban districts, effective July 1, 2027. This legislation aims to reduce housing costs and encourage denser, transit-oriented development by removing mandatory parking minimums. It aims to reduce reliance on cars and improve the cost of living. Mahalo.



**HAWAII STATE SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
State Capitol, Room 016  
9:40 AM**

March 4, 2026

Subject: SB 2981 - RELATING TO LAND USE

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and members of the Committees:

My name is Roseann Freitas, CEO of the Building Industry Association of Hawaii (BIA-Hawaii). Chartered in 1955, the Building Industry Association of Hawaii is a professional trade organization affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders, representing the building industry and its associates. BIA-Hawaii takes a leadership role in unifying and promoting the interests of the industry to enhance the quality of life for the people of Hawaii. Our members build the communities we all call home.

BIA-Hawaii is in support of SB 2981, which would, beginning July 1, 2027, prohibit counties from imposing minimum parking mandates for certain developments, including affordable housing projects, accessory dwelling units, senior housing, housing for persons with disabilities, and other community-serving facilities.

Hawaii's housing affordability crisis requires practical policy responses that remove unnecessary cost without sacrificing quality of life. Parking stalls can add tens of thousands of dollars per unit to the cost of housing, even when residents do not own cars or the stalls go unused — cost that is ultimately passed on to buyers and renters. Allowing developers and communities greater flexibility to match parking supply with real needs — rather than mandating parking stalls as a precondition to development — supports more affordable housing production, more efficient use of limited land, and broader consumer choice in how residents live and move around our islands.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our comments on this matter.