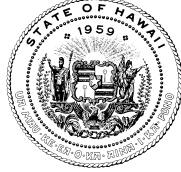


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o
Hawai'i*

SYLVIA J. LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ka Hope Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina
'o Hawai'i*



KALI WATSON
CHAIRMAN, HHC
Ka Luna Ho'okele

KATIE L. DUCATT
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRMAN
Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawai'i

P. O. BOX 1879
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
HEARING ON FEBRUARY 26, 2024 AT 12:30PM IN CR 308

HB 2358, HD 1, RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS

February 26, 2024

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

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) supports this bill, which would add a new section to Chapter 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes, that would exempt certain affordable housing projects from the requirements of the chapter.

DHHL intends to develop affordable housing projects that fit within the definition provided in this measure. DHHL appreciates the intent of this bill because it will help to streamline processes for the development, planning, permitting, and construction of all new affordable housing projects produced by the state and counties.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



February 25, 2024

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

RE: **HB 2358 HD1– RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS**
Hearing date – February 26, 2024 at 12:30 PM

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

Thank you for allowing NAIOP Hawaii to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF HB 2358 HD1– RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS (EIS)**. NAIOP Hawaii is the Hawaii chapter of the nation’s leading organization for office, industrial, retail, residential and mixed-use real estate. NAIOP Hawaii has over 200 members in the State including local developers, owners, investors, asset managers, lenders, and other professionals. NAIOP Hawaii is generally supportive of efforts to incentivize sustainability and promote the development of more affordable housing.

HB 2358 HD1 expressly codifies the exemption from environmental impact statements for affordable housing projects that meet certain criteria. Specifically, the exemption is narrowly tailored to affordable housing projects that:

1. Trigger review due to use of state or county lands or use within the Waikiki special district;
2. Is consistent with county zoning classifications; and
3. Does not require a variance for a shoreline setback or is not located in an environmentally sensitive area.

NAIOP Hawaii is supportive of creative housing solutions to address Hawaii’s housing shortage. Hawaii is currently facing housing crisis with the need for more affordable homes for residents reaching an all-time high. We support this measure which attempts to strike a reasonable balance between environmental concerns and the pressing need for more affordable housing. We completely understand the importance of EIS’, however, we support the need for expedited regulatory reviews that enable the development of much needed affordable housing.

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
February 25, 2024
Page 2

Ultimately, Hawaii residents need housing units to be produced to allow our local families to continue to thrive here. NAIOP Hawaii supports HB 2358 HD1 which will advance the production of homes for our residents. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reyn Tanaka', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Reyn Tanaka, President
NAIOP Hawaii



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 26, 2024

12:30 PM

CR308

In **OPPOSITION** to **HB2358 HD1**: Relating to Environmental Impact Statements

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

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **OPPOSES HB2358 HD1**, which could result in significant and unnecessary environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural impacts to the public interest, from certain housing projects on public lands or using public funds.

The Sierra Club emphasizes that an exemption from our environmental review law as proposed by this measure may result in significant, unnecessary, and irreversible impacts to a range of public interests in the use and development of our limited public lands. Our environmental review law has, for 40 years, played a critical role in ensuring that certain decisions potentially impacting our islands' environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic integrity are carefully and transparently assessed by government decisionmakers. The environmental review law also helps to ensure that decisionmakers explicitly consider ways to avoid such impacts, to the extent feasible. Notably, the environmental review process includes opportunities for decisionmakers and project planners to be informed by those with a wide range of expertise, insight, and experiences, who can identify and offer mitigation recommendations for the broad spectrum of specific impacts that may arise from particular projects. Exempting development projects from environmental review may therefore result in less-than-fully-informed project planning and decisionmaking, which could lead to significant, unanticipated, and potentially avoidable impacts to the public's interests.

This measure may result in significant and avoidable impacts to our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life, by greatly expanding the existing regulatory exemption from environmental assessments for "affordable housing" projects. Existing rules, which provide for a categorical exemption of certain affordable housing projects in the urban land use district, do *not* allow for such exemptions to be issued when a project *may nonetheless result in significant impacts*. For example, currently, an exemption may not be issued for projects that are likely to have significant impacts due to their location on lands that contain cultural sites, endangered species habitat, and other environmental and cultural features, or that may also contain residual and highly toxic pesticides, heavy metals, and other contaminants. This measure instead would disregard any and all potential environmental, cultural, and human health impacts, regardless of their severity, and allow decisionmakers and project planners to proceed without any assessment of such impacts, much less potential options to mitigate them.



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAII

Moreover, this measure would deprive the public of the current opportunity to inform government and project decisionmakers regarding potential impacts or environmental features that these decisionmakers may not be aware of. The current categorical exemption rules, including those concerning the development of affordable housing, generally provide for some form of public notice, whether through a decisionmaking body's public approval of a categorical exemption pursuant to the Sunshine Law, and/or via publication in the Environmental Notice. **Projects under this measure could instead proceed with no public notice or input until plans are completed and in the process of being implemented, running the risk of unanticipated significant impacts as well as substantial and costly community conflict or controversy, due to the lack of knowledge on the part of project planners and government decisionmakers.**

The Sierra Club emphasizes that the urban land use district contains vast acreages of land that are not fully developed, and that may still contain significant environmental and cultural resources or other features that may be significantly impacted by development projects. For example, much of the coastal regions of Kahalu'u, Ka'a'awa to Kahuku, as well as Hale'iwa, Pūpūkea, and Waialua on O'ahu are within the urban land use district boundary. Other areas in the urban district include Kaunakakai on Moloka'i; Hāna, Maui; and Keauhou, Hawai'i Island, among many, many others. The Sierra Club therefore urges the Committee not to dismiss the need to assess the environmental and cultural value of 'āina due to its inclusion in the urban district, as would be proposed under this measure.

The Sierra Club also appreciates that certain privately-funded affordable housing projects on private lands may in some instances not be subject to the requirements of our environmental review law. However, the heightened public interest in the use of our limited public land base, and the fiduciary public trust obligations of government entities in the use and disposition of our public lands and resources,¹ strongly counsel retaining the careful analysis, transparency, and input opportunities that environmental review provides.

Our public lands and natural and cultural resources are held in trust for the benefit of present and future generations, and potentially irrevocable environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts should be carefully considered when making major decisions regarding their development. Accordingly, the Sierra Club respectfully urges the Committee to **HOLD HB2358 HD1.** Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify.

¹ See HAW. CONST. ART. XI SEC. 1.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 10:28:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John & Rita Shockley	Free Access Coalition	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

The Free Access Coalition OPPOSES HB2358 that would allow housing construction to proceed with no ecological checks. Despite the real need for affordable housing, Projects that seek to bypass environmental review carte-blanche are a danger to the people of the State. Current rules allow for special cases.

We support free public access to housing but do not support cost-cutting construction methods that may save money for builders but harm the land in the long run.

Mahalo for your time.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 2:24:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kupuna for the Mo'opuna	Kupuna for the Moopuna	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSED TO HB 2358 HD1

HB 2358 will result in irreversible negative impacts to a range of public interests in the use and development of our limited public lands. Our public lands are held in trust and must be held to the highest of review in use. Please do not pass HB 2358 HD1.



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai‘i

To: House Committee on Finance
Hon. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Hon. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Re: HB 2358 HD 1 RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS

Hearing: Monday, February 26, 2024, 12:30 p.m., Room 308 & videoconference

Position: Opposition

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i (DPH) strongly opposes HB 2358 HD1. This bill would exempt from environmental impact statement requirements certain affordable housing projects. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

The PLATFORM OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAI‘I as adopted at the 2022 State Convention on May 28, 2022, states as follows:

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Protect and preserve Hawai‘i’s environment and achieve energy sustainability. Advance measures to re-establish a healthy climate and environment for humans and fellow species, including actions to urgently address climate change. Work towards 100% renewable clean energy goals.

We believe that all people have the right to live in a clean, healthy and safe environment. We believe that the preservation of our natural environment and its ecological well-being is essential to ensuring a safe, healthy, bountiful life for future generations in Hawai‘i. We support policies that create a more sustainable society. We support the restoration, preservation, and protection of native ecosystems. [Emphasis added.]

We believe in the resource management principles outlined in the Public Trust doctrine of the Hawai‘i State Constitution. We support policy that incorporates indigenous resource-management practices and technologies such as the Ahupua‘a System in modern urban planning and development to create an ecologically sustainable balance between the needs of the people and the rights of nature.

We believe that a key part of a sustainable and self-sufficient future for Hawai‘i lies in achieving energy independence through a transition to clean renewable energy sources. We support policies that eliminate our dependence on fossil fuels and other dirty energy sources. We support policies that expand access to public transportation and encourage transit-oriented development and walkable communities.

The Environmental Caucus opposes HB 2358 HD 1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully tailored categorical exemption environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, if they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1.

Melodie Adyja legislativepriorities@gmail.com

Alan B. Burdick burdick808@gmail.com

Co-Chairs,

Environmental Caucus of the
Democratic Party of Hawai‘i

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 6:25:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Bottorff	CleanEarth4Kids.org	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

CleanEarth4Kids.org opposes HB2358 HD1. Environmental reviews and public notice are absolutely necessary to protect from potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts of building projects.



Ka Iwi Coalition

Mauka to Makai



A COMMUNITY DRIVEN, VOLUNTEER-BASED RESTORATION PROJECT.
*Hāwea Heiau Complex
& Keawāwā Wetland*
CELEBRATE THE CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF YOUR COMMUNITY!

2024

February 26, 2024

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Livable Hawaii Kai Hui

Livable Hawaii Kai Hui is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, community organization serving East Honolulu since 2004. We strive to promote sensible growth, respect for cultural & natural resources, and upholding the integrity of the East Honolulu Sustainable Communities Plan.

Hawai'i State House of Representatives
Committee on Finance
Meeting on February 26, 2024 at 12:30 p.m.
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

SUBJECT: STRONG OPPOSITION TO HB2358 HD1, EIS Exemptions

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa & FIN Committee Members,

As an 'āina-based nonprofit with a mission to protect East Honolulu's cultural and natural resources, Livable Hawaii Kai Hui **strongly opposes HB2358 HD1** providing exemptions to certain projects from Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) requirements.

To be clear, the Hui supports sustainable development. This is not a matter of NIMBY-ism or total opposition to development, but rather a genuine and shared concern that in the rush to address Hawai'i's housing crisis, we may end up circumventing crucial environmental protections.

The Hui recognizes that EIS and other environmental review requirements can be burdensome, particularly for affordable housing projects. But we also recognize that especially in a place like Hawai'i, those obstacles can sometimes be the public's only way to slow down projects that are clearly harmful to our 'āina. There has to be a better balance than the one struck by this bill.

Please **OPPOSE** HB2358 HD1. Mahalo to the entire Committee on Finance for hearing this measure and voting in support of our 'āina.

Mālama pono,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth C. Reilly".

Elizabeth Reilly
Founder/President

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 11:09:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is another giveaway, masquerading as needed affordable housing. Once you screw with the environment, it is lost. What is also missing is a definition of affordable that is really affordable. Most affordable housing is not affordable to the vast majority of those in need of housing. We need the environmental statements, studies, etc. before Hawaii nei exists no more.

Please defer this bill.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 10:11:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lory Ono	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Lory Ono and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 10:20:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marjorie Bonar	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

While affordable housing is of great importance, it does not override the protection of environmental and cultural priorities. This bill seems a way to circumvent restrictions on areas that would not usually be allowable. Protect and preserve our sensitive area.

I could support a bill of this type for very limited development at TRULY affordable criteria, not the inflated options currently in place.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 10:44:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB2358 HD1 that would allow projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

The need for affordable homes must not override considerations of the environment in which they are placed. Allowing affordable housing developers to be exempt from an environmental review **only benefits the developer**, particularly in misguided bills like this one, where **“affordable” is not even properly defined**.

Just yesterday the Governor noted to the press that there are 75,000 Illegal short-term rentals in our state, with 52% of short-term rentals in the state owned by people who reside in the continental United States. Addressing this very concerning situation properly would go a long way in tackling our affordable housing crisis. Yet instead, the state is looking at weakening environmental reviews that are in place to protect present and future generations from potentially irrevocable environmental, and cultural harms via this give-away to developers. Our public lands are held in trust for the benefit of present and future generations, and potentially irrevocable environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts should be carefully considered when making major decisions regarding their development.

Most importantly, the term "affordable" is regularly misused. State and county policies aimed at increasing Hawaii's housing stock have had the unintended consequence of **pushing out lower-income residents**. Essentially, these so-called affordable units are completely unaffordable to many, with greedy developers getting away with rents reported as high as \$3,000 per month for 2-bedroom units. That's outrageous.

We all want to solve the affordable housing crisis. But if you want to implement policies and actions to truly address the problem, this measure isn't it.

I urge you to do the right thing. **HOLD** this misguided measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 10:49:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marilyn Mick	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Marilyn Mick and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners’ lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:05:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Garland	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners’ lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

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Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Emily

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:09:48 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Shay Chan Hodges and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners’ lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

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Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:12:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary True	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Mary True and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1.

Thank you for your attention, Mary True, Pepekeo, 96783

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:15:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bo Breda	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Bo Breda and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners’ lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:17:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Wilson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Peter Wilson and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:19:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Pence	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Deborah Pence and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:25:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica dos Santos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 25, 2024

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and esteemed members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Jessica dos Santos and I was born and raised in, and a life-long resident of, Kahuku. I am writing to vehemently OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which poses a grave threat to our environmental and cultural heritage by advocating for an egregious exemption from environmental review for select "affordable" housing projects. This proposal, scheduled for hearing on Monday, February 26 at 12:30pm, must be staunchly opposed before it proceeds to the Senate.

The bill in question undermines the fundamental purpose of environmental review processes, which serve to safeguard our native ecosystems, cultural sites, public health, economy, and overall quality of life.

HB2358 HD1 seeks to grant unwarranted immunity to certain "affordable" housing projects from crucial review requirements, irrespective of the severity of their potential impacts. It proposes an alarming blanket exemption that would eliminate any scrutiny or public oversight, regardless of a project's potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts or the sensitivity of its location.

It is worth noting that the designated "urban" districts where these projects may be situated encompass extensive undeveloped areas that may harbor delicate natural and cultural features and traditional Native Hawaiian practices.

While the necessity for affordable housing in Hawai'i is undeniable, the wholesale exemption of developments from environmental and cultural review poses an existential threat to our environmental and cultural integrity. Such a shortsighted approach jeopardizes the well-being of current and future generations and risks irreparable harm to our cherished natural and cultural heritage.

In conclusion, I urge the Committee to decisively REJECT HB2358 HD1. Preserving our environmental review processes is paramount to ensuring sustainable development and safeguarding the interests of our communities. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Warm regards,

Jessica dos Santos

Life-long Resident and Concerned Citizen

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:31:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathan Leo Braulick	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Nathan Leo Braulick and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners’ lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:34:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lei Fisher	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I respectfully **OPPOSE** HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners’ lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **HOLD** HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:42:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meredith Buck	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Meredith Buck, and I OPPOSE HB 2358 HD1. This bill threatens the environment and culture of our local community, and sets an incredibly dangerous precedent for future developments.

I understand that the intention of this bill is to expediate the construction of affordable housing for our community, but I find that intention hard to trust. There is a very poor track record for affordable housing in Hawai'i, with finished homes pricing well out of reach for many of the very people that were supposed to be served by those developments.

While I am not an active member of the Sierra Club, I did see their sample testimony, and I would like to share an excerpt below.

"Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

"This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

"Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow."

I ask that the Committee HOLD HB2358 HD1. Thank you for your time and consideration.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:43:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Matthews	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill as it exempts construction from environmental reviews. The environment is the most important consideration not the speed of construction.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:55:31 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jennifer valentine	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 12:08:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Matt and though I see the dire need for affordable house, I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1.

Let's not set a bad precedence of putting our natural resources and the need for environmental monitoring second.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 12:15:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rayne Regush	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita and House Finance Committee Members:

I strongly urge you to OPPOSE HB2358 HD1. Although “affordable housing” is a priority, it MUST NOT be at the expense of eliminating environmental review. The value of our culture and environment is far more precious.

The existing rules for categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, already provides sufficient opportunities for housing, provided the project will not result in significant impacts.

Please do not allow HB2358 HD1 to roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise of "codifying" existing rules. Please do not ignore all potential ecological, cultural, health, economic, and other impacts from certain “affordable” housing projects by completely exempting them from any environmental review. To do so threatens Hawai‘i’s quality of life and public trust.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Rayne Regush
Kauai

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 12:19:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Douglas	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Bob Douglas and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 12:21:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Lyerly	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Please oppose and hold this HB2358 which sets a dangerous precedent for on going development. True we need housing but not at the expense of free license from our important environmental reviews. This goes far beyond Hawai'i's environmental review rules, which allows for a "categorical exemption" to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects on urban lands.

Mahalo for this opportunity to be heard for the environment!

With Aloha,

Linda Lyerly, Lahaina

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 12:29:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina Bacchilega	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Cristina Bacchilega and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners’ lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This new measure would instead allow ALL such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, *regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.*

Please do not allow this uncalled for change to happen as it threatens our already vulnerably precarious environment. I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 12:30:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Diane Ware. I live in the Moku o Ka'u and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

For these reasons I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 1:00:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Craig Tanaka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Craig Tanaka and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 1:00:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We must have strong environmental laws.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 1:05:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Milena Kari	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Milena Kari and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1. I believe that this bill will threaten our environment and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

To allow all projects classified as "affordable" (and we all know how unaffordable they really are) to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, will open up the possibility of severe environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Therefore, I urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 1:20:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Michele Nihipali and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow and favors developers over the public.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 1:26:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Puppione	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Greg Puppione and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 1:27:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natasha Latta	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is _____ and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 2:02:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle K Kajihiro	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB2358 HD1, which would undermine Hawai'i's environmental review laws by providing a giant loophole for developers to bypass environmental review by claiming to build "affordable" housing. The designation of "affordable" housing has already been abused by developers to get tax breaks for luxury high rises that are not really affordable for residents, that have high rates of vacancy, and that are primarily investments for speculators. Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects. This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest. I urge you to reject this dangerous bill.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 2:07:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madison Owens	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Madison Owens and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 2:36:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kate Paine	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No more short-sighted giving away assets to developers who are not building affordable housing at all. Do not support off-shore investment for campaign coffers.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 2:45:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jolyn Okimoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

My name is Jolyn Okimoto and I am a long-time resident of Honolulu, testifying as an individual. I am writing to OPPOSE HB2358 HD1.

While it is important to build more affordable housing, such projects should not receive more exemptions of environmental assessment (EA) requirements. Proposed affordable housing projects should continue to be subject to EA requirements so that if built, new residents are SAFE living there. The need for affordable homes must not override considerations of the environment in which they are placed.

Data shows that this is a problem on the federal side. In November 2023 data was released by the National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation showing that nearly a quarter of federally assisted homes are located in areas with the greatest risk of negative impacts from natural hazards. This data uses the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Risk Index. The circumstances are different, but the message is the same: The environment must be considered, via the full EA process, to build safe affordable housing.

I ask you to OPPOSE HB2358 HD1.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Aloha, Jolyn Okimoto

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 2:51:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Harriet Burkholder	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill. The bill in place now allows for exceptions already, but HB 2358 would make it too easy for exceptions to be made without any public comment.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 2:55:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners’ lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 4:26:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Best	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Respectfully, we need environmental review with public notice so that cultural, socioeconomic and environmental impacts can be assessed for the public interest. Please do not pass this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Bill and Bobbie Best, Wailuku

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 4:34:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrice Choy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

I support building truly affordable housing, but to side-step environmental reviews to meet the goal for constructing affordable housing is unacceptable.

I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

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Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 9:33:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Maitino	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Maria Maitino and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

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Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Maria Maitino

Kilauea, Kauai

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 10:10:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Barry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Barbara Barry from Maui and I respectfully OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which needlessly threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects.

Current rules already allow for a carefully-tailored categorical exemption to environmental review for certain "affordable" housing projects in the urban district, provided that they are unlikely to result in significant impacts to public trust resources, cultural practices, and other environmental considerations. Exemptions granted under the current rules are also subject to public notice requirements that minimize the potential for unanticipated significant impacts due to project planners' lack of familiarity with any given project site. This exemption was carefully crafted after close consideration of the myriad public interests that may be at stake in the development of such projects.

This measure would instead allow all such projects to be developed without any environmental review, and without any public notice, regardless of the severity of potential environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts and threats to the public's interest.

Our environmental review law allows decisionmakers and the public to make more fully-informed decisions that can balance and mitigate potential long-term impacts to the public interest. This ensures prudent planning while reducing conflict, minimizing adverse outcomes, and safeguarding the health and well-being of present and future generations. Please do not roll back this critical law under the mistaken guise that we would simply be "codifying" existing rules - this measure goes far beyond what our existing rules allow.

*Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to HOLD HB2358 HD1.
Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.*

HB-2358-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:05:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2024 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jody Smith	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE HB2358 HD1, which threatens our environmental and cultural integrity and overall quality of life through an outright exemption to environmental review for certain “affordable” housing projects.

Environmental review laws exist for an important reason — our islands are known as the extinction capitol of the nation. Ignoring our fragile environment has LONG TERM NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES, some of which we experiencing today!

Don’t ignore environmental review for ANY development. Affordability is not an adequate reason to skip environmental reviews which protect all of our natural resources long term.