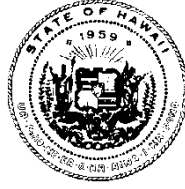


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR



**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of  
**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation  
Before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING  
AND  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

February 07, 2025 at 1:15 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 229

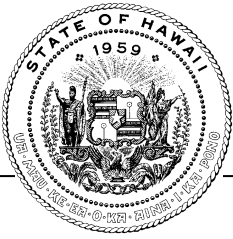
In consideration of  
**S.B. 1614**  
**RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT.**

Chairs Chang and Inouye, Vice Chairs Hashimoto and Elefante, and members of the Committees.

HHFDC **supports** SB 1614, which establishes what constitutes transit-oriented development (TOD) and incentivizes development in county-designated TOD areas or zones. It also prioritizes the allocation of a minimum percentage of the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF) for certain mixed-income rental housing projects or units.

HHFDC supports the development of high-density communities near transit stations, particularly stations near a locally preferred alternative for a mass transit project. TOD has the potential to lower transportation costs for residents, reduce traffic congestion, improve accessibility to businesses and services, efficiently use infrastructure, and create healthier, walkable communities. The bill promotes high-density TOD neighborhoods by incentivizing the counties to adopt high-density standards to receive prioritization of RHRF funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846  
Fax: (808) 587-2824  
Web: <https://planning.hawaii.gov/>

Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING  
AND  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

Friday, February 7, 2025  
1:15 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

in consideration of  
**SB 1614**  
**RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT.**

Chairs Chang and Inouye, Vice Chairs Hashimoto and Elefante, and Members of the Committees:

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports the bill's intent and offers comments** on SB 1614, which establishes what constitutes transit-oriented development (TOD) and incentivizes housing development in County-designated transit-oriented development areas or zones.

OPSD believes that directing housing to TOD areas enables the creation of more walkable, vibrant communities in areas with transit service and where infrastructure exists, or can be improved, to accommodate additional growth.

In particular, OPSD **strongly supports** the amendments to Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 226--63, which would define TOD and provide clarity for statewide TOD implementation as to what constitutes County-designated TOD areas. This bill also directs the TOD Council to ensure the [\*State Strategic Plan for Transit-Oriented Development\*](#) incorporates the TOD areas designated by the Counties in the Strategic Plan to facilitate coordination and collaboration in the implementation of shared TOD initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



## Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

### Committee on Housing Committee on Water & Land

February 7, 2025 at 1:15PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

### SB1614 Relating to Transit-Oriented Development

Dear Chairs Chang and Inouye, Vice Chairs Hashimoto and Elefante, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports SB1614**, which aims to streamline housing development near public transit by providing incentives for construction in these areas. The bill prioritizes affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families, while simplifying the development process for builders. It also ensures critical infrastructure improvements in transit-oriented zones, promoting the creation of sustainable, walkable communities that reduce reliance on cars, lower emissions, and support local businesses.

This bill is consistent with several goals of the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), including support for active and public transportation, promoting an equitable transportation system, and improving air quality and protecting environmental and cultural assets.

Incentivizing building at a higher-density in designated areas close to public transit areas will encourage more walkable, connected communities where residents drive far less each day than their counterparts in more sprawling locations.<sup>1</sup> In addition, mixed-use developments makes it easier for people to get around without their car, which can reduce emissions and transportation costs, while providing more opportunities for physical activity, and improving access for those who do not own a vehicle.<sup>2</sup>

For the State to meet its climate and energy goals, emissions from the ground transportation sector must be reduced. In 2019, emissions from transportation activities in Hawaii were 10.68 MMT CO<sub>2</sub> Eq, accounting for 54.9 percent of Energy sector

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Driving-Down-Emissions-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> IBID.

emissions.<sup>3</sup> Ground transportation accounted for the second largest portion of transportation emissions, at 37.7 percent.<sup>4</sup>

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, efficient, and resilient transportation system that serves the mobility needs of all people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

OahuMPO notes the amendments and comments by the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) and Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) and respectfully requests the Committees to consider them.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

---

<sup>3</sup> [https://health.hawaii.gov/cab/files/2023/05/2005-2018-2019-Inventory\\_Final-Report\\_rev2.pdf](https://health.hawaii.gov/cab/files/2023/05/2005-2018-2019-Inventory_Final-Report_rev2.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> IBID.

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

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

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



DAWN TAKEUCHI APUNA  
DIRECTOR  
PO'O

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

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

February 7, 2025

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Housing  
The Honorable Troy N. Hashimoto, Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Water and Land  
Hawaii'i State Senate  
Hawaii'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**Subject: Senate Bill No. 1614**  
**Relating to Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)**

Dear Chairs Chang, Hashimoto and Committee Members:

The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) offers **comments, with a suggested amendment**, on Senate Bill No. 1614. The Bill defines TOD for purposes of state implementation of TOD, incentivizes development in county-designated TOD areas, and allocates a minimum percentage of the rental housing revolving fund (RHRF) for certain mixed-income rental housing projects or units.

As we understand, development in TOD areas could receive priority for RHRF financing based on meeting certain criteria, including ministerial processing of applicable permits and a minimum floor area ratio (FAR). Therefore, we note the following:

- The Bill's definition of "ministerial" is different than the DPP's use of the term, which entails no discretionary review of permits, and only partially aligns with the City's TOD permitting procedures. For example, catalytic projects seeking a Planned Development-Transit permit for maximum flexibility, such as to modify density, height, and height setbacks, are currently reviewed and approved by the Honolulu City Council due to their potential to impact the surroundings. The remaining TOD permits are only reviewed and approved by the DPP Director.

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Housing  
The Honorable Troy N. Hashimoto, Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Water and Land  
Hawai'i State Senate  
Senate Bill No. 1614  
February 7, 2025  
Page 2

- The Bill prescribes the maximum FAR allowed by the adopted TOD Special District or applicable TOD plan, but no less than 7.0 FAR, within ¼-mile of a rail station; and no less than 6.0 FAR for areas between ¼-mile and ½-mile of a rail station. These thresholds align with the allowable FAR through the City's TOD regulations.

As background, these components were developed through significant input from the TOD neighborhood planning process that included community outreach, consultant and staff analyses, and City Council deliberations.

Furthermore, we understand that based on the Bill's definition of "county-designated transit-oriented development areas," there is deference to counties on designation of the TOD areas. However, we noticed a potential conflict and inconsistent use of the term on page 16 of the Bill, and ask that this be clarified as follows:

"(6) Delineate for each county, [~~county-designated~~] transit-oriented development areas within which transit-rich, pedestrian-oriented development is desired and investment in transit-oriented development and supporting infrastructure is to be directed."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Very truly yours,



Dawn Takeuchi Apuna  
Director Designate



# HAWAII APPLESEED

## CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
**Support for SB1614 – RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT.**

Senate Committee on Housing and Water & Land  
Friday, February 7th, 2025 at 1:15PM Conf. Rm. 229 and via Videoconference

---

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of **SB1614**, which establishes a framework for transit-oriented development (TOD) within the HRS and prioritizes the development of mixed-income housing in county-designated TOD zones.

Hawaii faces one of the most severe housing shortages in the nation, with thousands of families struggling to secure safe and affordable housing<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, rising transportation costs disproportionately burden low- and moderate-income households. Increasing density in TOD areas provides a comprehensive solution to these challenges by creating affordable housing near transit hubs, which reduces reliance on private vehicles and promotes equitable access to jobs, schools, and essential services.

Increased density in TOD areas directly benefits vulnerable communities by expanding affordable housing options in transit-rich locations. By defining TOD density, this bill would incentivize counties to adopt a density standard which would benefit residents with limited financial means and reduce their housing and transportation costs, two of the largest household expenses<sup>2</sup>. For families living paycheck to paycheck, this represents a lifeline, offering more disposable income for necessities like food, healthcare, and education.

Moreover, TOD promotes inclusivity and diversity by integrating affordable housing into high-opportunity areas, counteracting the historical patterns of segregation and displacement caused by exclusionary zoning and gentrification. Mixed-income developments, as incentivized by this bill, foster vibrant, integrated communities where people of different economic backgrounds can live, work, and thrive together<sup>3</sup>.

Increased density in TOD zones also brings significant economic benefits by creating opportunities for local businesses and reducing public infrastructure costs<sup>4</sup>. Compact, transit-supportive developments make more efficient use of land and infrastructure, lowering the per-capita cost of services like roads, utilities, and public transit. Furthermore, higher residential density increases ridership on public transit systems, making them more sustainable and

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/HawaiiHousingFactbook2024.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://iri.hks.harvard.edu/files/iri/files/fostering-equitable-and-sustainable-transit-oriented-development.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://housingmatters.urban.org/research-summary/how-transit-oriented-development-can-promote-equitable-healthy-communities>

<sup>4</sup> <https://tod.itdp.org/why-tod-matters.html>



# HAWAII APPLESEED

## CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
**Support for SB1614 – RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT.**  
Senate Committee on Housing and Water & Land  
Friday, February 7th, 2025 at 1:15PM Conf. Rm. 229 and via Videoconference

---

reducing Hawaii's reliance on imported fossil fuels, aligning with the State's climate goals to reduce VMT by 2050<sup>5</sup>.

Additionally Hawaii Appleseed supports incentivizing adoption of TOD standards through prioritizing the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF). The RHRF is a critical resource for financing price-restricted rental housing that serves low- and moderate-income families. Prioritizing the allocation of RHRF funds to counties that adopt state TOD standards within their TOD districts is an effective incentive.

Directing RHRF resources toward TOD locations ensures that affordable housing is built near transit hubs, where it can have the greatest impact. Low-income renters, who are the primary beneficiaries of price-restricted rentals, are also the most likely to rely on public transit. By living in TOD areas, these renters can reduce their transportation costs while gaining improved access to jobs, education, and essential services.

This approach not only promotes equity but also maximizes the social and economic value of public investments in transit infrastructure. **It incentivizes counties to adopt state TOD standards, encouraging compact, walkable, and transit-supportive communities.** By fostering development in TOD districts, we can reduce urban sprawl, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and build vibrant neighborhoods that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.

SB1614 promotes a sensible and equitable vision for Hawaii's TOD future. By increasing density in TOD zones and prioritizing the development of affordable housing in these areas, this bill addresses the housing crisis, reduces social inequities, and supports sustainable, connected communities. I strongly urge the committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

---

<sup>5</sup>[https://climate.hawaii.gov/hi-mitigation/hi-clean-cars-faq/transportation-choices/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://climate.hawaii.gov/hi-mitigation/hi-clean-cars-faq/transportation-choices/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)





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

February 7, 2025

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

**RE: SUPPORT for SB 1614 - RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT**

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

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of SB 1614** which would better define what constitutes Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and allocate Rental Housing Revolving Fund funds to incentivize more dense housing development within county-designated TOD areas.

We believe in fixing incentives. This includes adding new incentives to target housing development towards places that we have said for so long that we want the housing to go. We can and should prioritize our more abundant and dense housing efforts towards those areas that will be best suited for the increase in density, our TOD districts.

In the ongoing conversation around the housing crisis, both supporters and opponents of housing development say that housing should go along the rail, it is time to increase the stock of dense housing in areas served by transit.

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.



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

Sincerely,  
Damien Waikoloa  
Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega  
Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY



Feb. 7, 2025, 1:15 p.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Conference Room 430 and Videoconference

**To: Senate Committee on Housing**

**Sen. Stanley Chang, Chair**  
**Sen. Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice-Chair**

**Senate Committee on Water and Land**

**Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair**  
**Sen. Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice-Chair**

**From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii**

**Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns**

RE: SB1614 — RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice-Chair Miyake and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [SB1614](#), which would encourage the construction of higher-density buildings in county-established transit-oriented development zones or districts.

Specifically, the bill would prioritize funding from the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corp. to projects in TOD areas, as long as the counties in which the projects are proposed allow the permits for them to be processed ministerially, and as long as the counties allow certain levels of density in their TOD areas.

These density levels would range from a floor-area ratio of 4.0 to 7.0 or the maximum FAR allowed by the county's TOD district or plan, depending on where the project would be located in the TOD zone.

This bill could have positive implications for Hawaii's housing market. By encouraging dense, walkable neighborhoods in areas well-served by transit — such as near the Skyline — this bill would make Hawaii more vibrant and connected.

As Grassroot pointed out in a 2023 policy brief, “studies show that walkable neighborhoods also yield positive health outcomes. People lose weight, cardiovascular disease declines, and people report being happier.”<sup>1</sup>

Economically speaking, it makes sense to build more housing in urban areas because water and wastewater infrastructure is usually already present, which could help lower capital expenditures for state and local governments.

Furthermore, individuals who have good access to transit can realize lower transportation costs. Research has found that households living in TOD areas in California save \$429 a year on transportation — equal to about 6% of the households’ annual transportation spending.<sup>2</sup> For Hawaii families struggling with the high cost of living, any reduction in transportation spending would be a benefit.

The ministerial — otherwise known as by-right — permitting process proposed by the bill would make these types of developments more feasible.

According to The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai‘i, Hawaii’s housing regulations are the strictest in the country, and “approval delays” for housing developments are three times longer than the national average among communities surveyed.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, UHERO researchers estimated that regulations comprise 58% of the cost of new condominium construction.<sup>4</sup>

UHERO has also pointed out that “by-right development ordinances have the potential to speed project approval and substantially reduce project costs by reducing opportunities for neighborhood opponents of specific or all affordable housing projects to stop their development.”<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, increasing legal densities in TOD zones will support the creation of more housing units, helping projects pencil out and adding much-needed units.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas  
Director of Strategic Campaigns  
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

---

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Helton, [“How to facilitate more homebuilding in Hawaii,”](#) Grassroot Institute of Hawaii, December 2023, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Hongwei Dong, [“Evaluating the impacts of transit-oriented developments \(TODs\) on household transportation expenditures in California,”](#) Journal of Transport Geography, Vol. 90, January 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Rachel Inafuku, Justin Tyndall and Carl Bonham, [“Measuring the Burden of Housing Regulation in Hawaii,”](#) The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai‘i, April 14, 2022, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Justin Tyndall and Emi Kim, [“Why are Condominiums so Expensive in Hawai‘i?”](#) The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai‘i, May 2024, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Carl Bonham and Sumner La Croix, [“The Maui County Comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan: Understanding its Pros and Cons and Ideas for How to Improve it,”](#) The Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai‘i, Oct. 21, 2021, p. 5.

February 7, 2025

TO: Chair Chang and members of the Senate Committee on Housing  
Chair Inouye and members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land

RE: SB 1614 RELATING TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Chair Chang, Chair Inouye, and members of the Senate Committees on Housing and Water and Land:

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

**We support SB 1614, a measure to incentivize greater density—and more affordable housing—in county-designated transit-oriented development (TOD) districts.**

Pursuant to Act 130, SLH 2016, the State of Hawai'i Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan was drafted to provide Hawai'i with a roadmap for guiding future development in TOD communities. The State TOD Plan makes the case for maximizing housing density in county-designated TOD zones:

“The dire need and the lack of truly affordable housing statewide makes it imperative that the provision of affordable and rental housing be a priority consideration in the use and development of TOD properties. Mixed-use, higher density development is an excellent vehicle for the delivery of affordable and rental housing development, especially in areas close to public transit. Incorporating affordable housing in TOD enables residents to reside in opportunity- and amenity- based neighborhoods.”<sup>1</sup>

SB 1614's incentivization of a 'maximized' approach to housing construction in TOD areas is an environmentally sound and fiscally prudent approach to our housing crisis. More housing in TOD zones means fewer cars on the road and less urban sprawl. Limited, finite sources for financing infrastructure improvements in TOD zones means the State of Hawai'i, through investments in county-designated TOD zones, must strategically maximize the density of our TOD housing supply. Utilizing the Rental Housing Revolving Fund to promote this type of construction is an innovative mechanism for this task.

**We are grateful for your careful consideration of SB 1614.**

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)

---

<sup>1</sup> Hawai'i Office of Planning and Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation. *State Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Strategic Plan*. Honolulu: DBEDT, Updated October 2024. [https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/lud/TODStratPlan\\_Aug2018\\_Current.pdf](https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/lud/TODStratPlan_Aug2018_Current.pdf).

**SB-1614**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:58:44 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/7/2025 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

Building sustainable and human-centered communities is vital to the flourishing of Hawaii. Transit oriented developments helps make that vision a reality by reducing traffic congestions and easing the strains of suburban development. We must make TOD a reality to build more affordable neighborhoods!

I urge this Committee to SUPPORT this bill!

**LATE**

**SB-1614**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 2:14:37 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/7/2025 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Galen Fox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairs Chang, Inouye; VCs Hashimoto, Elefante; members:

In support of SB1614. We need affordable housing. The bill’s interagency council should plan for transit-oriented development districts (TODs) to foster communities with needed affordable housing, office, retail, civic, institutional, and other services near mass transit. Amenities would be built at densities that better support transit ridership and walkability, saving residents income lost to homes and vehicle transit. Please move forward SB1614. Mahalo.

Aloha,

Galen Fox