

To: Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice-Chair
Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs

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Subject: STRONG SUPPORT for SB 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554; Relating to Intoxicating
Liquor

As a resident of Waikiki and current elected member of the Waikiki Neighborhood Board for the past five years, I can tell you based on experience that laws relating to the granting of liquor licenses are in need of serious reform. Therefore, I strongly support the passage of Senate Bill's 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554.

These four senate bills are the result of a great deal of pain endured by many Waikiki residents who found themselves nearly helpless in trying to stop a liquor establishment from being opened up in the Condominium complex where they reside. When the issue came before the Waikiki Neighborhood Board, many members, including myself, were a bit confused and not sure how to proceed. Only now, months after the fact, have I begun to truly comprehend what really happened: some very good people were blind-sided by an un-fair system of granting liquor-license applications.

Many laws guiding the Honolulu Liquor Commission are still very antiquated. As a result, a substantial amount of liquor establishments are allowed to open nearby or directly inside of residential neighborhoods and/or areas without direct community input. More often than not, when granting or denying a liquor-license applications, the very people who will be directly impacted by such businesses are left out of the decision-making process. Essentially what's needed is greater community input before a bar or nightclub is granted a liquor license.

I urge the committee to pass SB 2551, 2552, 2553, and 2554. Passage of these four bills will help improve the quality of life for everyone, not just residents of Waikiki.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.