

Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee (2023-2025) on 2024-09-10 9:00 AM

Meeting Time: 09-10-24 09:00

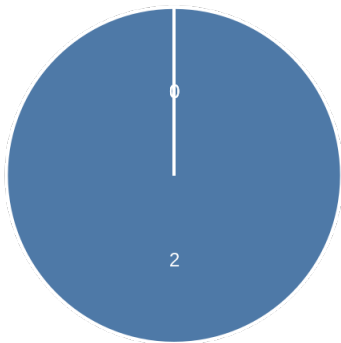
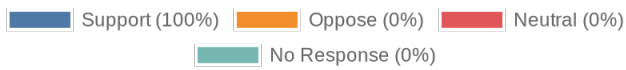
eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee (2023-2025) on 2024-09-10 9:00 AM	09-10-24 09:00	4	2	2	0	0

Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



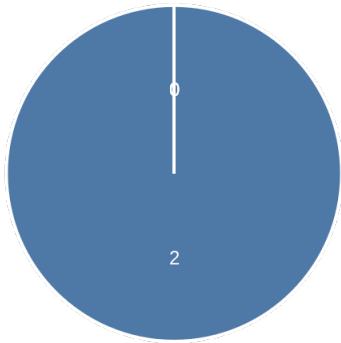
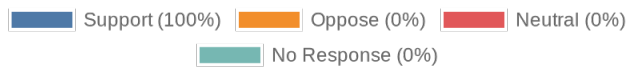
Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee (2023-2025) on 2024-09-10 9:00 AM
09-10-24 09:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
BFED-97, Bill 115 (2024) BILL 115 (2024), RELATING TO THE DEADLINE FOR FILING CLAIMS FOR REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS (BFED-97)	2	2	0	0

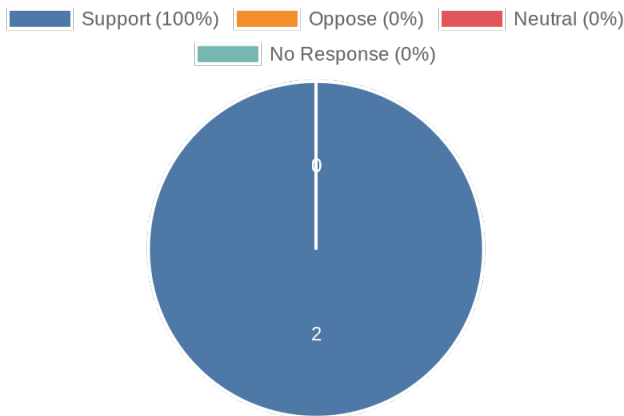
Sentiments for All Agenda Items

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



Overall Sentiment



Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 12:29pm 09-09-24

Aloha Committee Members,

I am writing in support of Bill 115 with perhaps a few changes. I am a Hawaii state resident and I have lived in my owner occupied home until I offered it to FEMA for fire victims, and I moved to a friend's home on February 28, 2024.

I filed appropriately for the tax classification offered by the county. Then I was told that at the end of the FEMA lease my classification would be "short term property" because I live at Mahinahina Beach which is erroneously classified as STR, even though we have not allowed short term rentals for years and we impose a hefty \$20,000 violation fine. I was told at the property tax office, "That's the risk you took when you put your home in the FEMA program." They recommended I contact the Maui Council because if not addressed, I will need to pay many thousands of dollars in taxes for a year until I can re-apply and be granted owner occupied status again.

I offered my home to FEMA because I witnessed first hand the anguish of Lahaina fire victims who were living in tents on the beach or in crowded hotel rooms. I volunteered, raised financial donations and felt compelled to help those needing a clean, comfortable, peaceful home with a kitchen to prepare culturally appropriate meals. The net proceeds of the FEMA rent do not even cover my expenses, but I was ok with that. But having to pay the short term rental rate is unfair to people like me who are only trying to help fire victims from our hearts.

Another issue is those of us whose FEMA leases started after January 31, 2024 received a tax abatement of 12 months as opposed to 18 months for those whose leases began before January 31, 2024. So people like me whose FEMA lease started on February 28, 2024 would have to start paying property tax again in July 2025 even though my home could still be occupied by FEMA for an additional six months after the lease ends, or until August 31, 2025. I'm ok with paying taxes starting July 2025, but I should pay at the owner occupied tax rate, not STR.

To make matters worse, the occupant FEMA placed in my home has been “trashing” it. I hired a housecleaner every two weeks with my own money and even then she has found my home filthy with mold in the shower, dirty dishes piled around the kitchen, and trash and dirty laundry strewn all over. It causes me much stress and anxiety to know the pristine home I gave to FEMA is being so disrespected. On top of that, as it stands now I will have to pay close to \$10,000 in property taxes next year unless Bill 115 is passed with perhaps a few changes to reflect the issues with timing that I have raised here today.

I look to this committee and the Maui Council for help because returning owners to their previous owner occupied status after FEMA occupation of our homes was perhaps not thought about or discussed previously. I would imagine most owners who placed their homes in the FEMA program were already doing short term rentals and are enjoying a huge tax break. That is not the case for those of us who were owner occupied and just want to help fire victims. I fully intend to return to my home at the end of the FEMA lease term. Right now the lease will end on February 28, 2025 but FEMA has the option to renew the lease for an additional six months, which could mean the lease would end on August 31, 2025. If Bill 115 is passed, can we create a way to pay owner-occupied tax rate in July 2025 if FEMA decides to extend the lease until August 31, 2025? Another solution could be to extend our tax abatement until the end of our leases with FEMA, and then allow us to file for owner-occupied status immediately thereafter.

I very much appreciate your efforts towards a solution that doesn't penalize those of us who are Hawaii residents and will return to live in our primary homes after FEMA occupancy.

Mahalo,

Madeline Monaco
Lahaina, HI 96761

Jonathan Helton

Location:

Submitted At: 5:47am 09-09-24

Please see attached

Sept. 10, 2024, 9 a.m.

Council Chamber, Kalana O Maui Building

To: Maui County Council Budget, Finance and Economic Development Committee

Yuki Lei Sugimura, Chair

Tasha Kama, Vice-Chair

From: Jonathan Helton, Policy Researcher

Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

RE: BILL 115 — RELATING TO THE DEADLINE FOR FILING CLAIMS FOR REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

Aloha Chair Sugimura, Vice-Chair Kama and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [Bill 115 \(2024\)](#), which would extend the deadline for property owners renting to residents displaced by the 2023 wildfires to apply for home exemptions or long-term rental exemptions.

The current deadline to file for a property tax exemption in Maui County is typically December 31 of each year. Bill 115 (2024) would extend the deadline to May 31, 2025 for tax year 2026, which begins on July 1, 2025.

For tax year 2025, 520 property owners renting to displaced residents claimed these exemptions.¹

Extending the filing deadline would provide these property owners a degree of flexibility that recognizes the constantly changing recovery and rebuilding process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Jonathan Helton

Policy Researcher

Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

¹ ["Number and Amount of Exemption by Type And County for Tax Year 2024-2025,"](#) Technical Branch, Real Property Assessment Division, Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, City and County of Honolulu. August 2024.