

# MINUTES

of the

## PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON

May 13, 2022

THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI, STATE OF HAWAII, CONVENED A PUBLIC HEARING ON FRIDAY, MAY 13, 2022, AT 10:00 A.M., ONLINE VIA BLUEJEANS EVENTS WITH CHAIR ALICE L. LEE PRESIDING, FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING TESTIMONY, PURSUANT TO SECTION 249-13, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES, AND SECTION 3.24.030, MAUI COUNTY CODE, REGARDING THE MOTOR VEHICLE WEIGHT TAX RATES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023.

COUNCIL CHAIR ALICE L. LEE: Will the Maui County Council Motor Vehicle Weight Tax Rates public hearing please convene.

Madam Clerk, we need to have roll call once again.

## ROLL CALL

COUNTY CLERK KATHY L. KAOHU: Chair, proceeding with roll call. Members participating from non-public locations should state who, if anyone, is present with them as part of roll call.

Councilmember Shane Sinenci.

CHAIR LEE: Excused.

COUNTY CLERK: Councilmember Mike Molina.

COUNCILMEMBER MOLINA: Aloha and good morning, Madam Chair. For the record, I'm transmitting from the County Council Chambers here in Wailuku. And to my knowledge, there is no testifiers at the Paia District Office. Mahalo.

COUNTY CLERK: Councilmember Kelly Takaya King.

CHAIR LEE: Excused.

COUNTY CLERK: Councilmember Gabe Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Good morning, Chair, Councilmembers. . . . to all of you once again. I am at my workplace. There is no one else with me, and there are no testifiers at the Lanai Office.

Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR LEE: Thank you.

COUNTY CLERK: Councilmember Tamara Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: . . . and aloha kakahiaka kakou. Broadcasting live and direct from Hilo Town, up Kaiwika Road. And with me I have my dad and my sister, my mom's taking a nap, and happy to see you.

CHAIR LEE: Yes. Long time no see.

Madam Clerk.

COUNTY CLERK: Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Good morning, everybody. I'm in the Council Chambers with Councilmember Mike Molina and the Clerks and staff. I'm glad to be here. Good morning.

CHAIR LEE: Good morning.

COUNTY CLERK: Council Pro Temp Tasha Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Good morning, everyone. Good morning, Chair. Once again, I am still in my workspace in my home. Lena just finished making me a tuna sandwich that has more bread than tuna, but it was a good attempt. So, but, good morning, everyone. Happy to be here.

COUNTY CLERK: Council Vice-Chair Keani Rawlins-Fernandez.

VICE-CHAIR RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha kakahiaka my Molokai Nui a Hina. I'm at the Molokai District Office, alone on my side of the office. And we have my community outreach specialist, Zhanell Lindo and my legislative analyst Mahina Poepoe on the other side of the office. There are no testifiers here and I would like to wish our hardworking OCS Legislative Analyst Kasey Apo-Takeyama a hau'oli lā hānau. Mahalo.

COUNTY CLERK: Council Vice-Chair Alice L. Lee.

CHAIR LEE: Who?

COUNTY CLERK: I'm sorry. Council Chair Alice L. Lee.

CHAIR LEE: Thank you, Madam Clerk.

I am here in my workspace, and no one around, no one around to interrupt or bother. And I want to wish all of you . . . for the second time. Second of three times and looking forward to a very efficient public hearing on this matter.

PRESENT: COUNCILMEMBERS MICHAEL J. MOLINA, GABRIEL JOHNSON, TAMARA A.M. PALTIN, NATALIE A. KAMA, YUKI LEI K. SUGIMURA, COUNCIL VICE-CHAIR KEANI N.W. RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ, AND CHAIR ALICE L. LEE.

EXCUSED: COUNCILMEMBERS SHANE M. SINENCI AND KELLY T. KING.

COUNTY CLERK: Chair, there are seven Members present, two Members excused, and no Members absent. A quorum is present to conduct the business of the Council.

For the record, I am County Clerk Kathy Kaohu. And also present from the Office of the County Clerk are Legislative Division staff Joyce Murashige, Lauren Saldana, and Dell Yoshida.

Joining the meeting from the Department of Corporation Counsel is Deputy Corporation Counsel Kristina Toshikiyo.

Chair, notice of this public meeting was published in the May 3, and May 6, 2022, editions of the Maui News.

CHAIR LEE: Members, the purpose of this public hearing is to receive testimony on the proposed Motor Vehicle Weight Tax Rates for Fiscal Year 2023.

Before we proceed with testimony, I ask that everyone please keep their microphones muted, unless it is your time to speak. Decorum shall be maintained at all times.

Madam Clerk, please proceed with testimony.

COUNTY CLERK: Chair, proceeding with the presentation of testimony. Members of the public may testify in the Council Chamber, at courtesy testimony sites or remotely through the information listed on the public hearing notice.

Individuals in the chamber may sign up to testify with the staff member located at the desk in the 8th floor lobby. Individuals at courtesy testimony sites may sign up with staff at the site. Individuals participating remotely may sign up in the meeting chat. And if you are connected to the meeting by phone, you will automatically be added to the testifier list. Individuals connected by phone are currently on mute and will be unmuted when it is their turn to testify. Individuals connected by videoconference should keep both their video and microphones off and should turn them on only when it is their time to testify.

Testimony is limited to the proposed Motor Vehicle Weight Tax Rates for Fiscal Year 2023.

Individuals may have up to three minutes to testify. When testifying, please state your name and the name of any organization you represent, as well as the items on which you will be testifying. Please also identify to the Council if you are a paid lobbyist.

After your testimony has concluded, please disconnect from BlueJeans. The remainder of the public hearing can be viewed on Akaku Maui Community Media Channel 53, or on [mauicounty.legistar.com](http://mauicounty.legistar.com). Individuals may also be disconnected from the public hearing at any time for breaking decorum.

Chair, at this moment, we have nobody signed up. Oh, we have one testifier, Mr. Tom Croly.

## PRESENTATION OF ORAL TESTIMONY

MR. TOM CROLY:

Aloha, Council. Tom Croly, testifying on my own behalf. Nice to see you all and I hope you're all rested after having a break from the long budget session.

The weight tax obviously not of great concern to people. You . . . full of testifiers and I think probably most people don't even understand what it's about, you know?

This is, this is what you pay when you register your car, and it's based on weight because a heavier car puts more use to the roads. So, heavy trucks and cars are going

to pay more than a lighter weight one, and it's a kind of way to distribute the road repair costs that the, that the Council, that the County has accordingly to the, to the road users and so forth. As is, the tax that you just went through the, the gas tax and so forth.

But I sent in some testimony related to this and it had to do with the electric vehicles where a few years ago the Council recognizing that electric vehicles were not using any gasoline, decided to add an additional \$100 fee for the electric vehicles, and kind of as an aside they said, well, let's add \$50 for hybrid vehicles. But I think they, they missed the mark in that what they were intending to do was add this \$50 to plug in electric vehicles.

And I sent in testimony about this, but I was disappointed that no action was taken, and I didn't hear back from any of the Councilmembers regarding it, because this is being applied, this additional \$50 is being applied to all hybrid vehicles that do not get their propulsion from electric means. Only plug in hybrids get their propulsion from electrical means.

Straight hybrids that, that run on gasoline or in some cases run on diesel are recapturing some of the power that would be lost in braking in other cars and in coasting. And that helps to then get a little bit better gas mileage. But I do think that it's incorrect to be charging this additional fee to the hybrid vehicles, and it should be charged only to the plug-in electric vehicles.

I recognize this testimony doesn't apply directly to this weight tax, but I thought this was the only opportunity to, again, draw attention to the testimony that I sent to each of the individual Councilmembers and got no response. And I didn't see any change in this year's budget. But for what it's worth, I'm supportive of the proposed weight tax that is in this budget, and good luck with the rest. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR LEE: Thank you, Tom. Members, any questions? I see no hands.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Chair.

CHAIR LEE: Oh, I see one hand. I see one hand.

Pro Temp Kama.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you. Thank you for always being here Tom.

So, my question is, you would have liked not to have that \$50 charge tacked on to the hybrids that don't plug in? Is that what you were saying?

MR. CROLY: That's correct. I believe that it was a mistake, and I believe it's unjust to, to charge that additional \$50 charge to the standard hybrids that do buy gasoline, and there you go. That's essentially what my testimony is.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Thank you.

CHAIR LEE: Unfortunately, it doesn't pertain to the weight tax.

COUNCILMEMBER KAMA: Yeah.

MR. CROLY. Right. Right. And it's something that you could take action at another time.

CHAIR LEE: Right. Okay, any other questions? If not, thank you very much, Mr. Croly.

MR. CROLY: Thank you.

CHAIR LEE: Are we going to see you at the next meeting? Oh, he left the call. Alright.

Madam Clerk, anybody else?

COUNTY CLERK: Chair, we do not have any other testifiers noted. If anyone has not testified, but would like to do so, please identify yourself now. This is the last call for testifiers.

Chair, no one else has indicated that they wish to testify, and we have received written testimony.

CHAIR LEE: Members. You already have received it?

COUNTY CLERK: Yes.

CHAIR LEE: Members, any objections to receiving written testimony into the record and to closing public testimony?

MEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTION.

THERE BEING NO OBJECTION, WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
RECEIVED FROM KEAHONUI POAIPUNI WAS MADE A PART OF  
THE RECORD OF THIS PUBLIC HEARING.

CHAIR LEE: Okay. Alright. Members, this would be a good time for you to take lunch, lunch break so that we could just go through the next public hearing without any, any long breaks.

So, there being no further business before the Council, this meeting is adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT

The public hearing of May 13, 2022, was adjourned by the Chair at 10:12 a.m.



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KATHY KAOHU, COUNTY CLERK  
COUNTY OF MAUI, STATE OF HAWAII

## County Clerk

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**From:** Chevelle Oliveira <kuiipooliveira@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 13, 2022 9:23 AM  
**To:** County Clerk  
**Subject:** Testimony for hearing on Friday May 13,2022

 You don't often get email from kuiipooliveira@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)  
05/13/2022

Keahonui Poaipuni  
Hana, HI 96713

Aloha to whom this may concern,

We are writing this letter to testify and share our thoughts towards the taxation of larger motor vehicles here in the county of Maui. First thought would be, "Why are we paying for fuel taxes on our vehicle tax bills if we also have to pay fuel taxes when we refill our motor vehicles at the gas pump at a gas station?". On second thought, "Why are we paying for highway restoration if our highways are still rough, have potholes, debris on the highways and bushes hanging over our roadways?". Last but not least, "Big Island is bigger than Maui and they pay less on motor vehicle registration."

Sincerely, Keahonui Poaipuni