

From: [House Of Lowe](#)
To: [Planning LPC Testimony](#)
Subject: TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO BILL 147 (Relating to Transient Vacation Rentals)
Date: Thursday, June 25, 2026 10:54:40 AM

Aloha Chair and Members of the Leeward Planning Commission,

I am a Hawai'i County resident and the owner-operator of a short-term vacation rental on this island. I am submitting this testimony in ****opposition to Bill 147**** in its current form, and respectfully request that the Commission decline to advance it, or at minimum recommend delaying further operational regulation until the County's existing tools have had time to work.

****1. The County is regulating ahead of its own data.****

Ordinance 25-50 (Bill 47) already created a full registration system for hosted and unhosted rentals — fees, a public registry, and fines of up to \$10,000 for non-compliance — with a registration deadline of September 1, 2026. That system has not even gone fully into effect. Bill 147 adds an entirely new layer of definitions, operational standards, and enforcement on top of a registration regime the County hasn't had a single day to evaluate. Sound policy follows evidence; this gets ahead of it.

****2. The County's own economic study cuts against further restriction.****

The County-commissioned economic impact study (Hunden Partners, June 2025) found that restricting short-term rentals would eliminate nearly a quarter of visitor spending on this island, and that 54% of owners depend on rental income to cover their own housing costs. Only 4% of owners said they would convert to long-term rental if restricted — meaning tighter operational rules don't meaningfully add housing stock. They simply remove income from residents, many of whom are not large investors but local families and retirees using their own home to stay financially afloat in one of the most expensive states in the country.

****3. The standards as drafted are vague and unevenly enforceable.****

Industry groups, including the Hawai'i Mid and Short-Term Rental Alliance, have already noted that several of Bill 147's proposed operational standards overlap with existing ordinances and rely on subjective language — particularly around what qualifies as an event of "residential character." A homeowner hosting a small gathering for guests should not face the same enforcement exposure as a commercial event venue. Ambiguous standards don't protect neighborhoods; they create arbitrary enforcement risk for ordinary owners trying to comply in good faith.

****4. Compliant owners already carry a heavy load.****

Between the state Transient Accommodations Tax, General Excise Tax, and county surcharges, STR operators in Hawai'i County already pay roughly 18–19% of gross revenue in taxes before any operating costs. Layer on the new Bill 47 registration fees, Bill 108 Nonconforming Use Certificate compliance, and now Bill 147's added standards and enforcement framework, and the cumulative burden on a small, owner-operated rental is substantial — while the County's own study points to enforcement of ***existing*** rules, not new ones, as the real source of uncollected revenue.

****My request:****

Please recommend against advancing Bill 147 in its current form, or recommend that the County pause further operational regulation until the Bill 47 registration system has produced

real enforcement data. Build the next layer of policy on evidence, not projection.

Mahalo for your time and for considering this testimony from a resident directly affected by this bill.

Respectfully submitted,
A Hawai'i County short-term rental owner
JL