

**COUNTY OF HAWAI'I PLANNING DEPARTMENT
BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATION**

**COUNTY COUNCIL INITIATED BILL 124 (PL-CCI-2026-000013)
AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 25, ARTICLE 8, SECTION 25-8-26, OF THE
HAWAI'I COUNTY CODE 1983 (2016 EDITION, AS AMENDED),
RELATED TO THE PĀHOA ZONE MAP**

The County Council has referred a bill for an ordinance to amend Section 25-8-26 (Pāhoa Zone Map), Article 8, Chapter 25 of the Hawai'i County Code 1983 (2016 Edition, as Amended) by changing the district classification from Village Commercial-10,000 Square Feet (CV-10) and Single-Family Residential-10,000 Square Feet (RS-10) to the Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC) zoning district at Waiakahi'ula, Puna, Hawai'i, covered by the area as more particularly described herein.

PURPOSE OF BILL 124

1. Bill 124 (**Planning Department Exhibit 1**) seeks to amend the Zoning Map in the Zoning Code for Pāhoa Village to establish the boundaries of a new special zoning district called the Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC) zoning district. The bill also proposes to change the zoning of properties within these boundaries from Village Commercial-10,000 Square Feet (CV-10) and Single-Family Residential-10,000 Square Feet (RS-10) to the Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC) zoning district. The boundaries of the new special district are described as follows and shown in Exhibit A of the draft bill:
 - A. All parcels having road frontage on the northern side of Pāhoa Village Road between Post Office Road and Akeakamai Loop that are, as of the effective date of this ordinance, wholly or partially within the Single-Family Residential (RS) zoning district.
 - B. Any contiguous area covered by two or more adjacent parcels having road frontage on Akeakamai Loop or on the northern side of Pāhoa Village Road, between Post Office Road and its eastern

terminus, that are, as of the effective date of this ordinance, wholly or partially within the Village Commercial (CV) zoning district.

C. Any contiguous area covered by two or more adjacent parcels having road frontage on the southern side on Pāhoa Village Road that are, as of the effective date of this ordinance, wholly or partially within the Village Commercial (CV) district, exclusive of any area within the State Land Use agricultural district.

D. All parcels adjacent to any area hereinabove described that are, as of the effective date of this ordinance, wholly within the Village Commercial (CV) district.

Whereas Bill 124 seeks to amend the Pāhoa Zoning Map to identify the boundaries of the Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC) zoning district, accompanying Bill 126 proposes to establish the Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC) zoning district and standards for development within the district.

AGENCY COMMENTS

2. **Department of Environmental Management (Planning Department Exhibit 2 – February 25, 2026 Memo)**
3. **Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee (Planning Department Exhibit 3 – March 5, 2026 Letter)**
4. **Department of Water Supply (Planning Department Exhibit 4 – March 11, 2026 Letter)**

AGENCIES – NO COMMENT OR CONCERN

5. Department of Health, Department of Public Works – Building Division, Police Department.

AGENCIES – NO RESPONSE

6. Department of Land and Natural Resources, Department of Public Works – Engineering, Parks and Recreation Department, Fire Department, Real Property Tax Office, Pāhoa Mainstreet Community Association.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

7. **Planning Department Exhibit 5 – Dephlia Rackley et al Testimony received by the Planning Department on March 22, 2026**

8. **Planning Department Exhibit 6 – Lorn Douglas Testimony received by the Planning Department on March 22, 2026**
9. **Planning Department Exhibit 7 - Bryan Rupp Testimony received by the Planning Department on March 25, 2026**
10. **Planning Department Exhibit 8 - Marty Robinson Testimony received by the Planning Department on March 25, 2026**
11. **Planning Department Exhibit 9 - Tiffany Edwards Hunt and Jeff Hunt Testimony received by the Planning Department on March 29, 2026**
12. **Planning Department Exhibit 10 - Namele Naipo-Arsiga Testimony received by the Planning Department**

PLANNING ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACTS OF BILL 124

A Special District in zoning refers to a designated geographic area within a municipality that has specific regulations and development standards tailored to address unique land use challenges and community needs.

In Hawai'i County, Special Districts such as the Kailua Village Design Commission and Pāhoa Village Design District have been created to maintain the architecture and design of communities, and Special Districts such as the Downtown Hilo Commercial District and University District have been created to establish unique zoning standards. If adopted, Bill 124 will establish the boundaries for a Special District and change the zoning district from Single-Family Residential and Village Commercial to the Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC) zoning district for multiple parcels in downtown Pāhoa.

According to proposed language in accompanying Bill 126, the purpose of the DPC zoning district is to encourage a dynamic town and support diverse, community-driven economic development. Additional goals focus on strengthening historical and cultural heritage, enhancing quality of life for residents, providing opportunities and promoting housing availability.

The boundaries of the proposed DPC zoning district are generally consistent with the General Plan land use map for Pāhoa Village where the town center is designated Medium Density Urban, which allows for village and neighborhood commercial and single-family and multiple-family residential, up to

35 units per acre; however some of the land uses proposed in accompanying Bill 126 are not typically permitted in the Medium Density Urban designated areas.

Bill 124 is consistent with the Puna Community Development Plan (PCDP) land use pattern, particularly its identification of Pāhoa as a Regional Town Center and its support for shaping growth into village/town centers rather than allowing continued sprawl. The PCDP describes the Pāhoa Regional Town Center as serving both regional and community functions, with the area along Pāhoa Village Road intended to serve Pāhoa residents and with the town core presenting a significant opportunity for revitalization and economic activity.

According to supportive comments provided by the PCDP Action Committee, Bill 124 will provide an opt-in rezoning mechanism, including voluntary participation for interested property owners. However, the Planning Director notes that the proposed ordinance will require additional language to explain the opt-in process and proposes adding the following, to be inserted in the appropriate section of Bill 124 as determined by County Council:

- *The DPC zoning district established by this section shall not supersede or otherwise modify the underlying base zone classification of any affected parcel, until the owner(s) of record of the parcel submit a valid DPC Election with the Director of Planning, and the election is confirmed as provided herein.*
- *Any owner of record of a parcel located within the DPC may elect to change the zoning of the parcel to the DPC zoning district by filing a DPC Election with the Director of Planning. A DPC Election shall be made in writing on a form prescribed by the Director and shall be effective upon written confirmation by the Director of Planning. Once effective, the election runs with the land and binds all successors and assigns.*

While the Director believes the opt-in process is appropriate for landowners in the small area of Pāhoa Village, it may not be an appropriate model for other areas of the island because of the potential to create a spot zoning pattern.

Comments provided by the Department of Environmental Management note that the area is about twenty (20) miles from the nearest county sewer and that properties included in the boundaries of the proposed ordinance would need to comply with Department of Health requirements for sewage treatment and disposal.

Comments provided by the Department of Water Supply (DWS) state that water availability remains limited for properties affected by the proposed reclassification. Specifically, DWS notes that the existing water system is inadequate to provide the required minimum flow (2,000 gallons per minute, at less than 10 feet, per second) for fire protection for commercial zoning and that existing fire hydrant spacing in the affected area does not meet the Department's standard for commercial zoning.

Given the stated purpose and goals of establishing the Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC) zoning district, the Planning Director fully supports the intent of Bill No. 124 and has no proposed amendments.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Director is supportive of the intent of Bill 124 and, based on the analysis provided, **recommends that the Windward Planning Commission forward a favorable recommendation** on Bill 124 to the County Council with the recommended inclusions, outlined in this report, of additional language to explain the opt-in rezoning process.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

The Windward Planning Commission (WPC) is required to take action on Bill 124 as described in Section 25-2-43(b) of the Zoning Code (**Planning Department Exhibit 11 - HCC Section 25-2-43(b)**). This bill was transmitted by the County Council to the Department on February 4, 2026, which means the WPC is required to transmit its recommendation to the council by June 4, 2026. The WPC shall recommend approval in whole or in part, with or without modifications, or rejection of the proposed bill, and the recommendation will be forwarded to the County Council for their consideration and decision. In the event the WPC fails to act on the proposed bill by this date, such inaction shall be considered as an unfavorable recommendation by the WPC.

Ashley L. Kierkiewicz
County Council District IV

*Policy Committee on Planning
Land Use and Economic
Development – Chair*



(808) 961-8265
ashley.kierkiewicz@hawaiiicounty.gov

*Policy Committee on Public Works
and Mass Transit– Vice Chair*

REC'D HAND DELIVERED

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

Hawai'i County Building
25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

TO: Jeff Darrow, Director
Planning Department

FROM: Ashley L. Kierkiewicz, Council Member

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "AK", written over the printed name of Ashley L. Kierkiewicz.

DATE: February 4, 2025

SUBJECT: Referral of Bill 124; AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 25-8-26 (PĀHOA ZONE MAP), ARTICLE 8, CHAPTER 25 OF THE HAWAI'I COUNTY CODE 1983 (2016 EDITION, AS AMENDED) BY CHANGING THE DISTRICT CLASSIFICATION FROM VILLAGE COMMERCIAL – 10,000 SQUARE FEET (CV-10) AND SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL – 10,000 SQUARE FEET (RS-10) TO DOWNTOWN PĀHOA COMMERCIAL (DPC) AT WAIAKAHI'ULA, PUNA, HAWAI'I, COVERED BY THE AREA AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN.

Pursuant to Section 25-2-43(b) of the Hawai'i County Code, I am submitting Bill 124, enclosed for your comment and recommendation. I also request that you forward the same to the Windward Planning Commission for their comment and recommendation.

Bill 124 was referred for comment and recommendation to the Planning Director and the Windward Planning Commission by the Hawai'i County Council's Committee on Planning on February 3, 2025.

After your and the Commissions review, please forward your comments and recommendations to Council Chairperson Dr. Holeka Goro Inaba.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Enc.
AK/kj

COUNTY OF HAWAI'I



STATE OF HAWAI'I

BILL NO. 124

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 25-8-26 (PĀHOA ZONE MAP), ARTICLE 8, CHAPTER 25 OF THE HAWAI'I COUNTY CODE 1983 (2016 EDITION, AS AMENDED) BY CHANGING THE DISTRICT CLASSIFICATION FROM VILLAGE COMMERCIAL – 10,000 SQUARE FEET (CV-10) AND SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL – 10,000 SQUARE FEET (RS-10) TO DOWNTOWN PĀHOA COMMERCIAL (DPC) AT WAIAKAHI'ULA, PUNA, HAWAI'I, COVERED BY THE AREA AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF HAWAI'I:

SECTION 1. Chapter 25, Article 8, Section 25-8-26, of the Hawai'i County Code 1983 (2016 Edition, as amended) is amended by changing the district classification from Village Commercial – 10,000 square feet (CV-10) and Single-Family Residential – 10,000 square feet (RS-10) to Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC) for the land situated at Waiakahi'ula, Puna, Hawai'i, as depicted on the map attached hereto, marked Exhibit "A" and by reference made a part hereof, and more particularly described as follows:

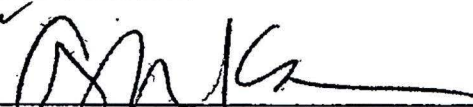
1. All parcels having road frontage on the northern side of Pāhoa Village Road between Post Office Road and Akeakamai Loop that are, as of the effective date of this ordinance, wholly or partially within the Single-Family Residential (RS) zoning district;
2. Any contiguous area covered by two or more adjacent parcels having road frontage on Akeakamai Loop or on the northern side of Pāhoa Village Road, between Post Office Road and its eastern terminus, that are, as of the effective date of this ordinance, wholly or partially within the Village Commercial (CV) zoning district;
3. Any contiguous area covered by two or more adjacent parcels having road frontage on the southern side on Pāhoa Village Road that are, as of the effective date of this ordinance, wholly or partially within the Village Commercial (CV) district, exclusive of any area within the State Land Use agricultural district; and
4. All parcels adjacent to any area hereinabove described that are, as of the effective date of this ordinance, wholly within the Village Commercial (CV) district.

SECTION 2. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of the ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are severable.

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall take effect upon its approval.

INTRODUCED BY: " "

KW for



COUNCIL MEMBER, COUNTY OF HAWAII

_____, Hawai'i

Date of Introduction:

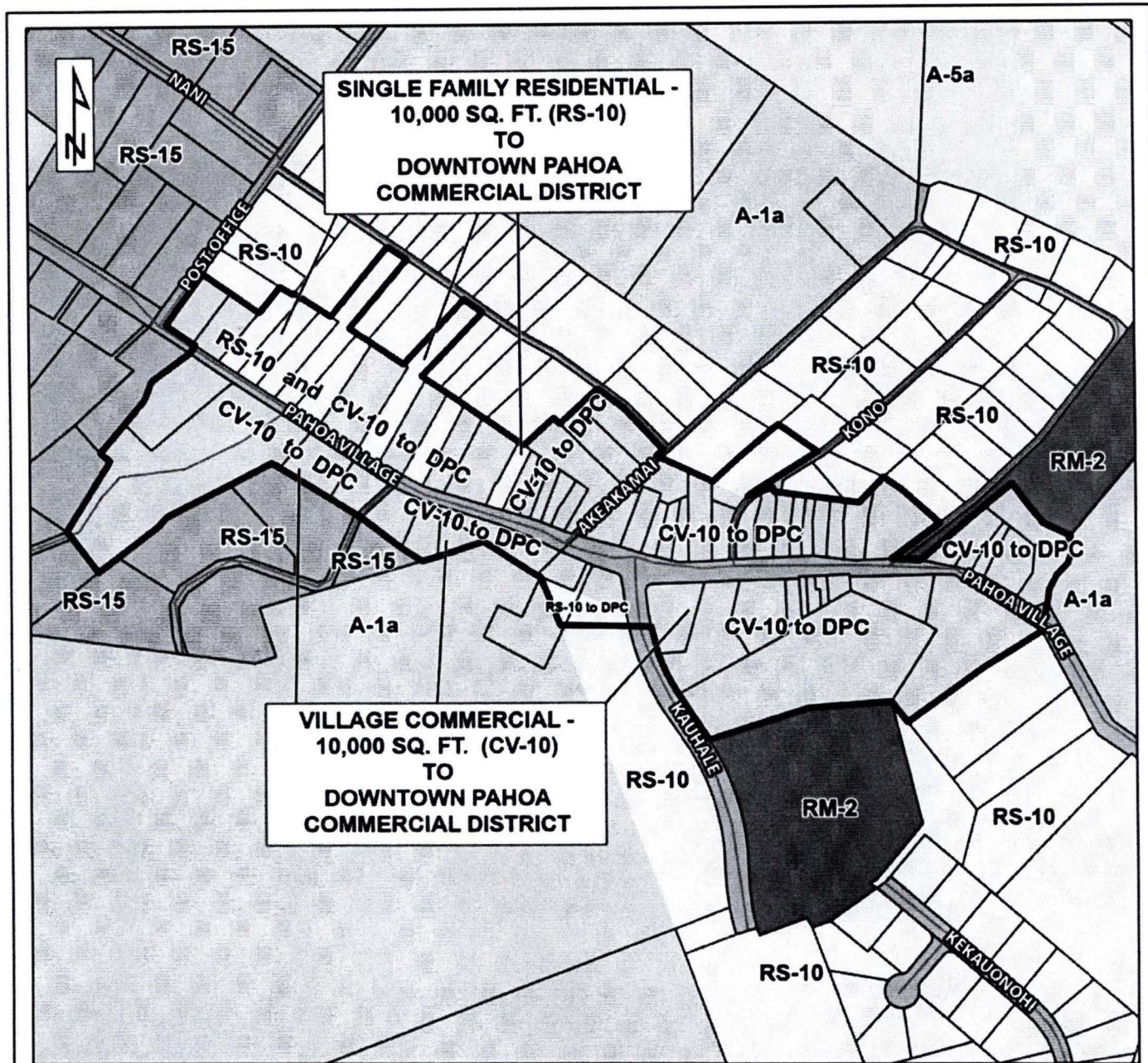
Date of 1st Reading:

Date of 2nd Reading:

Effective Date:

REFERENCE Comm. 708





0 500 1,000 Feet

AMENDMENT TO THE ZONING CODE

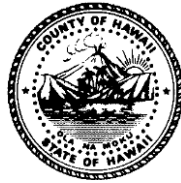
AMENDING SECTION 25-8-26 (PAHOA ZONE MAP) ARTICLE 8, CHAPTER 25 (ZONING)
OF THE HAWAII COUNTY CODE 1983 (2016 EDITION, AS AMENDED), BY CHANGING THE ZONE MAP
CLASSIFICATION FROM SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL - 10,000 SQ. FT. (RS-10)
AND VILLAGE COMMERCIAL - 10,000 SQ. FT. (CV-10)
AND AGRICULTURAL - 1 ACRE (A-1a)
TO DOWNTOWN PĀHOA COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (DPC)
AT PĀHOA, PUNA, HAWAII

MAP PREPARED BY:
COUNTY OF HAWAII, PLANNING DEPARTMENT

DATE: January 13, 2026

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor

William V. Brillhante Jr.
Managing Director



Daniel Girvan, P.E.
Director

Craig Kawaguchi
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

345 Kekūanāo'a Street, Suite 41 · Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 · cohdem@hawaiiicounty.gov

Ph: (808) 961-8083 · Fax: (808) 961-8086

MEMORANDUM

Date : February 25, 2026

To : Jeffrey Darrow, Director
Planning Department

From : Daniel Girvan, Director
Department of Environmental Management

Subject : PL-CCI-2026-000013

The Wastewater Division has reviewed the subject application and offers the following comments and/or recommendations:

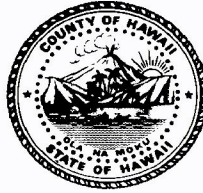
- ☐ No Comments
- ☐ The proposed subdivision is *accessible to a sewer*. The applicant is required to connect all existing and proposed structures to the public sewer in accordance with Section 21-6 and Division 2 of the Hawaii County Code.
- ☐ The proposed subdivision is within 300-linear feet of an existing sewer system. The applicant shall install sewer lines as required by Section 23-85 of the Hawaii County Code. Sewer lines shall comply with Chapter 21, Division 2
- ☐ Extensions of the public sewer system:
The applicant shall submit a letter application to the director detailing where and why the sewer extension is being requested, and a payment mechanism:
 - ☐ The applicant constructs and pays full cost for the extension and may receive for 10 years after completion one-half of all sewer charges collected by the County from other properties that connect to the extension, provided the reimbursement does not exceed the cost incurred by the applicant.
 - ☐ County constructs the extension (the County has yet to create a program to allow this):
 - ☐ The applicant pays the full cost for the extension and may receive for 10 years after completion one-half of all sewer charges collected by the County from other properties that connect to the extension, provided the reimbursement does not exceed the cost incurred by the applicant.
 - ☐ The applicant pays one-half the cost and the County pays the other half of the extension cost. The applicant shall submit sewer engineering plans and sewer study to the Wastewater Division for review.

- ☐ The applicant shall submit a study documenting proposed additional sewer flows so the director can evaluate the capacity of the existing system to handle them. Contact Wastewater Division staff for *Sewer Study* requirements.
- ☐ The proposed subdivision may be subject to existing or future federal, state, or county regulation under Title 40 CFR 403. Contact the Wastewater Division Pretreatment Group for information regarding pretreatment standards and requirements.
- ☒ The proposed subdivision is about 20 miles from nearest Hawai'i County Sewer. The applicant shall comply with Department of Health requirements, and all other applicable federal, state, and county regulations. The applicant shall submit plans for treatment facilities to the Department of Health and to the Department of Environmental Management director for review as required by Section 21-11.

For sewers in private roadways:

- ☐ Sewers will be dedicated to the County in accordance with Section 21-19. Contact the Wastewater Division for sewer and easement details and requirements. Applicant shall hold the County harmless for any damage to roadway corridors during or caused by the construction. Contact Wastewater Division for *Permit to Perform Work on the Public Sewer System*.
- ☐ Sewers will be private and will not be dedicated to the County. The applicant shall comply with all Department of Public Works requirements. Contact the Wastewater Division for *Permit to Perform Work on the Public Sewer System*.
- ☐ Other:

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Gregory Henkel
Jennifer Scheffel
Martha Morishige
Vacant
Melissa Leilani DeMello, Vice Chair
Stephanie Bath
Leila Kealoha
Susan Osborne, Chair
Frances Brewer

County of Hawai'i

PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

Aupuni Center • 101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
(808) 961-8288 • Fax (808) 961-8742

March 5, 2026

Chair Louis Daniele III
and Members of the Windward Planning Commission
County of Hawai'i
101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
Email: WPCtestimony@hawaiiicounty.gov

Aloha Chair Daniele and Members of the Windward Planning Commission:

**SUBJECT: Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee Letter –
Pāhoa Special District Legislative Suite (Bills 124, 125, and 126)**

The Puna Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee writes to express its strong support for the Pāhoa Special District Legislative Suite, a coordinated package of three bills introduced by Council Member Ashley Kierkiewicz.

This legislation reflects the vision and goals articulated by the community through the Puna CDP, the Kīlauea Recovery and Resilience Plan, the Eruption Economic Recovery Plan, and the Revitalize Puna initiative. Together, these measures represent an important step toward implementing community-driven strategies for recovery, revitalization, and long-term resilience.

Bill No. 126 establishes the Downtown Pāhoa Commercial Special District, recognizing Pāhoa's role as a regional town center. It expands permitted uses beyond those allowed under the existing Commercial Village zoning to include light industrial and economic-support uses such as agricultural processing, co-working spaces, creative media studios, and cultural enterprises. This expansion would support entrepreneurship and broaden economic development opportunities for property owners and local businesses.

Bill No. 124 provides an opt-in rezoning mechanism allowing property owners to transition from Commercial Village (CV) zoning to Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC). This approach ensures participation is voluntary while enabling interested property owners to immediately benefit from the expanded range of permitted uses.

Bill No. 125 clarifies the application of the Pāhoa Village Design Guidelines and establishes a transparent, sustained, and community-led design review framework. This process will help ensure that future construction and renovations respect and reinforce Pāhoa's distinctive small-town plantation character.

Collectively, this legislative package lays critical groundwork for economic revitalization, stability, and long-term resilience in Puna. It creates flexible, community-informed pathways for growth that align with the vision of the Puna CDP Action Committee: Mālama Puna A Mau Loa!

The Committee extends its appreciation to Council Member Ashley Kierkiewicz and her team for their continued collaboration and engagement throughout the development of this initiative. The Puna CDP Action Committee strongly endorses this legislative suite.

Me ke aloha nui,

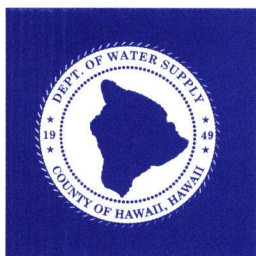
Susan Osborne

[Susan Osborne \(Mar 5, 2026 15:10:33 HST\)](#)

Susan Osborne, Chair
Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee

JH

<\\hawaiicounty.gov\depts\PL\PL\planning\public\wpwin60\CDP\CDP - Puna\Action Committee\Meetings\2026\2026 Letters>



DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY • COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

345 KEKŪANAŌ'A STREET, SUITE 20 • HILO, HAWAI'I 96720
TELEPHONE (808) 961-8050 • FAX (808) 961-8657

March 11, 2026

COH PLANNING DEPT
MAR 11 2026 PM4:36

REC'D HAND DELIVERED

TO: Mr. Jeffrey Darrow, Director
Planning Department

FROM: Keith K. Okamoto, Manager–Chief Engineer

Subject: **County Council Initiated Bill No. 124 (PL-CCI-2026-000013)**
Amendment to Section 25-8-26 (Pāhoa Zone Map), Article 8, Chapter 25 of
the Hawai'i County Code 1983 (2016 Edition, As Amended)
Request: By Changing the District Classification from Village Commercial-
10,000 Square Feet (CV-10) and Single-Family Residential-10,000
Square Feet (RS-10) to Downtown Pāhoa Commercial (DPC)
Tax Map Key: Multiple TMK's, Waiakahi'ula, Pāhoa, Puna, Hawai'i

We have reviewed the proposed amendments and have the following comments.

With the proposed re-classification, it should be noted that, if approved, water availability remains limited. The existing water system is inadequate to provide the required minimum-flow of 2,000 gallons, per minute, at less than 10 feet, per second, for fire protection, for commercial zoning. Also, within this area the existing fire hydrant spacing does not meet the Department's Standard for commercial zoning.

Should there be any questions, please contact Ms. Robyn Matsumoto of our Water Resources and Planning Branch at (808) 961-8070, extension 255.

Sincerely yours,

Keith K. Okamoto, P.E.
Manager-Chief Engineer

RM:dfg

Planning Dept.
Exhibit 4

... Water, Our Most Precious Resource ... Ka Wai A Kāne ...

The Department of Water Supply is an Equal Opportunity provider and employer.

From: [Dea Rackley](#)
To: [Planning WPC Testimony](#)
Subject: **4-2 WPC** Oppose/continue Bills 124,125 and 126 affecting Pāhoa Village
Date: Sunday, March 22, 2026 9:58:32 AM

Subject: Oppose / Continue Bills 124, 125, and 126 affecting Pāhoa Village

Aloha Chair and Commissioners,

I strongly urge you to defer and not advance Bills 124, 125, and 126 unless and until the County provides a full public analysis of the impacts on existing Pāhoa residents, property owners, and businesses.

These bills would change zoning in Pāhoa Village to Downtown Pāhoa Commercial, update the Pāhoa Village Design District, and establish new development standards for the DPC district. Before any recommendation is made, the public deserves clear answers on:

Which existing residential properties would be affected;

Whether existing homes become nonconforming;

Whether homes damaged by fire or storm may be rebuilt as residences;

The exact changes to permitted uses, building height, and yards/setbacks;

Expected impacts on assessed value, taxes, rents, traffic, drainage, parking, and infrastructure;

How these changes protect the historic character and livability of Pāhoa rather than accelerating speculative redevelopment.

Pāhoa is not just vacant land on a map. It is a living historic town. A zoning overhaul of this scale should not move forward without a parcel-level impact review and meaningful community process.

For these reasons, I ask you to continue Bills 124, 125, and 126 until the County releases complete impact information and holds additional community outreach focused specifically on affected Pāhoa residents and businesses.

Mahalo,

Dephlia Rackley

Rocky Ishibashi

Rhea Davis

Jennifer Jackson

Keegan Mcgreger

[Pāhoa resident / owner / business / community member]

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Lorn Douglas](#)
To: [Planning WPC Testimony](#)
Subject: WPC 4-2 ZOning 124, 125 and 126
Date: Sunday, March 22, 2026 5:22:34 PM

Aloha WPC members,

Hawaii has had huge development and I can't say that what has happened to Honolulu, Maui and Kona is a testimony for development. There are very few historical towns left and Pahoa is certainly one of them. Please do not support these bills, we already have Subway, McDonalds, Pizza Hut etc....

Thanks for your consideration and please vote NO!!!!

Lorn Douglas
Lower Puna

------(o)(o)
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Albert Einstein: "What I most admire about your art is your universality. You don't say a word, yet the world understands you!"
Charlie Chaplin: "True. But your glory is even greater! The whole world admires you, even though they don't understand a word of what you say."

From: [Bryan Rupp](#)
To: [Planning WPC Testimony](#)
Subject: Subject: Oppose / Continue Bills 124, 125, and 126 affecting Pāhoa Village
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 4:31:05 AM

Aloha Chair and Commissioners, I strongly urge you to defer and not advance Bills 124, 125, and 126 unless and until the County provides a full public analysis of the impacts on existing Pāhoa residents, property owners, and businesses.

These bills would change zoning in Pāhoa Village to Downtown Pāhoa Commercial, update the Pāhoa Village Design District, and establish new development standards for the DPC district. Before any recommendation is made, the public deserves clear answers on:

Which existing residential properties

would be affected;

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The exact changes to permitted uses, building height, and yards/setbacks;

Expected impacts on assessed value, taxes, rents, traffic, drainage, parking, and infrastructure;

How these changes protect the historic character and livability of Pāhoa rather than accelerating speculative redevelopment.

Pāhoa is not just vacant land on a map.

It is a living historic town. A zoning overhaul of this scale should not

move forward without a parcel-level impact review and meaningful community process.

For these reasons, I ask you to continue Bills 124, 125, and 126 until the County releases complete impact information and holds additional community outreach focused specifically on affected Pāhoa residents and businesses.

Mahalo,

Bryan Rupp

Pāhoa resident

From: [Doodle Bug](#)
To: [Planning WPC Testimony](#)
Subject: Oppose / continue bills 124, 125 and 126 affecting pāhoa village
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 7:08:05 PM

Aloha Chair and Commissioners, I strongly urge you to defer and not advance Bills 124, 125, and 126 unless and until the County provides a full public analysis of the impacts on existing Pāhoa residents, property owners, and businesses.

These bills would change zoning in Pāhoa Village to Downtown Pāhoa Commercial, update the Pāhoa Village Design District, and establish new development standards for the DPC district. Before any recommendation is made, the public deserves clear answers on:

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would be affected;

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How these changes protect the historic character and livability of Pāhoa rather than accelerating speculative

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For these reasons, I ask you to continue Bills 124, 125, and 126 until the County releases complete impact information and holds additional community outreach focused specifically on affected Pāhoa residents and businesses.

Mahalo,

Marty Robinson

Pāhoa resident

From: [Tiffany Edwards Hunt](#)
To: [Planning WPC Testimony](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]; [Kierkiewicz, Ashley](#); [Darrow, Jeffrey W.](#); [Council Testimony](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of Bill 124 and Bill 126 – Pahoa Revitalization
Date: Sunday, March 29, 2026 5:59:58 PM

To: Windward Planning Commission

From: Tiffany Edwards Hunt & Jeff Hunt

Date: March 29, 2026

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of **Bill 124** and **Bill 126** – Pahoa Revitalization

Chair and Members of the Windward Planning Commission,

My name is Tiffany Edwards Hunt, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of myself and my husband, Jeff Hunt. We have owned commercially zoned property in Pahoa for a couple of decades. We stand in strong support of Bill 124 and its companion, Bill 126, which together will establish and govern the new Downtown Pahoa Commercial District.

We are heartened to see this district described as a way to encourage a "dynamic town where environment, culture, commerce and community co-exist harmoniously." As long-time stakeholders, we have seen Pahoa suffer tremendously over the years:

- We witnessed the devastating Luquin's Mexican Restaurant fire.
- We felt the economic toll when lava threatened to cross Pahoa Village Road in 2014-2015.
- We saw the 2018 Kilauea lava flow wipe out 700 homes in our surrounding area, and we were among those with homes that were inundated.
- We endured the COVID-19 pandemic and tried to continue to operate our business despite the challenge of a government shutdown.

Our regional town center, as outlined in the Puna Community Development Plan, is in great need of revitalization. We believe the zoning changes in Bill 124 and the updated standards in Bill 126 are vital steps toward that recovery.

Beyond zoning, we hope the County will use this momentum to address the significant challenges of homelessness and vagrancy. We ask that the County proactively work with community partners to reinvigorate the "Weed and Seed" program that thrived here more than a decade ago.

Furthermore, we suggest the County prioritize the revitalization of the old Pahoa Council Office. We urge the County to pursue whatever renovations are necessary to make that building habitable and work with a social service partner to inhabit the space. Having a dedicated service provider located in the heart of the village would be a transformative step for our community's well-being.

We are in desperate need of parking options. Because on-street parking is minimal and many Pahoa lots are small and logistically challenging, we urge the County to:

- Widen hours of operation and remove restrictive fencing for the Pahoa District Park and the Pahoa Swimming Pool.
- Open the back area of the old Pahoa Council Office (the former Pahoa Police Substation) for public parking.

We thank our elected officials for the clear communication regarding these bills, specifically Councilwoman Ashley Kierkiewicz, who did a significant amount of "front-loading" to support Pahoa property owners.

Note on Mailing Address Change: Finally, please note that our mailing address has changed. We request that the Planning Department update its records for our correspondence to: **15-1682 Second Avenue, Keaau, HI 96749.**

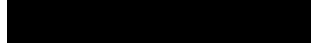
Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Edwards Hunt & Jeff Hunt

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Tiffany Edwards Hunt
(808) 938-8592



KVKS Media Foundation Board Member
Big Island Press Club Past President
Tiffany Edwards Communications Founder
HSTA Government Relations Committee Member
&

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Testimony in Strong Opposition
Bills 124, 125, and 126 – Downtown Pāhoa Commercial District
East Hawai‘i Planning Commission Hearing – April 2, 2025

Submitted by: Namele Naipo-Arsiga

Aloha Chair and Members of the Commission,

I am a resident of Puna and I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to Bills 124, 125, and 126.

My opposition is simple: Pāhoa and the surrounding Puna community do not have the infrastructure to support the scale of commercial development these bills would allow. Passing these bills does not create that infrastructure. It simply opens the door to businesses and developers while leaving our community to absorb the consequences.

That is not “Activate Puna”. That is negligence.

****These Bills Open Pāhoa’s Door to Outside Development — Without Building Anything Our Community Needs****

Who do these bills actually serve? The small local business owner in Pāhoa is already here. The artist, the farmer, the family running a plate lunch shop, the kupuna renting a small commercial space — they do not need a new zoning designation to do what they are already doing. What they need is infrastructure. They need reliable water. They need safe roads with sidewalks accessible for all ages. They need a community that is not being priced out from under them.

Large commercial districts attract developers and investors who look at a newly designated commercial corridor and see opportunity — the opportunity to build at scale, to acquire multiple parcels, to consolidate and develop in ways that local residents and small business owners cannot compete with financially.

We have watched this happen across Hawai‘i. Kaka‘ako was going to be revitalized for local communities. Kailua was going to be protected by design guidelines. In both cases, the zoning changes that were supposed to preserve character instead created the conditions for displacement. The buildings got taller. The rents went up. The local businesses that gave those places their identity could no longer afford to stay.

The development these bills attract will not build that infrastructure. It will consume what little we have — and leave our community to live with what remains.

****There Is No Water****

Most of lower Puna runs on rainwater catchment and private wells. There is no municipal water main serving Pāhoa Village at commercial scale. Bill 126 permits breweries, food processing facilities, car washes, laundries, and medical clinics by right — all of them heavy water users. None of these businesses can operate responsibly without a reliable, high-volume water supply that does not exist here.

Beyond supply, the geology beneath Pāhoa is young, porous lava. There is almost no natural filtration between the surface and the aquifer our community drinks from. Commercial wastewater — chemical runoff, cleaning agents, food processing discharge — moves directly into that aquifer. There is no sewer system to intercept it. The county is proposing to welcome large commercial operations into a community where the ground water is one spill away from contamination, with no infrastructure to prevent it and no plan to address it.

****There Is No Road****

Pāhoa has one road in and one road out. Pāhoa Village Road is a single corridor. It is already congested during peak hours. It is already difficult for kupuna, for families with young kēiki, and for community members with disabilities to navigate safely.

Bill 126 eliminates all off-street parking requirements for the entire DPC district while simultaneously permitting over fifty commercial uses by right — bars, restaurants, breweries, theaters, event facilities, wholesaling operations. The vehicles those businesses generate have nowhere to go except onto that one road and into the surrounding residential streets.

This is not a theoretical concern. It is a daily lived reality for everyone in lower Puna who drives through Pāhoa to get anywhere. Adding a large commercial traffic volume to a single-corridor road with no parking, no sidewalks, and no transit alternatives does not serve our community. It traps it.

And it does something far worse in an emergency. Pāhoa Village Road is the evacuation route for tens of thousands of lower Puna residents. We lived through 2018. We know what that road looks like when people are trying to leave and lava is moving. Increasing commercial density and eliminating parking on that corridor without a single traffic study or evacuation capacity analysis is not a planning oversight. It is a public safety failure that this community cannot afford.

****There Is No Wastewater System****

Lower Puna relies heavily on individual cesspools and septic systems. The State of Hawai‘i has already mandated under Act 132 that all cesspools be eliminated by 2050 because of the threat they pose to groundwater and coastal water quality. These bills would encourage large-scale commercial development — with the wastewater demands that come with it — in an area where the primary disposal method is already under a state mandate to be phased out. There is no county wastewater infrastructure to replace it. The county would be simultaneously telling property owners to upgrade their cesspools while rezoning their land in ways that demand more from those same failing systems.

****There Is No Plan****

Not one of these three bills is accompanied by a fiscal impact analysis, a traffic study, a water capacity assessment, a wastewater infrastructure plan, or an environmental review. The map establishing the DPC boundary was drawn by the Planning Department in January 2026. This hearing was scheduled two months later. The testimony deadline gives working people in our community less than one week to respond to a zoning change that will affect their land, their taxes, their safety, and their daily lives for generations.

The infrastructure does not exist. The studies have not been done. The community was not meaningfully consulted. And the businesses these bills invite — breweries, wholesalers, food manufacturers, car washes — are not small local enterprises that need a new zoning designation to thrive. They are commercial operations that require the kind of roads, water, wastewater, and utilities that lower Puna simply does not have.

Approving these bills does not build that infrastructure. It just makes our community responsible for the consequences of its absence.

I am asking this Commission to reject Bills 124, 125, and 126 in their entirety and to tell the County Council that before any commercial rezoning of Pāhoa moves forward, the infrastructure must come first — the water, the roads, the wastewater systems, the safety plans. Build that foundation, do the studies, consult the community, and then talk about what kind of future Pāhoa wants.

Until then, the answer is no.

- (3) Within ninety days after receipt of the application from the director, unless a longer period is agreed to by the applicant, the commission shall transmit the proposed change of zone ordinance together with its recommendations thereon through the mayor to the council. The commission shall recommend approval in whole or in part, with or without modifications, or rejection of such application. In the event that the commission fails to act on the application within the ninety-day period, the application shall be considered an unfavorable recommendation by the commission, and the application shall be transmitted through the mayor to the council with such recommendation.
- (1996, ord 96-160, sec 2; ratified April 6, 1999; am 2005, ord 05-136, sec 3; am 2012, ord 12-90, sec 1; am 2024, ord 24-87, sec 1.)

Section 25-2-43. Amendments initiated by the council and director.

- (a) Any amendment initiated by the director shall be reviewed by the commission.
- (1) The amendment shall be submitted to the commission with the director's justification and recommendation on the amendment.
- (2) Upon receipt of a proposed amendment from the director, the commission shall hold at least one public hearing. Notice of the hearing by the publication shall be provided by the commission in accordance with section 25-2-5, except that when a proposed amendment involves a specific parcel of land, notice shall be provided by the commission in accordance with subsections (c) and (d).
- (3) Within sixty days after receipt of the amendment from the director, the commission shall transmit the proposed amendment together with its recommendations thereon through the mayor to the council. The commission shall recommend approval in whole or in part, with or without modifications, or rejection of such amendment. In the event that the commission fails to act on the amendment within the sixty-day period, such inaction shall be considered as unfavorable recommendation by the commission, and the amendment shall then be submitted through the mayor to the council with such recommendation.
- (b) The council shall refer any proposed council-initiated amendment to this chapter to the director and the commission with requests for their respective comments and recommendations thereon, prior to the first reading of any such amendment. The director and the commission shall each submit comments and recommendations on the proposed amendment to the council within one hundred twenty days from the date that the amendment is transmitted by the council to the director and the commission.
- (1) The director shall submit comments and any recommendations to both the commission and the council within the one-hundred-twenty-day review period.

- (2) The commission shall hold at least one public hearing on the proposed amendment. Notice of the hearing by publication shall be provided by the commission in accordance with section 25-2-5, except that when a proposed amendment involves a specific parcel of land, notice shall be provided by the commission in accordance with subsections (c) and (d).
 - (3) The commission shall transmit the amendment together with its recommendations thereon through the mayor to the council. The commission shall recommend approval in whole or in part, with or without modifications, or rejection of such amendment. In the event that the commission fails to act on the amendment within the one-hundred-twenty-day review period, such inaction shall be considered as an unfavorable recommendation by the commission.
 - (4) After the one-hundred-twenty-day review period has expired, the council may proceed to act on the proposed amendment as it deems appropriate.
 - (c) Notice by mail to surrounding owners and lessees of record of properties within the boundaries established by section 25-2-4, shall not be required for any amendment initiated by the council or the director. In lieu of mailing written notice to surrounding property owners and lessees of record, the director shall publish notice of the commission's public hearing in at least two newspapers of general circulation in the County, once a week for three consecutive weeks, with the last notice to be at least ten days prior to the hearing. The notice shall specify the time, date and place of the hearing, its purpose and a description of any property which may be involved.
 - (d) Notice to owners of any properties specifically subject to the proposed amendment shall be provided by mail from the director, no later than thirty days prior to the commission's public hearing on the amendment.
- (1996, ord 96-160, sec 2; ratified April 6, 1999.)

Section 25-2-44. Conditions on change of zone.

- (a) Within any ordinance for a change of zone, the council may impose conditions on the applicant's use of the property subject to the change of zone provided that the council finds that the conditions are:
 - (1) Necessary to prevent circumstances which may be adverse to the public health, safety and welfare; or
 - (2) Reasonably conceived to fulfill needs directly emanating from the land use proposed, with respect to:
 - (A) Protection of the public from the potentially deleterious effects of the proposed use; or
 - (B) Fulfillment of the need for public service demands created by the proposed use.

Within any ordinance for a change of zone that includes any such conditions, except for ordinances reverting zoning to a previous zoning district designation or to an open zoning designation, the director shall specify the time by which all conditions shall be completed. The time during which required plans, reports, studies, or relevant permit applications are under review for approvals by