

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2046

Honolulu, Hawaii  
Feb. 14, 2006

RE: S.B. No. 3222

Honorable Robert Bunda  
President of the Senate  
Twenty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2006  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Media, Arts, Science, and Technology, to which was referred S.B. No. 3222 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR RENOVATION OF THE FACADES OF SEVERAL PROPERTIES IN CHINATOWN,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to the Honolulu Culture and Arts District Association to manage a project for the renovation of the facades of several privately owned properties on North Hotel Street between Nuuanu Avenue and Smith Street.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, the City and County of Honolulu; the Honolulu Culture & Arts District Association; the Historic Hawaii Foundation; the Louis Pohl Gallery; and a private individual.

In recent years, public and private entities have invested substantial amounts in the Chinatown Special Historic District to upgrade its infrastructure and to remedy the public perception that the area is run-down and crime-prone. Six new businesses have opened during the past two years on North Hotel Street, between Nuuanu Avenue and Smith Street, which have provided jobs and other benefits to the area.

Despite the improvements to the area, Chinatown still struggles with its negative reputation because many of the

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buildings in the area, especially along North Hotel Street, are dilapidated or vacant. The owners are unable to rehabilitate their buildings because the repairs are extensive and the potential rent income will not cover the repair costs. The rules of the Chinatown Historic District require rehabilitation rather than reconstruction; thus, bringing these buildings up to code while preserving their integrity involves a significant amount of money, expertise, and time.

Your Committee finds that making an appropriation to fund the Honolulu Culture and Arts District Association to manage a project to renovate the facades of several buildings on Hotel Street will help in the revitalization of the area. In return, the building owners have agreed to make, at a minimum, an equivalent matching investment in the restoration of the interior of three under-utilized and vacant buildings on the block, and to find tenants. Once restored, this block will complete an important link between the downtown culture and arts district and the shops and merchants of historic Chinatown, and will encourage more tourists and residents to seek Chinatown as a vibrant evening destination.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Media, Arts, Science, and Technology that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 3222 and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Media, Arts,  
Science, and Technology,

  
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CAROL FUKUNAGA, Chair



