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Statement of
MARY LOU KOBAYASHI
Planning Program Administrator, Office of Planning
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES
AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**
Monday, February 11, 2008
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

in consideration of
HB 2527
RELATING TO SMART GROWTH.

Chair Ito, Vice Chair Karamatsu, and Members of the House Committee on Water, Land, Ocean Resources, and Hawaiian Affairs.

The Office of Planning (OP) supports the intent of HB 2527, but we are concerned about the cost implications generated by the bill for OP as well as the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). The bill would amend: (1) Chapter 198D, the Statewide Trails and Access System, by establishing a new statewide greenways program to be administered by DLNR; and (2) Chapter 225M, State Planning, to charge OP with advocating and coordinating smart growth principles in new and existing communities. No funding is provided. Our concerns are summarized as follows:

Smart Growth Functions. OP does not object to the amendments to Chapter 225M for smart growth coordination and technical assistance, since our responsibilities and functions under our operating authorities—225M as well as the Hawaii State Plan,

the Coastal Zone Management Act, and the State Land Use Law—are founded on comprehensive long-range planning and sustainable development principles that predate the packaging of smart growth principles. However, we are concerned that OP may be limited in terms of what it can do with existing resources and staffing levels.

Statewide Greenways System. We defer to DLNR as to the specific impacts the proposal has on its Na Ala Hele program, but we note that the statewide greenways system concept is much larger in scope and function than the Statewide Trails and Access System program. Trying to fit the two programs under the same umbrella may very well dilute the focus of the Na Ala Hele program and diminish both the resource management and recreational values derived from this small program. Furthermore, the greenways system concept has a very large urban component that will require the full cooperation and participation of the counties as well as a host of State and federal agencies, including the Department of Transportation, for the system to be realized.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HB 2527, Relating to Smart Growth
COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN
AFFAIRS

Rep. Ken Ito, Chair

Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

February 11, 2008

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Room: 312

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB 2527**, which requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to establish a system of greenways and trails & requires the Office of Planning to coordinate smart growth planning.

The economic benefits of parks and open space are well-studied and documented throughout the United States. Communities that have made this investment consider open space conservation not as an expense but as an investment that produces important economic benefits. Such benefits may include recycling, land conservation, wildlife habitat preservation and non-automobile transportation - not to mention historical preservation, physical fitness, recreation access for wheelchair users and numerous other benefits.

OHA urges the Committee to PASS HB 2527. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.