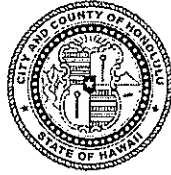


**LATE**

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION OFFICE  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 406 \* HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE (808) 768-3710 \* FAX (808) 768-3711 \* INTERNET: [www.honolulu.gov](http://www.honolulu.gov)

MUFI HANNEMANN  
MAYOR



JOAN MANKE  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

March 17, 2008

Honorable Lorraine Inouye  
Chair, Committee on Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 201  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: HB 2730, HD1 - Relating to Legal Requirements for Neighborhood Board Meetings

Dear Chair Inouye and Committee Members:

As Executive Secretary of the Neighborhood Commission, I am pleased to provide testimony in support of HB 2730, HD1.

Since my tenure in this position began in January 2006, I have observed the importance of transparency in government and the importance of the sunshine law. I have also observed the adverse impact the sunshine law has on the neighborhood board system, including its various interpretations.

Please know that the administration of Mayor Mufi Hannemann very much supports the open government laws. However, the effectiveness of the neighborhood system is compromised when our board members are not given the necessary tools to collect information on a timely basis, to do their homework, and to engage in factfinding so that they can be truly informed and fulfill their powers, duties and responsibilities as advisors.

There are specific ways in which this legislation will help to bring "common sense" into the our neighborhood board system:

- 1) Most boards provide the community with the opportunity to express their concerns under the "Community Concerns" topic on their monthly agenda. There is no way to know beforehand what those concerns may be. Therefore, boards should be able to receive input on issues not specifically noticed and be able to make decisions at a later meeting when the issue is properly noticed and discussed.
- 2) The current law does not allow more than two or less than a quorum number of board members to attend community meetings without first forming a permitted interaction

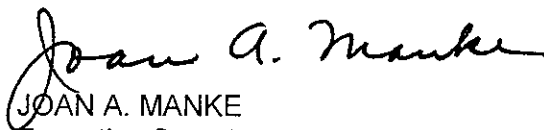
group (PIG). Oftentimes community meetings are scheduled at a time when it is not possible for form a PIG before the next board meeting or the agenda has already been filed. As a result, board members are forced not to attend community meetings to hear information firsthand and become uninformed. Under these circumstances, board members should be allowed to attend community meetings, place the subject matter on its next board agenda, provide the full board with a report, and ensure that any decision-making is made at a noticed meeting.

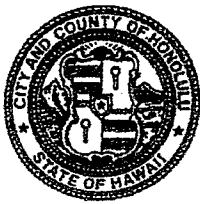
- 3) Because boards only meet monthly, there are times when an unanticipated event will occur which will impact a board area, but the agenda had already been noticed and time did not allow for calling an emergency special meeting. Although not on the agenda, it is important that issues relating to public health, welfare and safety, are discussed and timely action taken if necessary.
- 4) The current law does not allow board members to receive information or testimony on a matter of official board business without a quorum present at its meeting, including public safety reports and reports by elected officials. Monthly reports made by the police and fire representatives, for example, are of great importance to board members and the community. Therefore, testimonies should be heard even without a quorum, provided that the board may not make any decisions on the information being received until it is appropriately noticed and discussed.

The purpose of the Neighborhood Board System is to provide neighborhoods and neighborhood boards the opportunity to increase and assure effective citizen participation in the decisions of government. This can be accomplished, while conducting board business as openly as possible, with the passage of HB 2730, HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and I strongly urge adoption of this legislation.

Sincerely,

  
JOAN A. MANKE  
Executive Secretary



## WAIKIKI NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 9

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • CITY HALL, ROOM 400 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 17, 2008

COMMITTEE ON INTER-GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
The Twenty-Fourth Legislative Regular Session  
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye and Committee Members

Aloha Senator Inouye

Testimony in support of HB2730.

On February 12, 2008 the Waikiki Neighborhood Board (WNB) considered, debated and voted unanimous support in favor of HB2730. Over the past week the Honolulu Advertiser has published editorials and front page articles that do not clearly represent the problem Neighborhood Boards face when performing their duties.

The Oahu Neighborhood Board System is less effective with a few provisions of the current Sunshine Law and most of the provisions in the Sunshine Law, as Agenda and Quorum are already embedded in the Oahu Neighborhood Plan.

The Waikiki Neighborhood Board meets in open session for about 36-48 hours a year and all major construction and events that require a permit from the City of Honolulu are required to make a presentation to the board and seek our support or opposition during that 36-48 hour period. We also provide a forum for our Police, Fire, City and State Representatives as well as our Elected Officials the opportunity to meet one on one with the residents at each meeting during that same time frame. This time limitation allows only 10-20 minutes to discuss a project like the 350 foot tall multimillion dollar Allure Condominium.

The Neighborhood Board System does not provide technical expertise for projects to our boards and we are composed of unpaid volunteers who make every attempt to support good projects and oppose those which do not complement the community.

The critical issue with HB2730 for the WNB is the lack of ability to participate in open meetings conducted by contractors for major Waikiki projects. Board members who attend these contractor meetings can address issues like traffic, infrastructure support and types of construction. By attending these meetings and posing the concerns up front allows the contractors to address these issues as part of our regular meeting and resolve key issues in favor of the community.

Your and the support of committee members considering this change to the law will go far to support the ability of the Neighborhood Board System to support the communities it is designed to represent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Finley".

Robert J Finley  
Chair

