

March 24, 2008, 10:30
Testimony for HCR 68 and HR 59

REQUESTING THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO LEASE
APPROXIMATELY 13.2 ACRES OF STATE-OWNED PUBLIC LAND NEAR
KE'EHU LAGOON

To: Rep. Ken Ito, Chair, and Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair, and members
of the House Water, Land and Ocean Resources and Hawaiian Affairs Committee

From: Pacific Gateway Center, Dr. Tin Myaing Thein, Executive Director

Pacific Gateway Center, along with Oahu Head Start, its partner in this project, is in strong support of this resolution to acquire a lease to state-owned land near Ke'ehi Lagoon for the purpose of building a new and much needed community center.

Currently, Pacific Gateway Center is located at 720 N. King Street, on the grounds of the St. Elizabeth church, just Diamond Head of Kaumakapili Church. Our building is old and in great need of renovation, so much so that we have a rain gutter inside our building because of roof leaks.

The resolution speaks for itself in explaining the project which will provide facilities to two premier non-profit agencies (Pacific Gateway Center and Head Start).

For those not familiar with Pacific Gateway Center, here is a summary of who we are and what we do:

The Pacific Gateway Center (PGC), established in 1973 by the Palama Council of Churches, is a 501(c)(3) private non-profit corporation (FEIN: 99-0236204), initially known as the Kalihi Palama Immigrant Center. The Immigrant Center was renamed to the Pacific Gateway Center in 1999 to emphasize the shift in its clientele from immigrants and refugees to low income residents in general. PGC's mission is to empower Hawaii's low-income residents, immigrants and refugees to achieve self-sufficiency through skill-building and access to opportunities while respecting cultural heritages.

PGC's core program components are 1) social services, 2) employment and training, 3) economic development, and 4) community building.

The social services provided by PGC include: Hawai'i Language Bank (serving over 30 languages), Immigrant Youth Program, Employment Core Services for Immigrants, Refugee Resettlement & Matching Grant, Foodbank, and Emergency Rental Assistance.

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Public Hearing: March 24, 2008, 10:30, State Capitol Room 312

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PUBLIC LAND NEAR KE'EHĪ LAGOON**

To: Rep. Ken Ito, Chair, and Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair, and members of the House Water, Land and Ocean Resources and Hawaiian Affairs Committee

From: Oahu Head Start, Joni Ikemoto and John Park

Oahu Head Start is in support of this resolution.

Oahu Head Start receives \$12 to \$13 million yearly in federal funds to run Oahu's largest early childhood pre-school program with over 1600 students of low income families. Our classrooms are in over 50 locations throughout Oahu. Currently, almost none of this federal money is used for rental or lease of its headquarters, which is at the old Kapalama Military Reservation, off Sand Island Access Road. Head Start would like to use its federal funds for childcare, not for building lease or rent.

In addition, its headquarters are World War II vintage buildings and in bad need of replacement. Restrooms are not working and staff must go outside to the next building to use facilities. Our warehouse has cracks in the outer walls which run from roof eaves to near the floor because the wood has shrunk.

Head Start has received notice to vacate its current facilities in two years and has been searching for years for new facilities.

We have met with DLNR and been encouraged by prospects of securing this land but need to go through the application and review process. Support from the Legislature would help in this effort.