



LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



CHAD K. TANIGUCHI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Statement of
Chad K. Taniguchi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & PUBLIC HOUSING

January 29, 2008, 1:30 p.m.
Room 016, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
S.B. 2479
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE KALOKO HOUSING PROGRAM

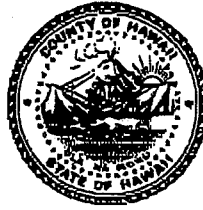
S.B. 2187
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR WEST HAWAII HOUSING

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) supports S.B. 2187 and 2479, which would provide the County of Hawaii with funds to build a shelter and affordable housing in Kona. The Legislature has the formidable task of balancing a multitude of needs with limited resources. The HPHA is grateful for this legislation that would support the Hawaii County initiative to create a much needed homeless shelter to replace the only other shelter in the Kona area – Kawaihae Transitional Shelter.

Although the homeless population has experienced steady growth over the last four years, homeless shelter accommodation on the Big Island has remained the same for over eleven years: 24 transitional units at Kawaihae and 11 units of transitional housing plus 79 emergency shelter beds in Hilo. The January 2007 point in time count yielded 1,018 homeless persons on the Big Island on any given day, while our homeless data base puts the number at 1,264 homeless persons on any given day.

The Kawaihae shelter is on leased land with cesspool issues which require abatement. Additionally, the Kawaihae shelter is in a remote location which has serious transportation challenges for residents seeking employment and child care to help them transition to permanent housing. The buildings at Kawaihae Transitional Shelter are portables that have long outlived their original live expectancy, and the shelter is slated to close in June, 2009.

The Kaloko Project represents a community-based response to the need for homeless shelter in Kona. The County of Hawaii has expressed strong commitment with eight acres of land in central Kona in partnership with the community and business. Funding for this sorely needed project will create a respite for the homeless to move from homelessness to economic self sufficiency. The HPHA strongly supports both bills.



Harry Kim
Mayor

Edwin S. Taira
Housing Administrator

County of Hawaii
OFFICE OF HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
50 Wailuku Drive • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-2456
V/T/T (808) 961-8379 • FAX (808) 961-8685

January 28, 2007

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
The Honorable Les Ihara, Vice Chair
And Committee Members
Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

Twenty-Fifth Legislature
Regular Session of 2008

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 2187
Relating to housing
Hearing Date: January 29, 2008
Time: 1:15PM
Conference Room 016

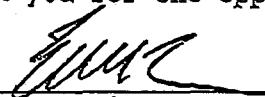
The Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) supports Senate Bill 2187.

The OHCD is facilitating the development of the Kaloko Housing Program (KHP), a fifty-four unit multi-family, cluster homes program, which will provide short term and long term rental units. It will also provide housing sustainability services to families negatively impacted by homelessness.

The reason it is a top priority for our County is that the KHP is needed to replace the Ka Hale O Kawaihae Transitional Housing Program (24 units), a temporary shelter that is mandated by the EPA to be closed in 2009. It does not meet EPA large capacity cesspool standards. It is the only shelter that serves homeless families in West Hawai'i.

The OHCD has been working with local service providers for over 15 years to find a suitable location and to construct a permanent shelter. In addition, the community is also proposing to construct a warehouse to house The Food Basket, formerly known as the Hawai'i Island Food Bank, and Habitat for Humanity. The warehouse operation(s) will provide resources and job training opportunities for the participants. A detailed informational packet is enclosed for your information.

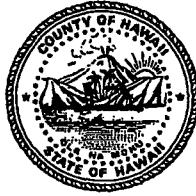
As this program provides housing opportunities for this vulnerable population, the OHCD respectfully requests your consideration and support of S.B. 2187. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.


Edwin S. Taira
Housing Administrator

Enclosures



Harry Kim
Mayor



Dixie Kaetsu
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawaii

25 Aupuni Street, Room 215 • Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4252 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
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January 25, 2008

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland
Chair, Committee on Human Services
and Public Housing
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Chun Oakland and Committee Members:

Re: SB 2187

In all of Kona and all of Kohala, we have only one homeless shelter (in Kawaihae), and it must close because of EPA regulations and problems with its lease. Thanks to some wonderful non-profit organizations like Catholic Charities, this issue was brought to my attention, and I determined to make it my number one priority for this Legislative Session, in this my last year as mayor. I cannot, in good conscience, leave half of Hawai'i County without some shelter for our homeless population.

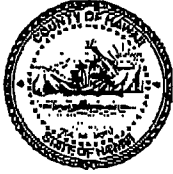
Our County Office of Housing and Community Development has worked with the service providers, and together they have developed a plan to establish the Kaloko Housing Program on an eight acre parcel of non-ceded land. If we are successful in securing funding, we will build more than a shelter, we will build a program. I will leave it to others to describe the vision, which is not extravagant but which is meant to meet the real needs of part of our homeless population.

I would ask you to please consider and pass SB 2187, with three amendments. In Section 1, reference is made twice to providing housing for "individuals" and families. The facility probably will serve families only, and therefore the word "individuals" should be deleted. The section also refers to "emergency units." Our current plans intend to focus on transitional and affordable units for families, and therefore I would ask that the phrase "emergency units" be deleted.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. It reflects an urgent need, and I urgently ask for your approval.

Aloha,

Harry Kim
MAYOR



County of Hawai'i
Office of Housing and Community Development
50 Wailuku Drive
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-2456

Phone: V/TT 808/961-8379

FAX: 808/961-8685

Fax

To: Senate Sergeant-At-Arms	From: Office of Housing and Comm. Devel
Fax: 1-800-586-6659	Pages: 7 (Exception to 5 Granted)
Phone:	Date: 01/28/2007
Re: Senate Bill 2187	

Urgent For Review Please Comment Please Reply Please Recycle

Senate Sergeant-At-Arms,

The County of Hawai'i, Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) respectfully submits the attached testimony. Thank you for granting the OHCD with an exception to the 5 page restriction for testimony submitted by fax.

Committee on Human Services and Public Housing
Senate Bill 2187
Hearing Date: January 29, 2008
Time: 1:15PM
Conference Room 016

Mahalo,

ASR

Kaloko Housing Program Informational Packet
County of Hawai'i – Office of Housing and Community Development
Contact: Jeremy McComber, 808/961-8379

Request: \$12 Million – Kaloko Housing Program

The Kaloko Housing Program (KHP) will be constructed on an 8-acre parcel acquired by the County of Hawai'i (County). The site is located north of Kaloko Industrial Park, off of Hina-Lani Street in Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i (Tax Map Key: 7-3-009:055). The County will facilitate the development of a minimum of 54 multi-family units (24 transitional and 30 affordable rental), which will provide transitional and affordable rental housing to families negatively impacted by homelessness. Included in this program will be a warehouse facility, operated by the Habitat for Humanity – West Hawai'i and The Food Basket, which will provide a unique opportunity for **job readiness and placement on-site**. This essential component will enhance the sustainability of the program – strengthening the ability of participants to not only secure long-term housing, but training and employment resources as well.

The need for a **comprehensive homeless program** has been the County's challenge for over 15 years. The County has worked with the community address the needs of the housing continuum, beginning with the inception of The Friendly Place (donated by Stanford Carr Development), which provides essential daytime services to the homeless population in West Hawai'i. A 30-bed overnight shelter (funded by the County, State and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development), which is currently in the environmental review stage, will address emergency housing needs of the homeless. While the County is utilizing \$40 million of its limited resources to provide permanent affordable housing (rental and for-sale) in Waikoloa, the KHP remains the critically-needed **missing piece of the housing continuum**. Partnership with the business community, along with the service providers composing the **Community Alliance Partners (CAP)**, the KHP has been designed to serve the need of working families in West Hawai'i. As there are currently no immediate neighbors, which has posed problematic in the past, it is critical that the County begin development of the program as soon as possible – alleviating **perceptions of NIMBY (Not In My Backyard)**.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The KHP will offer a secure environment, which will strengthen the community by providing **service-enriched housing** – stabilizing families affected by homelessness. Units will be secure, yet user-friendly, while integrating private quarters for families with communal uses such as classrooms and recreational facilities, and office space for supportive service providers. A **tailored service array** will address such needs as life skills training, budgeting and credit counseling, job training and placement, educational referrals and resources, transportation, childcare and youth enrichment, as well as counseling referrals – backed by a government, non-profit and community-based collaborative. A combination of housing and customized services will create an **uplifting environment** that doesn't overpower the residents, who may be afflicted by

any of the social and/or economic strains of homelessness. The end result will be **creation of an affordable community** for families negatively impacted by homelessness – **a safer community closer to where families work and play.**

The County will lease the KHP to a non-profit organization for management and daily operation. Funding for the program will likely be obtained through the State's Homeless Stipend (SHSP) Program and revenues generated by the affordable rentals. As such, management and recordkeeping for the program will be conducted by the program operator in accordance with SHSP requirements and applicable rental guidelines.

Monitoring of the lease agreement with the program operator will be conducted by the County's Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD).

FUND AMOUNT REQUESTED

The County requests \$12 million for construction of the KHP. Phase I will include 24 units to replicate and enhance transitional housing and services currently offered at Ka Hale O Kawaihae Transitional Housing Program, while Phase II will offer 30 service-enriched rental housing units to provide longer-term housing opportunities for participants successfully transitioning from emergency housing programs or working families in need of affordable rental housing.

NEED OF FUNDS

SHELTER CLOSURE

The need for this program is urgent, with the forecasted closing of the Ka Hale O Kawaihae Transitional Housing Program (24 units), a temporary shelter located in close proximity to a tsunami inundation area – **the only shelter that serves homeless families** in West Hawai'i. The small, **10' x 10' portables** are housing large families of **6 to 8 people**. This housing program, an interim solution utilized until a more practical site could be secured, remains at full capacity some **15 years later**. The KHP will replace the loss of the Kawaihae shelter as well as provide a significant increase in housing inventory for Hawai'i County. Units at KHP will more than double the current county and state supply of supportive units currently in operation.

GROWING POPULATION

As the Big Island continues to grow in size, so does its population. The most current *County of Hawai'i Data Book, 2004 (with updates)*, confirms that the Big Island has experienced a large population increase – from just under 150,000 people in 2000 to just over 170,000 in 2006. This rapid **rate of population growth surpasses** the other rural island counties. In addition, the Big Island continues to have the **highest per capita of homeless persons** in the state.

ACCESS TO LIFE ESSENTIALS

While the state as a whole has felt the negative affects of increasing housing prices and decreased availability of affordable housing inventory, the Big Island remains the **most**

affordable island within the chain. Combined with a still rural atmosphere of "old Hawai'i", the Big Island has an appeal that is apparent from a migrant influx from, not only the continental U.S., but neighbor islands as well. This **incoming population** spans the gamut of homeless persons to gainfully-employed two-income households. As indicated in *Economic Well-Being in Hawai'i: Family and Individual Self-Sufficiency (Aloha United Way)*, an individual in Hawai'i County earns a **living wage lower than** his/her counterparts on any of the other islands – making affordability in housing more competitive among the working poor here.

Transportation has been an issue for all people in the spectrum, as **affordable housing is limited near the urban core**. For those that do have reliable transportation, fuel cost becomes a financial concern – both in price and frequency in accommodating housing, employment and educational needs. Households at the Ka Hale O Kawaihae currently travel hours to access these resources that are located closer to urban core.

HIGHER DEVELOPMENT COSTS

The cost to develop housing and/or service resources for the homeless population has also become a financial challenge. With lava rock covering much of the terrain on many parts of the young island, **costs to develop and construct are much higher** than that of the other islands. Homeless service providers do not have the financial wherewithal to respond to such expenses. Homeless programs are then forced to stretch existing limited resources to accommodate need, which stresses program and facility functionality. In short, **fewer programs and facilities serve well beyond capacity**.

RESOURCE COMMITMENTS

The County secured an 8-acre parcel from TSA Corporation (TSA), along with a commitment from TSA to install (1) an access roadway to the parcel and (2) a water service lateral (of which half will be paid by the County).

The County was awarded \$325,279.21 through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME). Use of the HOME program is for the design of the KHP. If the County is unable to complete this project, HOME funds would have to be returned to HUD – jeopardizing future federal funding, as evidenced by the unspent HOME funds.

The County has also begun collaboration with Habitat for Humanity on labor resources to offset construction costs of the project.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Planning:	11/2007 - 04/2008
Design & Bid:	01/2008 - 06/2008
Pre-Construction:	07/2008 - 08/2008
Construction (transitional):	09/2008 - 01/2009
Construction (rental):	10/2008 - 05/2009



A Community Effort

A comprehensive collaborative effort utilizing public-private partnerships to establish a community solution.

Land:
TSA Developer / County

Design Funds:
Federal HOME Funds / County

Infrastructure:
TSA Developer / County

Community Support:
Community Alliance Partners

Construction Funds:
STATE CIP Funding Request

Labor and Materials:
Habitat for Humanity

Program Operator:
(Selection in progress)

Affordable Housing Developer:
(Selection in progress)

Support Services:
Multiple providers (listed at right)

Kaloko Housing Program: Community Investment Timeline

► Completed / In-progress

- Secure land, and commitments for infrastructure
- Obtain Federal funds for project design
- Gather community input to identify key area of need to be served
- Establish network of agencies to provide tailored service array
- Assemble coalition of community advocates
- Promote homeless awareness, cultivate support of neighbors
- Execute contract to begin design process
- Selection of program operator and non-profit project developer

► Current Activity

- Request State contribution toward construction funds

► Future Steps

- Obtain resource commitments from private sector and community
- Begin program construction: Phase 1 (transitional*), Phase 2 (affordable)

If needed:

- Pursue additional Federal and State resources for Phase 2 construction
- Initial State funding used to leverage possible matching funds

*State funding is essential to begin construction of transitional housing alternative prior to 2009.

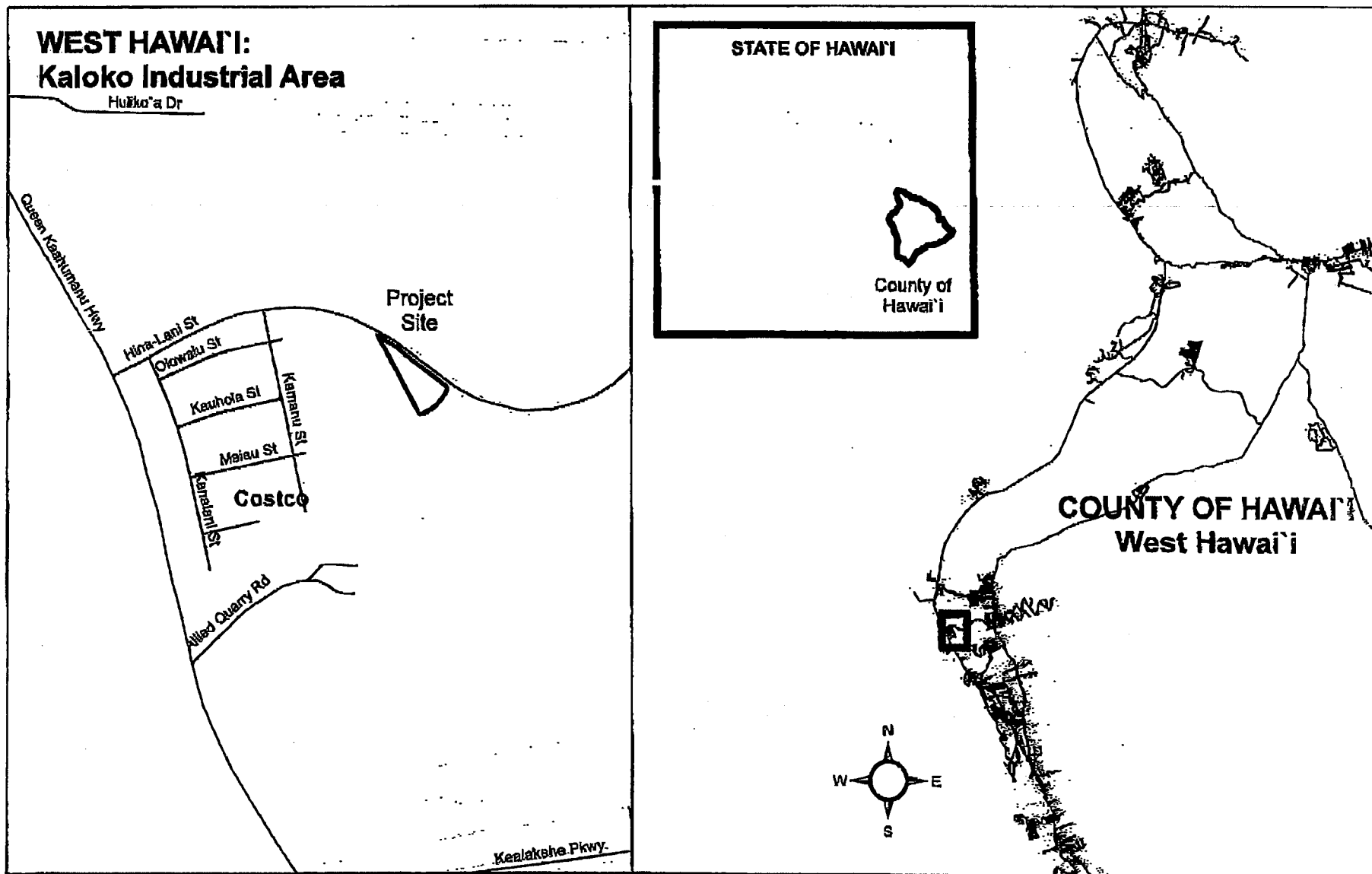
Onsite Services For Families

A network of provider partners offer tailored services to help families succeed.

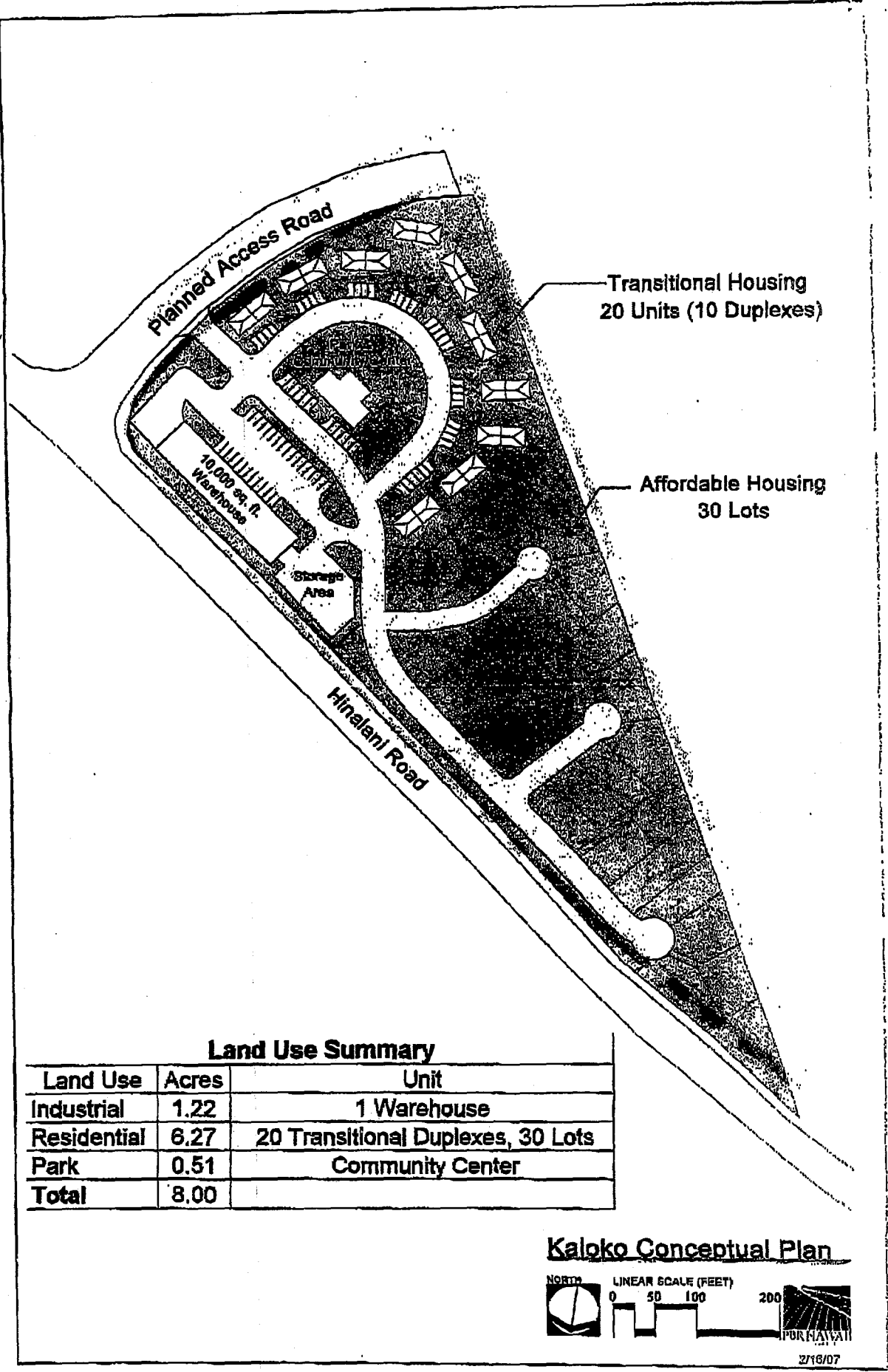
Homeless Referrals	Office of Social Ministry; Care A Van
Life skills training	Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Job Training and Placement	Workforce Development & Altra Staffing
Budgeting	Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Credit Counseling	Credit Counseling Hawai'i
Renters Education/Tenant Suitability	Office of Social Ministry
Educational Needs	DOE and Migrant Ed. Program
Adult Education, GED, ESL	Kona Community School for Adults
Transportation Services	Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Counseling Referrals	Private Community Agencies, and Family Guidance Center (DOH)
Keliki Play Program for Toddlers	The Institute For Family Enrichment (TIFFE)
Youth Enrichment Activities	HPA, Youth groups, Under His Wings
Child and Family Development	Hale Kipa, HeadStart, HealthyStart, Neighborhood Place of Kona

These essential partnerships are currently part of the Transitional Housing Program operated by Catholic Charities Hawai'i at Kawaihae. With the proximity of the site to the urban core, the availability of providers, such as the Food Basket and Habitat for Humanity will increase.

Kaloko Housing Program Tax Map Key: 7-3-009:055



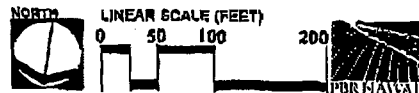
Created: 8/22/06
Modified: 10/25/07



Land Use Summary

Land Use	Acres	Unit
Industrial	1.22	1 Warehouse
Residential	6.27	20 Transitional Duplexes, 30 Lots
Park	0.51	Community Center
Total	8.00	

Kaloko Conceptual Plan



2/16/07



6301 Pali Highway
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224



HAWAII CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
6301 Pali Highway
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224

A JOINT LEGISLATIVE EFFORT

E-Mail to: testimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Regarding: Senate Committee on HSP Hearing
Hearing on: January 29, 2007 @ 1:30 p.m.

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Date: January 28, 2008
To: Senate Committee on Human Services & Public Housing
Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
From: Kelly M. Rosati, JD
Executive Director, Hawaii Family Forum
Lobbyist, Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii
Re: **Strong Support for SB 2187 Making an Appropriation for West Hawaii Housing**

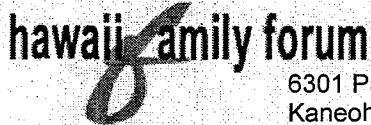
Honorable Chair and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services & Public Housing, I am Kelly Rosati, representing both the Hawaii Family Forum and the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii.

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii. The Roman Catholic Church in Hawaii, under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents over 230,000 Catholics in Hawaii.

In order to help address a critical gap in housing, our community partner Catholic Charities Hawaii collaborated with Partners in Care and the County Office of Housing and Community Development to create the concept for the "Kaloko Housing Program" which would provide housing and supportive services to stabilize families affected by homelessness.

Hawaii Family Forum and the Hawaii Catholic Conference support more resources to address homelessness and strongly supports this bill which appropriates funds to help with construction of a facility that provide housing and services for individuals and families that are successfully transitioning through the homeless continuum on the island of Hawaii.

The Kaloko Housing Program is designed to help the rapidly growing population of working poor, unable to find a place to live in their own community, struggling with inadequate transportation to maintain employment, care for their family and access to support services. An extremely limited number of programs and facilities are pressed to stretch their resources beyond capacity to accommodate the need of the homeless population.



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HAWAII CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
6301 Pali Highway
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PAGE TWO

The urgency of this shortage of services is heightened by the impending closure of Kawaihae Transitional Housing Program, the only shelter program in West Hawai'i, which currently provides services to homeless families from all over the Big Island. The closure of this facility will result in a dramatic loss in homeless services with an impact island-wide, leaving the island with a total of only twelve remaining units of housing to service its growing population of homeless families. This situation will leave the island of Hawai'i as one of the most severely underserved areas in the State.

We strongly support SB 2187, Making An Appropriation for West Hawai'i Housing, which would establish a solution to this critical service gap to help support the most vulnerable in our community.

We urge the committee to pass SB 2187. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Vice-chair
Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

Sonia Scadden - 808-329-7133
St. Michael's Social Ministry Committee and CAP member

HSP Public Hearing Date: 01-29-08 at 1:30 pm in conference room 016.

Support of SB 2187, Making An Appropriation for West Hawai'i Housing
Support of SB 2479 S.D. 3, Making An Appropriation of the Kaloko Housing Program

My name is Sonia Scadden. I live in Kailua-Kona on the Big Island. I am an active member of the Social Ministry Committee of St. Michael's Catholic Church and represent St. Michael's on CAP, the Community Alliance Partners that works to find solutions to homelessness. As a volunteer involved in feeding the homeless at the Friendly Place in Kailua-Kona, I have the opportunity to talk to many of those in our community who have no place of their own to call home or to raise their children. Their stories have profoundly affected me, and that is why I am here today.

For example, two weeks ago today as we were finishing serving, a well-dressed young couple whom I had not seen before came to be served. In conversation with them, I learned that they were both working in town and had come on their lunch hour for a hot meal. They told me that they had children, but because their family was homeless, they spent the nights outdoors somewhere in the bushes. This is no way for parents to be forced to raise their children! Even though they are both working, they do not make enough money to afford any available place for rent.

Based on the 2007 Homeless Service Utilization Report published by the Center on the Family at the University of Hawaii at Manoa there are 1,228 unsheltered people on the Big Island. It is a very sad fact that 1 out of 3 is a child. Of these children, 210 are under the age of 5. They are babies! Hawaii County has the largest percentage of unsheltered children under the age of 5 in the state. It is hard enough to be a parent these days, but imagine trying to be a parent and have to live unsheltered, being constantly on watch for your children's safety.

Another parent told of how it was to live in a car. The father would stand guard for 5 hours while his wife and children slept and then he would wake his wife and let her be "on guard" while he slept his 5 hour shift. Imagine trying to function at a job and trying to save money for rent and live under those circumstances. According to the 2007 Homeless Service Utilization Report, on our island, 1 out of every 6 homeless persons is employed either part time or full time. They are trying to get their lives together. These are examples of the people that are being helped by the Kawaihae Transitional Housing Program.

But, as you know, in less than 18 months, Kawaihae Transitional Housing will close. This is the only facility for homeless families in West Hawaii, an area comprising 2,230 sq. miles, more than 3 times the area of the entire island of Oahu. Since it houses only 24 families it is always totally occupied with an extensive waiting list.

Currently, the West Hawaii CAP Outreach Committee is conducting a campaign to educate citizens about the homeless issues and the need for the Kaloko Housing Program and we are collecting their signatures on petitions in support of the Kaloko Housing Program. I have brought with me today over 600 such petitions that we collected at the Masses this past weekend at St. Michael's Parish in Kona. All of us strongly urge you to pass SB 2187 and SB 2479.

We are asking the state legislature to make the appropriations needed to construct the Kaloko Housing Program.

Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Iharra, Vice-chair
Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

Testimony provided by:

Rev. Konelio Faletoi, Pastor, St. Michael the Archangel Church, Kailua-Kona, HI

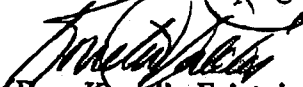
HSP Public Hearing Date: 01-29-08 at 1:30 pm in conference room 016.
Support of SB 2187, Making An Appropriation for West Hawai'i Housing
Support of SB 2479 S.D. 3, Making An Appropriation of the Kaloko Housing Program

The rapidly growing population of working poor in West Hawaii, unable to find a place to live in their own community, are pushed into homelessness, living on the beach, in vehicles, and in remote rural areas. They struggle with inadequate transportation to maintain employment, care for their families, and access support services. An extremely limited number of programs and facilities are pressed to stretch their resources beyond capacity to accommodate the needs of the homeless population.

Three major reasons make the Kaloko Housing Program critical for addressing West Hawaii's housing crisis at this time:

1. The one facility for homeless families on the west side of the Big Island—the Kawaihae Transitional Housing Program—is scheduled to close in 2009 due to health and safety issues at the facility. Families who need this service will be put back on the street if an alternative site is not provided. The Kaloko Housing Program will provide this alternative.
2. The Kaloko Housing Program will increase the number of homeless and low income families who can be provided housing and support services as they work to secure and maintain permanent housing of their own.
3. The Kaloko Housing Program will include construction of new housing facilities that can be rented by low income families who work in the immediate neighborhood. This will eliminate the several hours spent each day by them driving from far distances on the Big Island, thus giving parents more time to provide their children the parenting they need and deserve.

As pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Church in Kona, I am pleased to report that our Social Ministry Committee collected over 600 petitions from parishioners after the Masses this past weekend indicating their overwhelming support for construction of the Kaloko Housing Program. In order to have housing available for homeless families in West Hawaii by June 2009 when the Kawaihae facility is closed, construction has to begin in Summer 2008. It would be unacceptable to displace 24 families with 66 children and put them back on the street. We urge the Hawaii State Legislature to appropriate the funds essential to launch this critical program.


Rev. Konelio Faletoi

Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Iharra, Vice-chair
Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

Don Watson, Chairperson
Island of Hawai'i Advisory Board of Catholic Charities Hawai'i
(808) 987-0574

HSP Public Hearing Date: 01-29-08 at 1:30 pm in conference room 016

Monday, January 28, 2008
Support of SB 2187, (companion HB 2209)
Making An Appropriation for West Hawai'i Housing

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. The Island of Hawai'i Advisory Board acts as a vehicle for community input for the program planning and service development of Catholic Charities Hawai'i on the island. We strongly support SB 2187 (companion HB 2209) regarding the Kaloko Housing Program, which represents a productive solution to a serious crisis in our community.

"Responding to Hawai'i Island's Housing Crisis" has been identified as a priority goal in our Advisory Board's strategic plan. On the island of Hawai'i, the lack of homeless services and access to affordable housing is a growing concern, particularly in West Hawai'i where housing prices have skyrocketed far out of reach, particularly for low-wage earning households.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i is committed to addressing homelessness by helping people become self-sufficient and move into or maintain affordable permanent housing. This includes the operation of the Kawaihae Transitional Housing Program on the Big Island which is designed to help homeless families transition to, and maintain, permanent housing. This facility provides urgently needed services, but does not have the capacity to respond to the level of community demand for housing and transition support for homeless families. The program director consistently reports a waitlist for services, of more than 50% above program capacity – during which families remain unsheltered as they await an opportunity for assistance.

This overwhelming need will be intensified by the imminent closure of the facility at Kawaihae in June 2009. The Kawaihae program has been in operation for over 15 years, although the site was originally developed as a "temporary solution" to respond to the need for homeless services. It now faces closure due to an EPA mandate regarding the conversion of gang cesspools. Since Kawaihae is the only transitional housing program for homeless families available in West Hawai'i, and its closure will significantly impact the number of beds available to the homeless on the Big Island.

To address these concerns, Catholic Charities Hawai'i has worked in collaboration with the County of Hawai'i and the network of local service providers to develop the Kaloko

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HSP Public Hearing 1/29/08

Housing Program as a comprehensive new solution to address homelessness and affordable housing for the West Hawai'i community.

CCH also recognizes that the success of transitional housing is linked to the availability and accessibility of affordable housing in the local community. Due to the current housing situation, many families are unable to fulfill their goal of transitioning to permanent housing, even after obtaining employment and learning budgeting skills. Without this essential component, all the other levels of homeless service are adversely affected.

By providing both transitional housing and affordable rental housing with supportive services, SB 2187 will replace the loss of Kawaihae and also address the source of the housing crisis.

My involvement with CCH and the Transitional Housing program spans the last fourteen years. As a retired police lieutenant for the Hawaii County Police Department, I found that this program had a profound impact in many ways.

Children were now in a positive family and learning environment. A high sense of pride and self-esteem along with the support of the dedicated staff culminates in fast and efficient transitions. This program has streamlined the use and efficiency of the social services available to the clients. Law enforcement has rarely responded to any type of criminal activity at this facility.

We urge your support of SB 2187, as it will help to launch this valuable and long awaited project, providing productive solutions to address gaps in service for one of the most intense needs facing our community.

Sincerely,



Donald Watson

cc: J. Nagasako