



Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs
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TESTIMONY OF LEIMOMI KHAN, PRESIDENT

SB 2421, SD 2 – RELATING TO LAND ACQUISITION

**COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN
AFFAIRS**

Hearing date and time: Friday, March 14, 2008, 10:00 a.m.; In person testimony

March 12, 2008

Aloha Chair Ito, Vice Chair Karamatsu and Members of the Senate Committee.

The Association is a growing national confederation of fifty-three Hawaiian Civic Clubs located throughout the State of Hawai`i and in the States of Alaska, California, Colorado, Illinois, Nevada, Utah, Virginia and Washington State. It initiates and works to support actions that enhance the civic, economic, educational, health and social welfare of our communities, and in particular, the culture and welfare of the Native Hawaiian community.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on SB 2421, SD 2, Relating to Land Acquisition. This bill authorizes the Department of Land & Natural Resources to acquire lands owned by the Galbraith Estate in central Oahu and appropriates funds for the acquisition of land in Wahiawa, Oahu, currently owned by the George Galbraith Estate.

Related bills under consideration by this legislature are: HB 2293 and Senate Bill 2463, both of which would authorize issuance of revenue bonds to purchase land in central Oahu from the Galbraith Estate, appropriate funds to purchase the lands, and enable the Agribusiness Development Corporation to contract with lending institutions to provide lease management services.

It appears all three bills recognize the agriculture value of the Galbraith lands, but what it fails to recognize or to take into consideration is the cultural landscape of these lands and their significance to Native Hawaiians and the community at large.

Kukaniloko is one of the most sacred places in Hawai`i. The Galbraith lands sit on Kukaniloko. It is here where chiefs were born and where famed chiefs lived. Beginning with the birth of Kapawa in the 1300s, Kukaniloko became recognized as the royal birthsite on O`ahu. Birth at Kukaniloko assured a child high-ranking status and the privileges of this status.

SB. 2421, SD 1, cites Article XI, section 3 of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii that requires the State to conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands.

The State Constitution also recognizes, however, the value of conserving and developing the historic and cultural property within the State for the public good. Hawai`i Revised Statutes, Section 6E-1, states,

The legislature declares that the historic and cultural Heritage of the State is among its important assets and That the rapid social and economic developments of contemporary society threaten to destroy the remaining vestiges of this heritage. . . . The legislature further declares that it shall be the public policy of this State to provide leadership in preserving, restoring, and maintaining historic and cultural property, to ensure the administration of such historic and cultural property in a spirit of stewardship and trusteeship for future generations, and to conduct activities, plans, and programs in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of historic and cultural property.

At its recent convention, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs passed a resolution urging the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Land Management Hale, in consultation with 'Aha Kukaniloko, to research and analyze the acquisition of lands in order to protect and preserve the integrity of Kukaniloko and its surrounding complex. This resolution recognized the cultural significance of Kukaniloko and that the 36,000 acre complex of Kukaniloko is critically endangered as lands north of Wahiawa have been listed on the Global Real Estate Market; and that the sale of these lands will open all culturally sensitive areas to damage and destruction.

The companion bill, SB 2463, proposes to amend Section 163D-7 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes to allow the agribusiness development corporation to develop and implement agricultural projects. It lists the contents of plans, such as proposal for the organization of the enterprise, a marketing information and strategy, the impact of existing agricultural operations throughout the State, etc., but nowhere is consideration given to cultural impact, nor is there any consultative requirements with the families who have lived in the area for generations. Thus, as a minimum, we propose that the bill be amended to call for consultation with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs before any leases, sales or eminent domain condemnation action be instigated to assure the cultural integrity of the land.

The Association asks that there be recognition of the Kukaniloko complex, an extremely significant cultural site located within the Galbraith Estate, to assure protection and preservation of the site consistent with the State of Hawai`i's policy on historic and cultural sites engendered in HRS Section 6E.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this bill.