

FINTestimony

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To: FINTestimony
Subject: 3/26/2008 SB3174 Agenda

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Testimony in support of SB3174sd2hd1

House Committee on Finance
March 26, 2008 11a.m. Conference Room 308

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Chair Oshiro, Members of the Committee,

Senate Bill 3174 is a compilation of several significant housing measures which together will provide assistance in addressing Hawaii's critical need for affordable housing. Habitat for Humanity supports these measures because we see every day the depth of the need for housing as it is experienced by Hawaii's residents.

We request that you support the extension of the sunset of crucial funding for the Rental Housing Trust Fund. In Hawaii we have lost affordable rental housing at a frightening rate and it will take concerted effort and commitment to get the affordable rental market to the point where it is not a contributing factor to the rise in homelessness.

Today we would like to speak primarily about the Self Help Housing Fund proposed in this bill. Self Help Housing provides hope and stability to families who have been priced out of the homeownership market and out of the rental market also: Habitat for Humanity is a form of self help housing. We work with families in need and community volunteers to create homeownership for families with low and very low incomes who are living in great need of affordable housing. These families use their sweat equity to build a home and a future for their children and grandchildren.

The Self Help Housing Fund would make funds available to assist us in this work. Not only us, it would assist all of the Self Help Housing programs in Hawaii to more rapidly address the needs of families in dire housing circumstances by building homes with them.

We are asking you to support the Self Help Housing Fund. We are also asking your indulgence to our request for an amendment to this legislation, which has the concurrence of Representative Shimabukuro as chair of the Committee on Human Services and Housing and of Representative Ito, chair of Committee on Water, Land and Ocean Resources and Hawaiian Affairs.

We request that the language of the bill be amended so that the portion of the bill which establishes the

Self Help Housing Fund includes land acquisition, infrastructure and construction. Without this amendment the Self Help Housing Fund is limited to technical assistance. The requested amendments to this bill have been submitted to the Chairman's office by Representative Shimabukuro and Representative Ito.

The Self Help Housing Coalition which includes Habitat for Humanity also requests that the bill be funded in the amount of \$5 million. There are six programs in Hawaii who build or want to build self help housing. Together we have already produced more that 1,100 self help homes. We can be a significant part of the solution to the housing crisis if the state legislature will give us the tools to increase our production. We ask your support for the Self Help Housing Trust Fund.

Thank you.

Kathleen Hasegawa
Executive Director
Hawaii Habitat for Humanity Association