

TESTIMONY
SCR 119
LATE

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March 28, 2008, 2:45, room 414

Testimony for SCR 119

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

To: Senator Clayton Hee, chair of Water and Land Committee, and
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, chair of Human Services and Public Housing, and
Members of the respective Committees

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.

The employment and training service programs include: Employment Core Services for Low Income, Small Business Management Training, English as a Second Language Training, and Kitchen Incubator Training.

PGC offers lending services funded by U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and Bank of Hawai'i to low-income residents of Hawai'i who want to startup or expand their businesses. In the technical assistance area, PGC provides business skills training, advanced computer classes, commercial kitchen usage training, and one-on-one business consulting. PGC economic development projects include: USDA Homeownership on Kaua'i, RED Manini Microloan Program, Microenterprise Assistance Project (MAP) – A Program for Investment in Microenterprises (PRIME), Employment Creation for Refugees, Immigrants, & Low-Income, Rural Economic & Agriculture Development (READ) Project, and Virtual Business Incubator for Refugees.

Today, PGC is the only SBA Intermediary Lender in the state of Hawai'i and is certified by the U.S. Treasury Department as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and Community Development Entity (CDE).

PGC's awards and honors include the Hawai'i Welfare to Work SBA Associate Award, New Markets Initiative Award, 2006 Ho'okele Award, SBA Community Express Award, and the 2007 SBA Minority Business Champion of the Year Award. PGC's designations include: Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), Community Development Entity (CDE), Community Based Development Organization (CBDO), SBA Intermediary Lender, and Voluntary Agency (VOLAG).

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