

LATE TESTIMONY



Via Capitol Website

February 9, 2009

**Senate Committees on Education and Housing &
Transportation, International and Intergovernmental Affairs
Hearing Date: Monday, February 9, 2009, 1:15 p.m. in CR 225**

Testimony in support of SB 740 – Relating to Housing
(Directs DLNR and HHFDC to identify public lands within transit station suitable for affordable housing.)

Honorable Chairs Sakamoto/English, Vice-Chairs Kidani/Gabbard
& EDH-TIA Members:

My name is David Arakawa, and I am the Executive Director of the Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF), a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and a utility company. One of LURF's missions is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources and public health and safety.

LURF is writing to provide testimony **in support** of **SB 740**, which directs the department of land and natural resources (DLNR) and Hawaii housing finance and development corporation (HHFDC) to identify public lands within one-half mile of the city's transit corridor and within a one-mile radius of any designated transit station suitable for affordable housing.

Background. The lack of affordable housing remains a significant problem affecting Hawaii. Finding ways to provide sufficient affordable housing and market housing for Hawaii's residents has been a major objective for our elected officials, and state and county agencies, and members of the housing industry and business community. For the past two years, LURF has participated in a statewide task force comprised of representatives from all four counties, business, labor, developers, architects, nonprofit providers of services, the State, and the legislature, whose purpose was to identify, address and propose regulatory reform and solutions to remove the barriers to the production of affordable housing.

SB 740. This bill directs DLNR and HHFDC to submit a list to the governor identifying all public lands within one-half mile from the transit corridor and within a one-mile

radius of any transit station that are suitable for housing development pursuant to chapter 201H, Hawaii Revised Statutes. DLNR and HHFDC must submit the list of public lands to the Governor, within one hundred eighty days following the final determination by the city and county of Honolulu of the specific mass transit corridor and the locations of the transit stations serving the mass transit system.

Provisions of SB 740 direct HHFDC to prepare a report prior to the next legislative session, which identifies the following:

- (1) A list of the public lands set aside pursuant to this Act;
- (2) A prioritized list of the public lands set aside in accordance with each parcel's suitability, based on location, topography, and proximity to existing infrastructure, for housing development pursuant to chapter 201H, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- (3) A proposed timetable for the development of housing on the prioritized list of selected parcels; and
- (4) An estimated capital cost for the development of needed infrastructure and construction of housing units on the parcels identified pursuant to this Act.

LURF's Position. The housing crisis in Hawaii has affected many families who are now forced to live with extended families because of high costs. Access to affordable housing is critical to our communities and any further delay of any affordable housing type projects will cause an even bigger crisis in the near future.

A report by DLNR and HHFDC to the Governor which identifies which lands are most suitable for development of affordable housing projects, is a step forward starting the development of more affordable housing. With the completion of the Honolulu Rail transit system expected in 2018, the sooner proper sites for possible affordable housing projects are determined, the more efficiently development will take place.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support** SB 740.