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Sent: Sunday, January 30, 2011 9:50 AM
To: TOUTestimony
Cc: Heather Bolan; Don Persons
Subject: HB84

Robert F. Gentry, President, Gold Coast Neighborhood Association

Committee on Tourism

Monday, January 31, 2011
9:15 a.m.

HB 84

Members of the Committee on Tourism. I am submitting testimony regarding HB 84, a public safety measure to repair the sea wall along the Waikiki shoreline from 2957 Kalakaua Ave., to Coconut Avenue.

This sea wall was constructed approximately 100 years ago (Hana Hou Magazine, vol. 9, no. 3, pg 78) and has provided uninterrupted access to the ocean for the public during that entire time period. The sea wall has been periodically repaired by the State of Hawaii over the years, but that came to an end during the previous administration when Gov. Lingle refused to release budgeted funds for such repairs. The issue for the administration at that time was the alleged "ownership" of the sea wall. Portions of the facility are on private property and portions are on State property. The sea wall has been used as a public right of way for ocean access, fishing, and recreation during its entire existence.

Currently, the sea wall is in need of repair. The walkway on top of the sea wall is deteriorating, and is a severe safety hazard for the public walking along the sea wall. The wall itself needs professional analysis to determine its strength, as it protects residential property along Kalakaua Avenue. There may be necessary repairs to the infrastructure of the sea wall once the engineering analysis is completed. Again, funds for this activity have been included in the legislative budget in past years.

The Gold Coast Neighborhood Association, established in 2002, has been advocating for the maintenance and repair of the sea wall since its inception. This facility is an important public access to the ocean resource for residents and visitors alike. It is part of the Waikiki experience, and should be protected and preserved.

Mahalo.