

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



KAREN SEDDON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

Statement of
Karen Seddon
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND HOUSING

March 1, 2011 at 1:15 p.m.
Room 225, State Capitol

In consideration of
S.B. 897, S.D. 1
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

HHFDC **offers the following comments and concerns** on S.B. 897, S.D. 1. This bill requires the HHFDC, the Homeless Programs office, and the Hawaii Association of Realtors to collaborate on an annual survey of vacant state- and privately-owned vacant housing units that could be used as affordable rental housing under Chapter 201H, Hawaii Revised Statutes and to report the results of the annual survey to the Legislature.

This bill does not meet its stated purpose of addressing the shortage of affordable rentals and would be costly to implement. The proposed report would only represent a point-in-time count. Vacancy rates change daily, as tenants give notice and others are placed in units.

For state-owned projects, vacancies are filled from extensive wait lists already in place. Furthermore, any units, whether state- or privately-owned, that are vacant and uninhabitable because of disrepair, would require a source of funding to make repairs necessary to place them back in service.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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March 1, 2011

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Housing
State Capitol, Room 225
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: S.B. 897, S.D. 1, Relating to Homelessness

HEARING: Tuesday, March 1, 2011 at 1:15 p.m.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Solomon, and Members of the Committee:

I am Myoung Oh, Government Affairs Director, here to testify on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawai'i, and its 8,500 members. HAR submits comments on S.B. 897, S.D. 1, which requires the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, the Homeless Programs Office of the Department of Human Services, and the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® to identify state-owned, state-managed, and other government and privately-owned or managed vacant housing units that could be used as affordable rental housing, and report annually to the Governor and Legislature.

HAR has historically supported mechanisms to help increase the supply of low and moderate income affordable rental housing, such as the Rental Housing Trust Fund Program, which helps provide these opportunities.

HAR is supportive of the intent to identify units that may be utilized for affordable rental housing. However, we note that an annual survey of vacant state- and privately-owned vacant housing units is only a product of the date and time in which the data was collected.

If this Committee is inclined to move this measure forward, HAR would respectfully request that this project have an end date, and adequate resources to implement this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.





HAWAII CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
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Email to: WLHTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Hearing on: March 1, 2011 @ 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room #225

DATE: February 24, 2011

TO: Senate Committee on Water, Land & Housing
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Malama Solomon, Vice Chair

FROM: Walter Yoshimitsu, Executive Director

RE: Strong Support for SB 897 SD1 Relating to Homelessness

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I am Walter Yoshimitsu, representing the Hawaii Catholic Conference. The Hawaii Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva.

The Hawaii Catholic Conference is committed to reducing poverty and homelessness now and for the future. The provision of safe and affordable housing is an important part of any such effort. Often, support services are necessary to enable an individual to make the transition from homelessness to a stable housing situation possible. We do, however, acknowledge and recognize that the fiscal situation in our State and country is serious, and that cuts in the budget are being made in light of these challenging facts.

The teaching of the church is clear on this issue: "...there is a growing awareness of the exalted dignity proper to the human person, since he stands above all things, and his rights and duties are universal and inviolable. Therefore, there must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and rightful freedom even in matters religious." Gaudium Et Spes (5):

Based on our commitment to the dignity of the human person and to helping the least among us, we strongly support this measure. This bill, if passed, will move us in the right direction to end homelessness in Hawaii. Along with our community partners, Catholic Charities Hawaii, Office for Social Ministry and the Diocesan Office for Affordable Housing, we strongly urge your support but leave the technicalities of the bill to their expertise.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

hawaii family forum

Email to: WLHTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Hearing on: March 1, 2011 @ 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room #225

DATE: February 24, 2011

TO: Senate Committee on Water, Land & Housing
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Malama Solomon, Vice Chair

FROM: Allen Cardines, Jr., Executive Director

RE: Strong Support for SB 897 SD1 Relating to Homelessness

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify. I am Allen Cardines, representing the Hawaii Family Forum. Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii, representing a network of various Christian Churches and denominations.

The Hawaii Family Forum is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that was founded in 1997 by a group of leaders in the community that were (and still are) deeply disturbed by the appearance of Hawaii residents, including our precious keiki, living on the streets. Although we are not a social service provider, we are an educational organization that is committed to educating people in our faith-based communities about our brothers and sisters who are in need of housing assistance.

Over the last few years, we have committed ourselves to finding community partners who believe there is a permanent solution to ending homelessness and poverty. Our faith-based, private and public sector partners across the state have organized to work together to provide access to affordable housing, easier access to services, and create a workable plan that will one day end homelessness in Hawaii.

We believe that there are many ways to help solve the housing crisis in Hawaii. These are some of the things we strongly support:

- Ongoing collaboration with an entire network of public, private and faith-based organizations that unite around the goal of ending poverty and homelessness. No one single organization can do it by themselves. This is OUR Hawaii and we should all work together.
- Providing access to housing for low-income families, those mentally challenged, the elderly and the disabled.
- And finally, continued funding for these essential programs and offices that go to the very heart of the issue. This includes funding for prevention and crisis response programs that solve people's unique housing issues preferably before they become homeless.

This bill can help accomplish these goals. For that reason, we support passage of this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.