

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



PATRICIA McMANAMAN.
DIRECTOR
PANKAJ BHANOT
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 30, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 900, S.D. 2, H.D. 1 - RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 30, 2011; 11:00 a.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B. 900, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, is to appropriate general funds to designate surplus or available open or vacant space as a safe haven for persons who are homeless.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the effort of the Legislature to seek solutions to challenge of homelessness. We, however, respectfully oppose S.B. 900, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, which would appropriate general funds to provide safe havens in surplus or vacant locations.

Designating areas in which to herd the homeless, especially those with mental health and addiction issues, sidesteps the issue of these people needing services oriented to recovery.

Historically, in Hawaii and in other locations, such set asides of public spaces incurs huge neighborhood resentment and a major challenge to undo when funding or

public support is no longer available. Once a way of life has been created for the severely disadvantaged, it is very difficult to undo.

In addition, the funding provided in this measure is severely inadequate to fund all of the amenities listed in the bill. Given the State's current fiscal difficulties and the budget shortfall for this biennium, we do not support a new general appropriation that could impact the priorities in the Governor's Executive Biennium Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.