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STATE OF HAWAII



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CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

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**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS**

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COMMENTS OF JOBIE M. K. MASAGATANI, CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
OCEAN, MARINE RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS ON

HB 2104, RELATING TO HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

January 24, 2014

Chair Hanohano, Vice-Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) appreciates the opportunity to provide the following comments on this measure that calls for the development of a comprehensive plan to provide sufficient infrastructure to allow access to water and enable development of Hawaiian home lands.

In general, DHHL agrees with the underlying history of water issues described in Section 1 of this bill and how water availability directly impacts our ability to fulfill the mission of this trust. That said, the lack of resources is the fundamental obstacle that prevents DHHL from meeting its mission expeditiously. The department currently has a series of existing comprehensive land use plans including island plans and regional plans that identify water needs. What DHHL is unable to deliver, as required by this bill, is the timeline for implementation since implementation requires sufficient funding from the legislature. Without this funding, DHHL cannot move

forward with developing infrastructure for water, or roads, or other needs.

On a related note, DHHL is working to address the issue of water through the development of its Water Policy Plan. The intent of the plan is to clearly spell out how the Hawaiian Homes Commission and department should plan for water, assert its rights to water, develop water sources and manage water systems on a policy level. We gratefully acknowledge that the committee chair and introducer of this bill, Representative Hanohano, was the only member of the legislature to attend any of the beneficiary consultation meetings we held on this plan across the state in 2013.

While the intent of this bill is good, we underscore the importance of funding in implementing this or any plan to provide water to Hawaiian home lands. These are funds that the department does not have and the legislature is empowered to provide. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

LATE



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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OCEAN MARINE RESOURCES,
AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

HB 2104 RELATING TO HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

Friday, January 24, 2014; 11:00 am; Room 325

Aloha Madame Chair Hanohano, vice chair Cullen and members of the Committee. I am Soulee Stroud, President of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs here to testify in support of this bill that would devise a plan for an adequate water supply to develop lands currently held by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.

With all due respect, Madame Chair, the AHCC would also like to offer a couple of amendments to the bill before us today. Our suggested changes are underlined.

*On page 1, line 3 we believe that “State” of Hawaii should actually be “Territory” of Hawaii.

AHCC suggests that the following clarification should be incorporated into the bill starting at page 1, line 5:

“Primary responsibility for the Homeland Trust was delegated to the State of Hawaii through the Hawaii State Admissions Act of 1959, while the Federal government retained certain aspects of responsibility as described in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920.”

AHCC believes that this would clarify that responsibility did not go directly to the Department but primarily to State Administration, and that certain responsibilities remain with Federal government.

Other than those suggestions, a plan to provide water infrastructure to the HHL residential, pastoral and agricultural land is long overdue. We have watched for years as thousands of acres dried in the sun at Kalae on Hawaii

Island, and with adequate water the “breadbasket” of Hoolehua, Molokai, has always had the potential to provide fresh food for Hawaii’s marketplace.

Clearly, the possibility of food shortages following a catastrophic storm or tsunami that cuts off our supply ships is frightening...especially to those among us who well remember the scarcities following December 7, 1941.

The State legislature in recent sessions expressed concern about Hawaii’s extreme reliance on the importation of food and, in fact, enacted laws supporting the sustainability and production of food here in Hawaii.

We have also seen a resurgence of interest by an impressive number of young Hawaiians who want to return to the aina and raise taro, or organic fruits and vegetables. Perhaps, a century later, Kuhio’s original dream for his people can come to reality utilizing the land in ways he envisioned as the most important of several paths to preserve the Hawaiian culture.

Thank you for the opportunity to advocate for water and the life of the land...Hawaiian Home Lands, to be exact.

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