



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
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BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

March 28, 2013 2:00 P.M.
Room 308, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of

**Senate Bill 305, Senate Draft 1, House Draft 1
Relating to Development of Public Housing**

Honorable Chair Luke, and Members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with comments regarding Senate Bill (S.B.) 305, Senate Draft (SD) 1, House Draft (HD) 1, relating to development of public housing.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) supports enactment of this measure with amendments, which would authorize the HPHA to develop commercial and industrial properties in connection with the development of public housing dwelling units.

The agency believes that this statutory amendment will further enhance the HPHA's ability to serve our low income residents by providing more development options that could also benefit the surrounding communities in which those properties are situated.

The HPHA respectfully requests the Committee to amend this measure by:

- a. Removing on page 3, lines 10 through 12 up to the words "chapter 91", and;
- b. Inserting on page 4, line 3 "also develop, **sell, or lease**, commercial, industrial, and other properties...", and;
- c. Removing on page 4, lines 12 through 20 up to the words "similar terms", and;
- d. Inserting on page 4, line 21 "all **sales and** leases, less costs to the authority..."

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The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the House Committee on Finance with the agency's position regarding S.B. 305, SD1, HD1. We respectfully request the Committee to pass this measure favorably, and we thank you very much for your dedicated support.

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Taro Security and Purity Task Force
TESTIMONY

**SENATE BILL SB305 SD1
RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC HOUSING**

SB305 SD1 authorizes the Hawaii Public Housing Authority to develop public housing projects, including mixed-use development of commercial and industrial properties in connection with the development of housing dwelling units. It provides that the authority may develop public land in an agricultural district subject to the prior approval of the land use commission when developing lands greater than five acres in size, and public land in a conservation district subject to the prior approval of the board of land and natural resources.

The Taro Security and Purity Task Force is the legislative body created in 2008 to provide guidance and recommendations regarding research, policy and the challenges that taro and taro farmers face both now and for the future. In 2009, legislators received a report from the task force outlining key issues and recommendations.

Based on these recommendations aimed at supporting various efforts to protect taro and taro lands as well as support taro growers for Hawai'i's future food security, the task force raises the following comments and concerns about SB503 SD1.

The task force recognizes that the development of agricultural lands for housing purposes is a concern when the State currently imports approximately 85 percent of its food. The proposed bill will impact Important Agricultural Lands (IALs) and agricultural or conservation lands on public lands. From a food security perspective, the State is most at risk for staple starch crops. Taro is highly suited to address this shortfall and represents the highest and best use of wetland taro sites on public lands adjacent to each community and should be protected for food security purposes.

Ancient wetland taro sites continue to exist on public lands, particularly in conservation lands along riparian areas and in the backs of valleys throughout the state. Wetland taro lands are the most at risk and intensive of these agricultural lands, particular as they are often classified as marginal agricultural lands under current IAL criteria and remain unclassified and undocumented on public lands. Wetland taro lands require specialized soil and climatic conditions and because of these unique requirements for growing cannot be easily replaced. Moreover, because wetland taro systems sites are at high risk for flooding and hence pose significant liability to the State should development projects be permitted and build on wetland taro lands. There is a long history of flood damage and mitigation for such developments that were allowed to be build in such zones, including Waiapuka, Kulioo, Punaluu, and Manoa valleys on Oahu and Waiohuli on DHHL lands, Maui. Permitted development in such areas directs liability immediately to the State knowing they are an avoidable liability on public lands for the State and the Counties where wetland taro sites are as yet undeveloped.

Based on the above concerns, the task force suggests including additional language in the bill to stipulate protection of wetland taro lands if state or federal monies or agencies are involved in a public housing project, as follows:

For purposes of this subsection, the authority shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 to provide:

(3) That the board shall not acquire for development, develop or disturb as yet undeveloped lands where existing taro-growing systems are in use, or ancient wetland taro lands, or structural elements of ancient taro-growing systems exist.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily Kandagawa', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emily Kandagawa, Coordinator

for Mark Alapaki Luke, Chair
Taro Security and Purity Task Force