



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR
SHAN S. TSUTSUI
LT. GOVERNOR

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. Box 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: 586-2850
Fax Number: 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

CATHERINE P. AWAKUNI COLÓN
DIRECTOR
JO ANN M. UCHIDA TAKEUCHI
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**PRESENTATION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2016
Friday, February 26, 2016
1:00 p.m.

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1840, H.D. 1, RELATING TO SUNSET
MEMORIAL PARK.**

TO THE HONORABLE SYLVIA LUKE, CHAIR,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs ("Department") appreciates the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1840, H.D. 1, Relating to Sunset Memorial Park. My name is Catherine Awakuni Colón, Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, offering comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1840, H.D. 1, requires that the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, in consultation with the State's Comptroller, develop strategies for the upkeep, repair, and maintenance of Sunset Memorial Park in Pearl City, and submit a report of findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2017.

As the Committee may be aware, the Department has been grappling with issues relating to this cemetery for a number of years, and has been exploring a variety of options to ensure that the cemetery is maintained appropriately and is safe for and accessible to families and loved ones. The Department is aware, for example, that family members have expressed interest in assisting with the upkeep on a volunteer basis provided they have clear authority to perform these services. The Department is amenable to exploring this and all other options, including consulting with the State's Comptroller.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1840, H.D. 1. I will be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

TESTIMONY OF
LARRY S VERAY
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON HB1840 RELATING TO SUNSET MEMORIAL PARK
FEBRUARY 24, 2016

Chair Luke, Chair and members of the Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1840.

I am the Chair for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board #21. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Pearl City Neighborhood Board #21 and the many grieving families that can't find their love ones buried at Sunset Memorial Park. On February 23, 2016, the Pearl City Neighborhood Board passed a resolution requesting the Hawaii State Legislature to enact law to support upkeep, repair and maintenance for Sunset Memorial Park.

Our Pearl City Neighborhood Board Health, Education and Welfare Committee documented numerous complaints over this past year from the community specifically many families who have suffered from previous owners neglect to maintain satisfactory operations of Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery.

I personally interviewed several family members and it was totally heart breaking to hear stories from many that can't find their love ones. Numerous family grave sites with head stones and urns have either disappeared or have been stolen from the property. Some of these headstones have sunken into wet ground and grounds collapsed due to collapsing coffins that were buried on the property. There is no current record of where people have been buried due to a fire that destroyed the main office on the property.

I personally facilitated a Pearl City Neighborhood Board Special Meeting on October 10, 2015 bringing over a 150 families and individuals together with our legislators to work this problem. It was clearly a huge undertaking to try to find solutions to bring the cemetery up to State standards and

discovering numerous liability issues with the many volunteers who have struggled to help cut grass, add soil, find sunken headstones and retrieve stolen urns.

I am personally requesting the State Legislature to in act immediate legislation for a long-term solution to support the Sunset Memorial Park and develop a strategy for the upkeep, repair and maintenance of the cemetery.

On behalf of the Pearl City Neighborhood Board #21 and all the grieving families who routinely look for their love ones at the cemetery; I urge you to pass HB1840.

Mahalo for your support.

Very respectfully,

Larry S. Veray

February 24, 2016

TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Friday, February 26, 2016 at 1:00 pm
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

FROM: Lisa Wond



SUBJECT: **H.B. 1840, HD1, RELATING TO SUNSET MEMORIAL PARK**

I support H.B. 1840, HD1.

I'm a member of the Nagamine family. Last year, our gravesite at Sunset Memorial Park was desecrated by thieves who stole the urns of my Grandfather, Grandmother, Aunty and Uncle. We recovered their urns at the Reynolds Recycling Plant, but never recovered their ashes. Our family has been deeply affected by this action against us.

Before the theft, our family members regularly visited and maintained the area around our gravesite, but overall, Sunset Memorial Park is run down and overgrown. The poor condition of the cemetery attracts homeless persons and chronics, making the area unsafe as well.

As a resident of Pearl City, I'm also disappointed at the eyesore the cemetery has become. You can't help but notice the overgrowth and trash at the cemetery, just off of Kamehameha Highway. When our family first purchased the gravesite, we thought it was a peaceful and final resting place for our family members. Who knew that we could be so wrong.

Although our family remains are no longer at Sunset Memorial Park, I support this bill and encourage DCCA to explore all options, so that other families won't experience what we're experiencing.

Thank you for your support.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2016 12:43 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: foodsovereignty@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1840 on Feb 26, 2016 13:00PM

HB1840

Submitted on: 2/25/2016

Testimony for FIN on Feb 26, 2016 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mitsuko Hayakawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Thank you for hearing this bill and supporting the families and friends of Sunset Memorial Park.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2016 9:24 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: dylanarm@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1840 on Feb 26, 2016 13:00PM*

LATE

HB1840

Submitted on: 2/25/2016

Testimony for FIN on Feb 26, 2016 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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