



SB2425
RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Senate Committee on Housing

February 13, 2018

3:10 p.m.

Room 225

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers the following **COMMENTS** on SB2425, to ensure that lands held by the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) remain consistently protected against inappropriate alienation, notwithstanding their exclusion from the definition of "public lands" in HRS § 171-2.

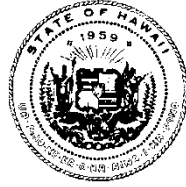
OHA appreciates that the HPHA may benefit from greater flexibility and autonomy over the management and disposition of lands under its control, particularly given its critical mission to provide housing relief for Hawai'i's indigent population. OHA understands that this measure would accordingly remove lands held by the HPHA from Board of Land and Natural Resources' oversight and management under Chapter 171, through an amendment to the definition of "public lands" in HRS §171-2. However, to ensure that HPHA lands are treated consistently with other state lands generally removed from BLNR jurisdiction (such as lands held by the University of Hawai'i, the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, and other state entities), OHA requests that this measure expressly reaffirm that current legislative approval requirements for the sale of any state lands also apply to HPHA lands. **OHA objects to the sale of "ceded" lands except in limited circumstances, and notes that the legislative approval requirements for the sale of state lands, as embodied in HRS § 171-64.7, were enacted to ensure a high level of accountability and transparency in any proposed alienation of the state's limited land base, and to protect "ceded" lands from being sold prior to the resolution of Native Hawaiians' unrelinquished claims.**

Therefore, should the Committee choose to move this measure, OHA respectfully asks that a new paragraph (9) be inserted into subsection (a) of HRS § 171-64.7, to read as follows:

"(9) Lands to which the Hawai'i public housing authority in its corporate capacity holds title."

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



HAKIM OUANSAFI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
AND
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING**

**Tuesday, February 13, 2018
3:10 PM - Room 225, Hawaii State Capitol**

In consideration of
SB 2425
RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS

Honorable Chair Rhoads, Chair Espero, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land, and Senate Committee on Housing, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning Senate Bill (SB) 2425, relating to public lands.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) **strongly supports** the enactment of SB 2425. This Administrative Bill is primarily a "housekeeping" measure that seeks to exempt HPHA lands from the definition of "public lands" under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) section 171-2.

HPHA titled lands were previously exempted from section 171-2, HRS, when the lands were held by the HPHA's predecessor agencies the Housing and Community Development Corporation of Hawaii (HCDCH) and the Hawaii Housing Authority (HHA). After the HCDCH bifurcated into two separate agencies, an exemption for HPHA titled lands was inadvertently not included in the list of lands exempted from section 171-2, HRS.

HPHA is authorized to acquire, own, and hold real property under chapter 356D-8, HRS, and its federal low-income public housing properties are in a Federal Annual Contributions Contract with the United States of America. Therefore, its titled lands do not fall under the catchall jurisdiction of state "public lands" under the Department of Lands and Natural Resources (DLNR). Unless exempted from the definition of "public lands" under section 171-2, HRS, the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) could cause unnecessary delay with HPHA's redevelopment projects due to the need for the BLNR to review and take action on land leases for "public lands".

A 2006, the Legislative Reference Bureau published a report, "*Clarifying Statutory References in State Housing Agency Laws*," stating that an amendment should be made based on the facts and history of both the HPHA and HHFDC.

Prior to 1987, §171-2 excluded from the definition of "public lands" those "lands to which the Hawaii housing authority in its corporate capacity holds title". Act 337, SLH 1987, that established the housing finance and development corporation, added a further exclusion in §171-2 for the corporation's properties. After 1997, when the two agencies merged into the housing and community development corporation of Hawaii, this section was further amended to change the reference to the housing and community development corporation of Hawaii to the (present) Hawaii housing finance and development corporation.

It would appear that this section should be amended to include both the Hawaii housing finance and development corporation and the Hawaii public housing authority, as both agencies are authorized to acquire, own, and hold real property.

"Clarifying Statutory References in State Housing Agency Laws," Report No. 5, 2006, Legislative Reference Bureau.

HHFDC lands have since been exempted under HRS Section 171-2. Accordingly, the HPHA lands should also be exempted from "public lands."

The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the Senate Committees with the HPHA's testimony regarding SB 2425. We thank you very much for your dedicated support.