



DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lieutenant Governor

MIKE MCCARTNEY
Director

LAND USE COMMISSION
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism
State of Hawai'i

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Statement of
Daniel E. Orodenker
Executive Officer
State Land Use Commission

Before the
Senate Committee on
Water and Land

Wednesday March 8, 2021
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Virtual Video Conference

In consideration of
GM 530
REGARDING THE CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION OF GARY OKUDA TO
THE LAND USE COMMISSION, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2025

Chair Inouye; Vice Chair Keith-Agaran; and members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Gary Okuda's re-appointment to the Land Use Commission. Mr Okuda has been an invaluable member of the Commission. In addition to being overwhelmingly well prepared for every meeting, his contributions to creating a record for decisions and developing factual information for the Commission in key areas has been critical. As an attorney he has also shown tremendous insight into the legal issues facing the Commission and a real penchant for the real-world application of statutory requirements and a deep concern for due process and open government.

Mr. Okuda is well respected by other commissioners and widely appreciated by members of the community who attend our proceedings. Showing a remarkable tendency to remain unbiased until all the facts have been put before the Commission, he has asked hard questions of all sides in the proceedings and does not allow anything to be assumed by the Commission. He has a keen mind and intellect, is humble and brings a welcome sense of humor to the Commission. An invaluable member, his re-appointment is welcomed by staff, fellow commissioners, and the general public. He is respectful and professional in bearing, bringing his expertise as a courtroom practitioner to the LUC quasi-judicial proceedings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Mr. Okuda's reappointment. We are honored to have him and look forward with pleasure to his continued participation.

GM-530

Submitted on: 2/24/2021 9:16:46 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/3/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kevin Yuen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

February 24, 2021

Dear Senator Inouye,

This letter is in support of Mr. Gary Okuda for his renomination to the Land Use Commission.

I met Mr. Okuda when I was an administrator for the Department of Education approximately 7 years ago. Mr. Okuda supported the development of a new Freshman Academy at Kaimuki High School. At that time, the retention rate of 9th graders was at a very high percentage where more specific interventions needed to be instilled.

Mr. Okuda helped increase the promotion rate to an amazing 96.2% to grade 10. Mr. Okuda arranged field trips to the University of Hawaii Engineering department to allow students to see and experience what it would be like to learn at that academic level. Students were drawn in to the most current engineering endeavors where it inspired many to take sincere interest in their education.

We opened our doors to students identified as needing extra time and opportunities to make up assignments and learn difficult concepts. These free tutoring sessions were held outside of our normal school hours. Mr. Okuda made it possible for our students to receive free pizza lunches if they attended Saturday tutoring sessions. The opportunity went viral as more and more students attended weekend tutoring. We had to open up a second portable to accommodate the increased interest. Mr. Okuda supported this effort and delivered the pizza to the students himself.

Mr. Okuda is a strong and humble public figure. His intention is to always keep the general public interest in mind. I have come to learn through numerous meetings with him that he will often base his decisions on current Hawaii laws and what is right for the people of Hawaii.

Ms. Inouye, I offer my highest recommendation in support of Mr. Gary Okuda. I have served the State of Hawaii for 36 years in the Department of Education as a Teacher,

Counselor, Vice Principal and Principal. I loved my job because of my experiences with the kids and families of my community. I vowed to never let my kids down. Mr. Okuda has the same beliefs deep within.

Sincerely,

Kevin Yuen, Retired DOE



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

March 3, 2021 1:00 PM

In SUPPORT of GM530

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee,

On behalf of our 27,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **supports GM530, the confirmation of Gary Okuda** to the State Land Use Commission for a term to expire 6-30-2025.

For 60 years, the Land Use Commission (LUC or Commission) has succeeded in encouraging proper land uses to protect and preserve Hawai'i's natural resources and foster appropriate and well-planned development throughout the islands. In 1961, the legislature created the LUC in response to "a lack of adequate controls [that] had caused the development of Hawaii's limited and valuable land for short-term gain for the few while resulting in long-term loss to the income and growth potential of our State's economy."¹ This unique agency is critical to protecting open space, agricultural fields, natural resources, native Hawaiian rights, taxpayers' money, the overall quality of life for Hawai'i residents, and the long-term health of our economy.

The LUC is composed of nine members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. One member is appointed from each of the four counties; five members are appointed at-large. The Commissioners are non-paid volunteers who represent a cross-section of the community.

Gary Okuda graduated from Kailua High School on O'ahu and received a Juris Doctor degree from University of California Davis. He has forty years of experience practicing law in Hawai'i and has also taught at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

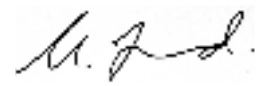
Commissioner Okuda was appointed to the LUC in 2016. During his four years of service, Mr. Okuda has proven to be an effective problem-solver by maintaining an approach that is both logical and empathetic. We especially appreciate that Commissioner Okuda diligently researches and reviews each matter coming before the LUC, so that he can ask thoughtful questions and make informed decisions during the meeting.

We do not always agree with his decision in every matter. But even when we disagree, we have found him to be respectful, thoughtful, and fair in his preferred outcome.

¹ <https://luc.hawaii.gov/about/history-3/>

Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony in **support of GM530.**

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Townsend", written over a light blue rectangular background.

Marti Townsend
Chapter Director

GM-530

Submitted on: 2/23/2021 7:52:50 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/3/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Arnold	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of Mr. Okuda to sit on the Land Use Commission

February 23, 2021

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Water and Land Committee

Hawaii State Senate

Hawaii State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: GM530 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, GARY OKUDA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025

Honorable Senator Lorraine Inouye:

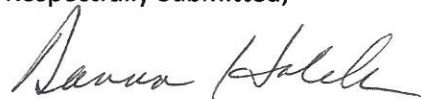
I have known Gary Okuda for over 50 years. Our families were raised on the Windward side of O'ahu in Kailua just blocks away from each other. Our families attended the same elementary, intermediate and high schools in our community.

After high school, Gary earned his BA from the University of Hawaii, Manoa and later his law degree from the University of California Davis. Gary received prestigious honors from Phi Beta Phi in 1977 and Phi Kappa Phi in 1978. In 1981 immediately following graduation from UC Davis, Gary began practicing law back home here in Hawaii. In 1987 he became a partner in Leu Okada and Doi, Attorneys at Law where he continues to practice today.

In 2011, after over 30 years in the mainland, I returned to Hawaii to take on the role as V.P. & General Manager of Turtle Bay Resort. As our professional lives crossed (I served several years on the O'ahu Island Burial Council and a non-profit organization called Key Project) I soon learned Gary had lived up to my expectations as a great husband, father, son and professional.

I write this letter in support of confirmation of Gary Okuda to serve on the Land Use Commission. I was grateful for his opposition of short-term vacation rental on agricultural land in the County of Hawaii last year. In his motion to uphold county law and prohibit the property owners' petition he demonstrated a commitment to Hawaii's needs. His motion exemplified support of sustainability and protection of our lands for continued agricultural growth, both of which I embrace as a Native Hawaiian.

Respectfully Submitted,



Danna Holck

GM-530

Submitted on: 2/23/2021 5:31:45 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/3/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
WalterS. Kirimitsu	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Senator Inouye and Members of the Water and Land Committee,

I wish to submit my testimony in strong support of the confirmation of GARY OKUDA to the Land Use Commission for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

I have known Mr. Okuda for at least the past 20 years, mostly on a professional basis. He is an outstanding litigation attorney with highest of character and integrity. Mr. Okuda has extensive knowledge and experience in the laws in Hawaii and the U.S. He is both articulate and his writings and analyses are exceptional. The Commission needs a member like Mr. Okuda who has all the requisite experiences, knowledge, common sense and integrity. He has served on the Commission since July, 2016, and has done an outstanding job. One example of this is when he led the Commission in upholding Hawaii County's vacation rentals ban on agricultural land.

For the above reasons, I highly recommend your confirmation of Mr. Okuda for an additional term to expire on June 30, 2025.

I will be honored to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully.

WALTER KIRIMITSU

Former Judge of the Hawaii State Intermediate Court of Appeals

Former General Counsel, University of Hawaii

Former President of the Hawaii State Bar Association

February 23, 2021

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye
Senator and Chair of Water and Land Committee
Hawaii State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: GM 530 –Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial nominee, Gary Okuda, for a term to expire on June 30, 2025.

Dear Chair Inouye and Committee Members,

I am pleased to submit my support of the confirmation of Gary Okuda to the Land Use Commission. I have known Gary since the mid-1990's when he was involved with the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii-Manoa (ASUH-Manoa) as a researcher, and I served as the Office Manager.

He is smart, diligent, and thorough in his endeavors. He is not afraid to voice his perspective and opinion, and acknowledges that there are other points of view that need to be considered before committing to the most responsible action related to the issue at hand.

Gary's legal background and experiences are assets he has brought to the Commission since 2016. His reappointment will provide continuity in the important work and decisions of the Commission.

I humbly ask you to act positively on the confirmation of Gary Okuda to our Land Use Commission.

Thank you and aloha,

Blair M. T. Odo, PhD
Former President, JAAMS
blairmtodo@gmail.com

February 24, 2021

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye
Chair
Water and Land Committee
Hawaii State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Inouye:

Re: GM530 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, GARY OKUDA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

I would like to take this opportunity to recommend GARY OKUDA for another term on the Land Use Commission. I have known Gary for close to 50 years and consider him to be one of the most intellectually gifted people I know, who comes with an unshakeable sense of integrity, and who also possesses the unique ability to find the essential core of an issue in order to derive what is the best decision for all parties involved, and who has the conviction to stand by whatever he concludes.

Translated – he is smart, honest, fair, and tough.

In addition, Gary brings valued experience to the position. He has been a very effective commissioner for these past years; one who has contributed to what I feel are very important land use decisions – witness his efforts to always look out for the long-term future of Hawaii by protecting its agricultural lands. The commission would do well to have him for another four years.

He is a very successful attorney, a compassionate educator, and a devoted family man, who also happens to be well versed in the history of our islands, and who harbors a deep desire to leave our `Āina better than how we inherited it.

Of his many positive attributes, Gary has both the “courage” and “tact” to speak his mind and tell all what he thinks is the “right” thing to do, and not the most expedient, the most popular, or - perhaps most importantly in the context of this position - the most politically advantageous. He is a pillar of integrity and a great weapon against group think. I wholeheartedly endorse him.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Eric Nemoto

Eric Nemoto
cocomo696@aol.com
808-778-1373

February 25, 2021

Senate Committee on Water and Land
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: GM530, Support for the Nomination of Gary Okuda to the Land Use Commission (LUC)

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members,

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members,

My name is Jonathan Likeke Scheuer. I am a member and Chair of the LUC, but offer this testimony in personal capacity. It has been my pleasure to serve with Mr. Okuda since his appointment to the LUC in April 2017.

To be frank, Mr. Okuda deserves an award for his service to the state, in addition to his appointment. His diligence in knowing the laws he is to implement, his preparation for hearings, and his commitment to service is exemplary.

If Hawai`i was so lucky as to have someone like Gary on every key Board and Commission, our state would be well served and would be reaching many of our goals. I encourage you to recommend the Senate Advise and Consent to this nomination.

Mahalo for your consideration of my mana`o.

Jonathan Likeke Scheuer, Ph.D.

GM-530

Submitted on: 2/26/2021 2:17:23 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/3/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sandie Wong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support the nomination of Gary Okuda to the Land Use Commission. Gary is a man of integrity and he does his homework, thus, his continued service on the Land Use Commission will be in the public interest . Thank you.

GM-530

Submitted on: 3/1/2021 4:48:50 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/3/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Edmund "Fred" Hyun	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Inouye and Members of Water and Land Committee. My name is Edmund "Fred" Hyun and I submit my testimony in strong support for Governor Ige's nomination of Gary Y. Okuda for a second term to the Land Use Commission. Gary has my total admiration as a individual of conviction, fairness, and compassion. Gary's legal practice and expertise in real property provides a sound foundation to continue making significant contributions. His high ethical standards instills public trust and warrants a second term to this esteemed Commission. Hawaii is best served by this deserving nomination. I thank the Committee for this opportunity to voice my support for Gary Okuda.

Respectfully,

Edmund "Fred" Hyun

Chair Senator Lorraine R. Inouye
Water and Land Committee
Hawaii State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: GM530 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, Gary Okuda for a term to expire 6/30/25.

Aloha Chair Inouye and committee members,

I am Kili Namau'u and it is my pleasure to write a letter of support for Gary Okuda as a commissioner on the Land Use Commission. I have known Gary for over forty years and have always appreciated his candor, honest critiques and talented legal mind. He is very thorough and researches completely the tedious work necessary in preparation for issues before the Land Use Commission.

As a Hawaiian, I admire his respect for the environment and the viewpoints of Native Hawaiians. I believe that Gary is committed using and protecting the lands of the State of Hawaii, following the Constitution of the State, and seeking the best interests of the people. I don't know if he does it consciously but he is a great example of someone living out the State motto, *Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono*, the sovereignty of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.

Gary Okuda has been a serious and dedicated commissioner on the LUC. He deserves to continue his good work and the balance that he offers to the Commission. I humbly ask that your committee will consider his reappointment for another term on the Land Use Commission.

'O au nō me ka 'oia'i'o,



Kili Namau'u
808.283.7733
kilinamauu@gmail.com



ASHFORD + WRISTON
A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW PARTNERSHIP LLP

BENJAMIN A. KUDO
Telephone: (808) 539-0400
Fax: (808) 533-4945
bkudo@awlaw.com

March 2, 2021

To: The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land

From: Benjamin A. Kudo
Ashford & Wriston
999 Bishop Street, Suite 1400
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: GM 530 – Consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, GARY OKUDA - **SUPPORT**.
Hearing date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021
Hearing time: 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee:

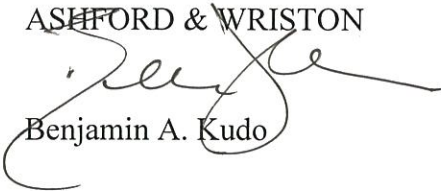
I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration and the support of your Committee members on the appointment of Mr. Gary Okuda to the State Land Use Commission (“Commission”). He will carry out his responsibilities well and add to the Commission’s knowledge and capabilities.

Based on the foregoing, I recommend with no reservation your favorable consideration of Mr. Gary Okuda for the aforementioned position.

Thank you for your consideration and I respectfully urge your Committee’s support to confirm his nomination.

Very truly yours,

ASHFORD & WRISTON


Benjamin A. Kudo

MAILING ADDRESS
Post Office Box 131 / Honolulu, HI 96810

STREET ADDRESS
First Hawaiian Center / 999 Bishop Street, Suite 1400 / Honolulu, HI 96813
T 808 539 0400 / F 808 533 4945 / E atty@awlaw.com / www.ashfordwriston.com

GM-530

Submitted on: 3/2/2021 3:52:11 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/3/2021 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
William Hoshijo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

March 3, 2021

1:00 p.m.

State Capitol Room 229

& Videoconference

TO: Hon. Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair,

and Members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture

FROM: William Hoshijo, as an individual

RE: Governor's Message No. 530

Nomination of Gary Okuda to the Land Use Commission

While I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission, this testimony is offered as an individual, not in any official role or capacity.

I have known Gary Okuda since 1979. I recommend him as an exemplary person, attorney, and citizen. Mr. Okuda is principled, honest, hard-working, and smart. He has a strong sense of justice and a real commitment to the public interest in the broadest sense.

Mr. Okuda has taken his role and duties as a member of the Land Use Commission seriously, and his performance inures to the benefit of the people of Hawai'i. He is technically sound, applying the law as required, and is guided by an abiding appreciation of his public trust responsibility.

I support the nomination of Gary Okuda to the Land Use Commission without reservation.

Allan Y. Okubo, Esq.
P. O. Box 10225
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816-0225
Telephone (808) 735-6582

February 24, 2021

SENATOR LORRAINE R. INOUE
CHAIR
WATER AND LAND COMMITTEE
HAWAII STATE SENATE
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL
415 SOUTH BERETANIA ST.
HONOLULU, HI 96813


RE: GM530-SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE LAND
USE COMMISSION, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, GARY OKUDA, FOR A TERM
TO EXPIRE 06-30-2025.

HONORABLE SENATOR INOUE:

I HAVE KNOWN THE NOMINEE, GARY OKUDA, BOTH PROFESSIONALLY AND
PERSONALLY, FOR OVER 30 YEARS. DURING THAT TIME I HAVE ALWAYS FOUND
HIM TO BE OF HIGH MORAL CALIBER AND VERY THOROUGH IN ALL MATTERS HE
WAS INVOLVED IN, BE IT PROFESSIONAL OR PERSONAL.

I WOULD HAVE NO HESITATION IN RECOMMENDING HIM FOR ANOTHER TERM IN
THE LAND USE COMMISSION AS I AM CONFIDENT THAT HE WILL CARRY OUT HIS
DUTIES WITH THE UTMOST DEDICATION AND INTEGRITY.

RESPECTFULLY YOURS,



ALLAN Y. OKUBO

2021 FEB 24 PM 3:00
HONOLULU, HI 96813

Gary Okuda

From: Eric Mita <ericm@iirhi.com>
Sent: Monday, March 01, 2021 2:42 PM
To: 'seninouye@capitol.hawaii.gov'
Subject: FW: Gary Y. Okuda - Commissioner on the Hawaii State Land Use Commission

Aloha Senator Inouye:

My name is Eric Mita. I was born and raised here on Oahu, HI and have been a Business Owner and Insurance Professional for over 40 years. I would like to provide my testimony on Gary Okuda's nomination to serve another term as Commissioner on the Hawaii State Land Use Commission. I have known Gary for over 45 years as we attended high school together. For as long as I've known him, I can confirm he is a tireless advocate on doing the right thing! His success as an attorney is due to his high ethical standards, perseverance and hard work. Gary's vast work experience and knowledge has helped me understand what may be the best path to take on specific matters we face in so many areas today. I know this because being a former community league baseball coach for over 20 years, situations that you would never expect sometime come up and one may need legal advice. When consulting with Gary, he always provided great insight to solve problems amicably and avoid law suits which are hardly ever beneficial to the parties involved. This shows that Gary has a "big picture mentality" which is beneficial for our State when making Land Use decisions. Also, being a part-time actor, I was happy to see Gary does have a personal life and is not confined only to his office as he attended some of the community theater plays I have participated in such as: "Aloha Las Vegas," "Massie/Kahaawai," and "Mahalo Las Vegas." This tells me that Gary has an innate ability to be well balanced which I believe is key when serving in a government official capacity.

Finally, as a current avid "old time" and former competitive surfer, I grew up practically living on our once beautiful beaches. I learned how to fish, dive and conservatively harvest some of Hawaii's ocean "treasures" which are disappearing at an alarming rate! All of my 5 children also surf and love and respect the ocean and our beaches. Their children, my grandchildren, love the ocean and our beaches. Today, sadly, some of those same beaches I grew up with are no longer recognizable. The safer nicer beaches are surrounded by new resorts and are inaccessible to families not staying at those resorts. Others are riddled with trash, hypodermic needles and homeless encampments. Why or rather how did this happen? I think this is partly due as a result of extremely poor Land Use decisions made from previous government officials! This is why Gary Okuda needs to continue his tenure. With his "big picture" mentality and understanding what's best for Hawaii, I have all the confidence he will be making the right decisions for Hawaii's future which is our future! I am hoping that Gary will be confirmed to serve another term as Commissioner and know that he is the right person for this position!

Thank you,
Eric Mita, Member



615 Piikoi Street, Suite # 1717
Honolulu, HI 96814

Ph: 808-369-8706
Fax: 808-369-8711

VANBUREN & SHIMIZU LLP

A Hawaii Limited Liability Law Partnership

February 23, 2021

VIA E-MAIL seninouye@capitol.hawaii.gov

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye
Chair, Water and Land Committee
Hawaii State Senate
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: GM530 – Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the
Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, Gary Okuda,
for a Term to Expire June 30, 2025

Dear Senator Inouye:

Thank you for this opportunity to present written testimony in support of Gary Okuda for consideration and confirmation of his nomination to serve as a State Land Use Commissioner for a term through June 30, 2025.

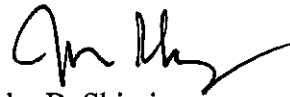
I am an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Hawaii, as well as the State of California (inactive status). Mr. Okuda is also an attorney, and I have known Mr. Okuda on both a professional and social basis for 40 years. Over this period, I have been involved in several cases and other matters with Mr. Okuda. In some of these cases, Mr. Okuda served as opposing counsel. I have found him to be an excellent attorney and a formidable advocate. He is diligent, capable, communicates well, and is an excellent writer. He has always displayed the highest ethical conduct and high moral standards. These great character traits and qualities will serve the Land Use Commission and the State of Hawaii well if Mr. Okuda is confirmed.

Mr. Okuda is well-read and has a strong interest in the history of Hawaii and its people. Since his first appointment as a Land Use Commissioner, he has become extremely knowledgeable about the history of water and land use in our State, and the laws and procedures applicable to the issues he will face if he is confirmed. I am confident that Mr. Okuda will take his duties seriously and thoroughly research the legal issues involved in any hearings or cases. I know that he will be unbiased and fair, and that he will try to balance the interests of the parties who come before him with the long-term goals and needs of our State. He is concerned about the future of Hawaii, and will be a good steward for the land.

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye
February 23, 2021
Page 2

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John B. Shimizu", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John B. Shimizu

JBS/paf

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Water and Land Committee
Hawaii State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TESTIMONY OF LOWELL CHUN-HOON

Re: GM 530 –Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, GARY OKUDA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025

Hearing: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

Senator Inouye, Members of the Water and Land Committee:

Thank for the opportunity present my views on GM530. I am writing to support the nomination of Gary Okuda to the Land Use Commission.

I have known Mr. Okuda for close to four decades and collaborated with him in litigation while also regularly seeking his informal advice and counsel. Mr. Okuda has always been generous in furnishing such assistance as well as astute and constructive in the advice he has offered.

From my own direct experience, I know that Okuda possesses all of the essential attributes of an outstanding land use commissioner. A Phi Beta Kappa during his undergraduate years, he possesses a superior intellect but equally vital, a keen sense of what is practical and achievable. He is open-minded and eager to learn, imaginative and far-sighted. He is tenacious almost to fault. At the same time, Mr. Okuda is also deeply compassionate in an authentic and unpretentious way and holds a deep and abiding concern for the future welfare of Hawaii and all its people.

One recent incident illustrates not only his compassion but his commitment to justice. When an unemployed client of mine was facing eviction, Mr. Okuda represented the client free of charge because he was personally outraged by how poorly the client was treated. This pro bono representation is all the more noteworthy because in his current practice Mr. Okuda is a specialist in mortgage foreclosures and customarily represents institutional lenders. His selfless act of service is not an anomaly but characteristic of many instances during Okuda's career where he fearlessly represented the underprivileged against more powerful adversaries.

The principled, independent sense of justice Mr. Okuda has always displayed is perhaps the quality that makes him uniquely well-suited to serve on the Land Use Commission, where the reconciliation of conflicting interests is inevitable and necessary. His vast experience in a

variety of fields of law will also be an invaluable resource. He will pursue the public interest as a Commissioner with absolute integrity and intelligence with the perspective of our entire community's welfare, not the parochial interests of only a few limited segments of society. While no one can foretell the future reliably, it would nonetheless be my own view, that when the history of the Ige Administration is finally written, Mr. Okuda's nomination to the Land Use Commission will be seen as among the very best decisions made during our current Governor's tenure in office.

Forwarded by e-mail to seninouye@capitol.hawaii.gov

George Mavrothalassitis/Chef Mavro
1022 Prospect Street Suite 1103
Honolulu HI 96822

I George Mavrothalassitis/Chef Mavro have known Gary Okuda personally & professionally for more than 30 years.

Gary has worked very hard on the Land Use Commission to preserve Hawaii agricultural land & must have the opportunity to continue his important work for the community.

I have had hundreds of long conversations with Gary over decades about a wide range of topics so I can speak about his character. He always shows common sense and expresses his opinions in a way that anyone can understand. I can say from experience that Gary is honest in all situations.

I want to present why I am qualified to speak about the importance of agriculture. As a chef my contribution to Hawaii includes 8 years as executive chef of Halekulani Hotel Waikiki, as well as chef of La Mer at Halekulani; 3 years as senior executive chef of the Four Season Hotel Wailea; and 22 years chef/proprietor of Chef Mavro restaurant Honolulu, the only AAA 5 Diamond free standing restaurant in Hawaii. I have also been recognized for my ongoing role in culinary education, mentoring of young chefs and personally conducting farm tours to teach the importance of agriculture.

I'm one of the 12 original founding members of the Hawaii Regional Cuisine chefs association. This experience made me aware of the importance of Hawaii agricultural land & sustainability. In 1990 when we started there were hardly any local farmers and none were growing the high quality ingredients that we needed. We HRC developed personal relationships with dozens of aspiring boutique Hawaii farmers & ranchers and supported them to produce high quality local products for our restaurants.

I'm also one of only 3 James Beard best chef award winners in Hawaii with Roy Yamaguchi & Alan Wong. This award is the highest culinary recognition in the United States of America and really put Hawaii on the American culinary map. The result has been increased tourism among high spend visitors who travel to experience cuisine with a sense of place.

All this would not be possible without unique local ingredients grown on micro farms by enthusiastic young farmers. Also these high quality Hawaii ingredients have become popular in supermarkets and farmers markets, a trend that builds our local economy. Again this shows the importance of preserving agricultural land. We're counting on Gary to continue his work on the Land Use Commission.

George Mavrothalassitis/Chef Mavro

DONNA JUNG PUBLIC RELATIONS

1022 Prospect St., Suite 1103, Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 286-8850 donnajungpr@gmail.com

February 24, 2021

I have known Gary Okuda as an attorney and a friend since the early 1990's. Since joining the Land Use Commission, Gary has consistently expressed to me how important this work is for him.

One of the key issues in his life is preserving the lifestyle and values that make Hawaii such a unique place. I see in his work for the LUC that he has been active in the area of agricultural land preservation and working towards food independence for Hawaii. I think it's very important that he continue his LUC position so that his positive influence can be felt in the area of food independence. The pandemic has made it obvious once again that Hawaii is very dependent on distant food sources that are easily disrupted leaving us with empty shelves. And now after decades of work by Hawaii chefs and many others, Hawaii residents value and buy local food products. We must continue to support local farmers and preserve agricultural land.

I also read the proceedings and Gary's highly skilled questioning during the Maui affordable housing issue involving RCFC Keahalani, LLC, and RCFC Pi'ihana, LLC. He is a valuable land commissioner who communicates and investigates in a very clear way that is fair to all. His contribution led to clarity on this difficult issue.

We are lucky that a highly successful professional like Gary is willing to continue on the Land Use Commission.

Donna Jung
President, Donna Jung Public Relations

March 2, 2021

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Water and Land Committee

Hawaii State Senate

Hawaii State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: GM530 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, GARY OKUDA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

Honorable Senator Lorraine Inouye:

It is my pleasure and honor to submit this letter in support of confirmation of GARY OKUDA to serve on the Land Use Commission to continue his excellent service to administer our state wide land use law.

I met Gary when he was attending Kainalu Elementary School in Kailua many years ago and have fond memories of him as we were growing up! He was a one of my brothers' (Wilbert Holck) friends that lived nearby, would come over to our home, and who uniquely stood out! As a young boy, he was inquisitive, thoughtful, very responsible and committed "to do the right thing"! Gary became a very special part of our family and this relationship is even stronger today!

Gary graduated from Kailua High School, received his BA from the University of Hawaii and continued his education receiving his law degree from the University of California, Davis. Gary then returned to Hawaii to begin practicing law and is currently an Attorney and Partner with Leu Okuda & Doi.

Over the years I've had the opportunity to meet up with Gary at family functions, as VP, Hawaii Division for Allied Managed Care, and now as VP, Business Development and Client Relations. He continues to be thoughtful, very responsible, committed to his profession and "to do the right thing"!

In August, 2020, we applauded Gary's motion to uphold the Hawaii County Law and deny property owners' petition to allow short term vacation rentals on agricultural land. His motion and fellow commissioners' significant ruling acknowledges their commitment and responsibility to administer our state land use laws, to protect Hawaii land and to encourage those uses to which the lands are best suited for (self-sustaining agriculture and food security).

It is my pleasure to strongly recommend Gary Okuda for confirmation to the Land Use Commission. If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to call me at 808 277-1847.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Souza

From: [Doss K. Tannehill](#)
To: [Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye](#)
Subject: Support Gary Okuda
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 5:38:18 PM

I would like to support Gary Okuda.
He is smart, honest and hard working
He supports Hawai'i very well.

Aloha,
Doss K. Tannehill

752 17th Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96816
Phone: (808) 738-5300
Facsimile: (808) 738-5300

www.pacificeyes.net

From: [Mackie Avecilla](#)
To: [Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye](#)
Cc: [Gary Okuda](#)
Subject: Gary Okuda Confirmation to Land Use
Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 7:30:58 AM

Subject: Confirmation to Land Use

Date: February 24, 2021 at 6:31:50 AM HST

I am glad to hear that a Commissioner on the Land use Board has the integrity to keep the designated use of property as its intended use and not bend to the public outcry that ruins the Land Use by changing what it is not intended to accomplish. This Short Term Vacation Rentals has not business trying to rezone, obtain another use other than what it was designated for. I support and applaud Gary Okuda for his foresight and judgment. The management of land use is for the best of people as other areas have designation for such use. We need to develop food, sustenance, and provide self sufficiency and need to have farms, food producers, and the agriculture use has been so designated. We do not want to be another State only depending on tourism we need to diversity.

Please reconsider Gary Okuda for his 2nd term on the Land Use Board.

Mackie Avecilla
3512 Kumu Street
Honolulu, Hi 96822

From: [Lisa Tojo](#)
To: [Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye](#)
Subject: GM530 -Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, GARY OKUDA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025
Date: Monday, March 1, 2021 3:54:29 PM

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye
Chair
Water and Land Committee
Hawaii State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
seninouye@capitol.hawaii.gov

Re: GM530 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, GARY OKUDA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025

Aloha Senator Inouye:

Gary Okuda has provided legal advice to our family with regard to privately owned farmland on Oahu that involved complicated subdivision and zoning issues. We found him to be very well informed of the history and application of State and County land use laws.

Mr. Okuda tirelessly examined every aspect of our situation, considered all sides of the issue, and pursued multiple paths to resolution. His thoughtful and thorough approach, particularly when encountering obstacles, focused us on achieving cooperation and collaboration with all parties. Because of his efforts which culminated in a successful mediation, we are well on our way to settling our case.

I believe our experience attests to Mr. Okuda's proficiency to serve as an insightful and ethical member of the [Land Use Commission](#).

Kind regards,

Lisa Tojo

From: [Peter Morimoto](#)
To: [Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye](#)
Subject: GM530 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, GARY OKUDA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.
Date: Tuesday, March 2, 2021 9:39:41 AM

Dear Senator Inouye,
I have known Gary Okuda for 60 years. We attended the Kailua Hongwanji Temple, Kailua High School, Windward Community College and University of Hawaii.

During our lifetime, Gary has always been honest, smart and hard working. I know that he will continue to serve the people of Hawaii conscientiously and with the best intentions.

Please confirm his reappointment to the Hawaii Land Use Commission.

Sincerely,
Peter Morimoto
PO Box 408
Lihue, Hawaii 96766

From: [Lisa Shozuya](#)
To: [Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye](#)
Subject: Letter of Support for Gary Okuda for Land Use Commission
Date: Monday, March 1, 2021 7:06:31 PM

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye
Chair
Water and Land Committee
Hawaii State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: GM530 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, GARY OKUDA, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

Aloha Senator Lorraine Inouye and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

I write to you today in STRONG SUPPORT of GARY OKUDA's nomination to the Land Use Commission for another term. He has served on this committee since July 2016 and has been a positive, contributing member. He has done an excellent job of understanding and upholding both the State's and community's interests.

I've personally known Gary Okuda for many years and have always known him to be fair, lawful, and a man of integrity. He is able to put complex issues into its right and just perspective while providing a careful and compassionate review of the issue at hand.

Gary is an exceptional attorney who has successfully served on the Land Use Commission for the past 4.5 years and I am very confident that he will continue to do so if given the opportunity.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my letter of STRONG SUPPORT OF GARY OKUDA FOR LAND USE COMMISSION.

Mahalo for your consideration and for representing the people of our great State.

Lisa Shozuya

LAW OFFICES OF
AARON S.H. YOO



HAWAII KAI CORPORATE PLAZA
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HONOLULU, HI 96825
TEL-808-973-0820
FAX-808-973-0825

February 23, 2021

VIA E-MAIL seninouye@capitol.hawaii.gov

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye
Chair, Water and Land Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: GM530 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Land Use
Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, GARY OKUDA,
for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

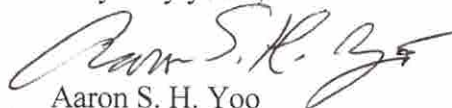
Dear Senator Inouye:

This is to present written testimony in support of Gary Okuda for consideration and confirmation of his nomination to serve as a State Land Use Commissioner for a term through June 30, 2025.

I have been licensed to practice law in the State of Hawaii since 1988. Mr. Okuda was an attorney at Okumura Takushi Funaki & Wee when I joined the firm as a summer associate in 1987. I was fortunate to be able to work under Mr. Okuda that summer on a complex real estate litigation involving a golf course development/purchase. It left such a positive impression on me that even after both of us left the Okumura firm I sought him out to work together on several complex commercial and real estate cases, and throughout the years I have gotten to know him very well, professionally and personally. Mr. Okuda is highly intelligent and an excellent attorney. Moreover, in my dealings with Mr. Okuda he has shown to be honest, patient, fair, thoughtful and insightful. I can say without any reservation that he is a man of true integrity and character.

During the time Mr. Okuda has served as Land Use Commissioner, he has taken positions that frankly I did not agree with but I do not question his motive. I believe such positions to be thoughtful, unbiased and fair. There is no question in my mind that Mr. Okuda will continue to serve the Land Use Commission and the State of Hawaii well if he is confirmed.

Very truly yours,



Aaron S. H. Yoo