

Monday, March 29, 2021

Office of Sen. Rosalyn Baker  
State Capitol, Room 230  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Subject: GM731 Joel Kurokawa, Responses to Questions  
Nomination to the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape  
Architects**

- (1) Why do you wish to be a member of the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects?

I have completed two consecutive terms as a landscape architect member on the EASLA Board, the most recent term ending in June 2020. I continue to serve on the Rules Committee of EASLA. During my time on the Board, I have learned a tremendous amount about the regulation of the allied design professions in Hawaii in general and about Landscape Architects in particular. Having served on the Board I appreciate the importance of the roles and responsibilities of the EASLA Board Executive Officer, PVL staff, and volunteer board members in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Hawaii by ensuring that the State's allied design professionals have documented relevant education, work experience and passed rigorous defensible standardized exams through the licensure process. I am interested in serving a new term because I feel I have more to contribute.

- (2) What do you perceive are the roles and responsibilities of a member of the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects?

As a Board member my roles and responsibilities are to adopt, interpret and enforce HRS Chapter 436B – Professional and Vocational Licensing Law and Chapter 464 – Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects, to protect the health safety, and welfare of Hawaii consumers of services provided by the professions included above. Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 16, Chapter 115 clarifies and implements HRS Chapter 464.

- (3) Given your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects member, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise and knowledge that would aid you as a member of the Board.

I am a licensed landscape architect with over 35 years of professional practice in Hawaii, California and Japan; own and operate an established firm in Hawaii with a diverse portfolio of project types, scale, located throughout the Hawaiian islands; have supervised and mentored landscape architecture interns preparing to qualify for and take the licensure examination; currently serve as a director on the Council of Landscape Architecture Registration Boards, CLARB, of which the EASLA board is a member of; previously served as Trustee of the Hawaii Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects, and serve or have served on environmental non-profit organizations lending my professional expertise. All these experiences require me to have a clear understanding of the regulations, laws, and requirements governing

the title and practice of landscape architects in Hawaii. I believe this qualifies me and will aid in my ability to serve as an effective board member of EASLA.

- (4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?

A goal I set for myself in my last term, but remains incomplete, is to establish Continuing Education (CE) requirements for Landscape Architects to maintain their Hawaii licenses. Hawaii is one of a small number of state jurisdictions across the United States that do not require its licensed landscape architects to earn CE credits as a condition for license renewal. Hawaii faces unique environmental, social, cultural, and economic challenges with increasing urbanization, global climate change and sea level rise, threatened fragile ecosystems, environmental and social justice for disadvantaged and underserved communities, and other critical issues. As such, it is critical that our design professions, including landscape architects, tasked with the physical planning and designing of our diverse communities, remain prepared and equipped with the latest technology, tools, theory and practice to address these 21<sup>st</sup> century issues. CE requirements for landscape architects will improve the HAR Title 16, Chapter 115 and ensure the continued protection of the health safety, and welfare of the people of Hawaii.

- (5) Name three qualities that best describe you and how these qualities will benefit the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects.

I am collaborative and work well in a group, action oriented, and organized. These qualities will help the Board get its work done in an efficient, timely, and pleasant, professional manner.

- (6) Name a previous experience you've had that will be beneficial as a Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects member.

I serve and have served on other boards. Sometimes issues before a board can elicit divergent viewpoints and can sometimes cause divisions amongst board members. I have learned that it is critical that all board members perceive that each has an equal and fair opportunity to share their point of view without fear of ridicule or ostracism. When a board is respectful of each other it tends to operate more efficiently and effectively. I have experienced board meetings where best practices such as this one was not adhered to and the negative impact it had on the board member participation and overall board effectiveness.

- (7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects? How would you overcome conflicts of interest?

Yes. In fact, at my first Board meeting as an interim board member an employee of my firm applied to take the LARE and came up for board review and approval. Before board discussion of this candidate's application, I disclosed I have a conflict of interest because the candidate was an employee of my firm. While I participated in the discussion, I abstained from voting.

**Testimony of the Board of Professional Engineers,  
Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects**

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection  
Friday, April 9, 2021  
9:20 a.m.  
Via Teleconference**

**On the following measure:  
G.M. 731, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION  
TO THE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS,  
ARCHITECTS, SURVEYORS, AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS,  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JOEL KUROKAWA,  
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2024**

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sandra Matsushima, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects (Board). The Board supports the appointment of Mr. Joel Kurokawa to the Board as a licensee member.

Mr. Kurokawa has been licensed as a landscape architect since September 19, 2002, and his license is current, valid, and in good standing. Mr. Kurokawa was born and raised in Hawaii. Spanning over 25 years, Mr. Kurokawa's professional career led him on a journey around the Pacific from San Francisco to Japan, and eventually back to Hawaii. Mr. Kurokawa is the principal and owner of Ki Concepts, LLC, an established landscape architecture, site planning, and urban design firm.

Mr. Kurokawa previously served on the Board from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2020, and his experience and participation in regional and national meetings provide the Board with a wealth of knowledge both locally and nationally. In addition, he is an elected member of the Board of Directors for the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB), which administers the Landscape Architect Registration Examination.

By sharing insights that he has gained over his many years of experience as a landscape architect in active practice, Mr. Kurokawa has made significant contributions to the Board and is committed to keeping the Board informed with current trends in the practice of landscape architecture.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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March 30, 2021

Office of Sen. Rosalyn Baker  
State Capitol, Room 230  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Joel Kurokawa, GM731 - Nomination to the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects

Dear Senator Baker:

In my roles as Trustee of the Hawaii Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Hawaii at Manoa School of Architecture, I am pleased to write to you in strong support of Joel Kurokawa's nomination to the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors and Landscape Architects (EASLA Board).

As exemplified by his past Trustee position with national ASLA, his previous board membership with the national Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB), as well as his past membership on the Board of Professional Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, and Landscape Architects, Joel Kurokawa has a long and impressive record of service to the local and national landscape architecture community. He has demonstrated a thorough, forward-thinking understanding of a wide range of professional issues, and has a strong reputation for working on the forefront of landscape architecture in the State of Hawaii. His professional record and personal background qualify him uniquely to serve on the state licensing board. Joel has gained the respect of colleagues from various areas of the profession for his exemplary qualifications and his deep commitment to the field.

I support Joel Kurokawa's nomination for appointment to the EASLA Board enthusiastically and with the confidence that he will make significant future contributions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of any additional assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'J. Stilgenbauer'.

Judith Stilgenbauer, Professor  
Director of the Master of Landscape Architecture Program  
jstilg@hawaii.edu  
808-956-7227

24 March 2021

The Honorable Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 230  
425 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: Joel Kurokawa Nomination to EASLA (GM731)

Senator Baker,

I am writing this letter in support of the nomination of Joel Kurokawa to the Board of Engineers, Architects, Surveyors & Landscape Architects (EASLA) as a landscape architect member. Having served with Joel as a fellow EASLA board member for many years, I have seen Joel become an invaluable member of the board. He also has volunteered much of his time nationally as an elected director of the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB). He has shown a passion for landscape architecture as well as the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of the public when professional services are required. He understands how the rules and practices need to be interpreted for licensing issues.

Having known Joel for many years, I have to say that he is an extremely ethical individual who I trust completely. It would be a pleasure to have him back on the EASLA board for another four-year term.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Hirota". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Dan Hirota, PE, PLS  
EASLA Board, Chairperson & Surveying member



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Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair  
Commerce, Consumer Protection & Health Committee  
Attn: Haley Saba, Legislative Aide  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 230  
Honolulu, HI 96813

March 29, 2021

RE: Letter in Support of Joel Kurokawa ASLA PLA  
Reappointment to EASLA Board

Dear Senator Baker,

I enthusiastically recommend Joel Kurokawa's reappointment to the Engineers Architects Surveyors & Landscape Architects Board. Joel's professional insight, experience, ethics and persona make him uniquely qualified for this position. I also believe that the continuity of his service is important and selfless. As both a committed practitioner and educator, there are few others who are willing, able and so well suited for this post.

My personal and professional association with Joel began when I first met him over seven years ago. Since then, he has been a charter board member, officer and mentor at SHADE Institute, a non-profit public interest design organization which provides pro-bono and low cost services to community organizations and government agencies through its fellowship training program. We also collaborate regularly on private design projects for public and private clients. His firm, KI Concepts is the landscape architect with my firm, Dean Sakamoto Architects, for the soon to be completed *World Language Center* at Niu Valley Middle School, a 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Project for the Hawai'i State Department of Education.

Please feel free to call me at my office (808) 591-5558 or email me at [deans@dsarch.net](mailto:deans@dsarch.net) if you should have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dean Sakamoto'.

**Dean Sakamoto** FAIA, NCARB, LEED AP, SEED  
Principal Architect, DSA LLC  
Executive Director, SHADE Institute