



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

February 11, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senate Committee on Water and Land

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB 2372 – RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**

Hearing: Friday, February 11, 2022, 1:00 p.m.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciate the intent of this bill and respectfully offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require State agencies to report annually to the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness on any vacant State land that could be utilized for the construction of affordable housing. The bill takes effect upon its approval.

In December 2021, the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) – a 27-member advisory council chaired by the Coordinator – adopted policy priorities for the 2022 legislative session, including a specific focus on scaling low-income affordable housing for people transitioning from homelessness.

Identifying vacant State lands that are suitable for development will support this goal.

The Coordinator notes that public lands have supported low-income housing for people transitioning out of homelessness through programs such as the Ohana Zones pilot program. Examples of Ohana Zones permanent housing projects such as [Kamaoku Kauhale](#), [Huliau](#), [Kealaula at Pua Loke](#), [Kumuwai](#), and [Hale Maluhia](#). The [Hawaii Interagency Council on](#)

[Homelessness annual legislative report](#)¹ provides a detailed overview and evaluation of the Ohana Zones pilot program.

If this measure moves forward, the Coordinator suggests establishing one Full-Time Equivalent (1.0 FTE) position and sufficient appropriations to support the collection and compilation of information from State agencies and produce the annual report to the Legislature. The Coordinator requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

¹ Report available at: <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/HICH-Report-to-2022-Legislature-FINAL.pdf>

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committees on
HUMAN SERVICES
and
WATER AND LAND**

**Friday, February 11, 2022
1:00 PM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 229, Via Videoconference

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2372
RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Senate Bill 2372 proposes to: (1) require each state agency to submit to the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness an annual report on any vacant state land suitable for the construction of affordable housing within its jurisdiction or the jurisdiction of any of its attached offices, boards, commissions, or other agencies; and (2) require the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to compile the agency reports and submit an annual report of their findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) acknowledges the intent of this measure and provides the following comments.**

The bill lacks specificity as to how each state agency determines which vacant lands are suitable for the construction of affordable housing. Accordingly, each state agency is left to its own definition and discretion of which lands may be suitable to the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness, thus resulting in inconsistency, variation and possibly contradiction amongst the state agencies' reports. The Department respectfully suggests that there should be a pre-determined and common understanding of enumerated, explicit, and detailed parameters to be gathered by the state agencies that would be beneficial in identifying parcels of land suitable for the governor's coordinator's evaluation and purpose. Essentially, the bill as currently drafted is too vague and ambiguous to implement.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

STATE OF HAWAI‘I
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender, State
of Hawai‘i to the Senate Committee on Human Services
and the Senate Committee on Government Operations**

February 11, 2022

S.B. No. 2372: RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Chairs San Buenaventura and Inouye, Vice Chairs Ihara and Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committees:

The Office of the Public Defender supports S.B. No. 2372.

An informal group brought together by the Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki and identified as the Ending Homelessness Group (“EHG”), representing twenty-plus representatives from eleven state, county, and non-profit agencies (including the Office of the Public Defender), has been meeting since June 2021 to discuss problems and difficulties in ending (or at least reducing) homelessness and in finding solutions to prevent and end homelessness. The EHG came up with many different proposals to meet gaps in housing, enforcement, and treatment/system flow. One such solution is to require state agencies to report annually to the governor’s coordinator on homeless ness information on any vacant state land that could be utilized for the construction of affordable housing.

The EHG recognized that there is a need for affordable housing. In Hawai‘i, there is shortfall of rental units that are affordable to very low-income households. It has been increasingly difficult for individuals and families to pay for their rent or their mortgage or to save for a down payment on a home. The cost of housing has rapidly increased, effectively pricing out local renters and homeowners.

One obvious solution is to increase the availability of affordable housing that would enable hard-working to buy or rent suitable housing that they otherwise could not afford. However, the major challenge for affordable housing developers is coping with the increasing developmental costs. The State can assist in reducing the costs by identifying and utilizing vacant state lands for the construction of affordable housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on S.B. No. 2372.



HAWAI'I HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION CENTER
The New Chapter for Life Foundation and The CHOW Project

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2372

TO: Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, & Human Services Committee Members
Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, & Water & Land Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz
Grants & Advancement Manager

DATE: February 11, 2022 (1:00 PM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports** SB 2372, which requires state agencies to report annually to the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness on any vacant state land that could be utilized for construction of affordable housing.

To the extent that state lands can be identified, this measure can help site projects on properties where a range of affordable housing units can be built, from micro-units to higher-density projects. As DLNR has noted in its testimony for HB 1649, there should be a "pre-determined and common understanding of enumerated, explicit, and detailed parameters" to effectuate the bill's purpose.

HHRC Executive Director Heather Lusk currently serves as Board Chair of [Partners in Care O'ahu](#), a planning, coordinating, and advocacy alliance that develops recommendations for programs and services to fill needs within O'ahu's continuum of care for homeless persons. HHRC provides homeless outreach and housing placement navigation services in urban Honolulu and the Upper Windward Coast, including North Shore.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions. Many of our program clients and participants have also been deeply impacted by trauma, including histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

February 11, 2022

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senate Committee on Water & Land
Via Videoconference

RE: S.B. 2372, Relating to Affordable Housing

HEARING: Friday, February 11, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Inouye, and Members of the Joint Committees,

I am Ken Hiraki, Director of Government Affairs, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawai'i, and its over 10,800 members. HAR **supports** Senate Bill 2372, which requires state agencies to report annually to the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness on any vacant state land that could be utilized for construction of affordable housing.

Homeownership is one of the most important ways for families to build wealth, connect more deeply with their communities and support the economic growth of the State. Unfortunately, that goal has become difficult for many families in Hawai'i, which has the highest cost of living in the country and high housing prices.

According to the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism's 2019 report on Housing Demand in Hawai'i, the state needs up to 46,000, housing units to meet demand in Hawai'i by 2030. Ultimately, we have a housing supply problem, and this measure is a creative approach to address those challenges. Land costs are a large part of the development cost of housing, so by identifying and utilizing State lands to build affordable housing would help address our State's housing challenges.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.