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WRITTEN TESTIMONY
OF
CURT T. OTAGURO, STATE COMPTROLLER
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES
TO THE

COMMITTEE ON LABOR, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

FEBRUARY 4, 2022, 3:00 P.M.
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, STATE CAPITOL

S.B. 2713

RELATING TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE STATE ARCHIVES

Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on S.B. 2713.

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) strongly supports this bill and offers the following comments:

1. The current archives facility was designed 70 years ago. Based on current archival practice and public access needs, this facility is severely outdated in form and function to address the digital age that the State now operates in.
2. The facility is capable of storing approximately 14,000 cu ft of records and is currently at over 98% capacity. At the current rate of growth, the State Archives will reach capacity in the next biennium; after that time, it will no longer be able to execute on its Legislative mandate to collect, arrange, describe and make accessible the Public Archives of the State of Hawai'i.

3. The Public Research Room is limited in the number of patrons it can accommodate and can only offer limited computing resources to aid in research due to the limitations of the original building design and construction – greatly reducing its utility to public researchers, classroom activities at the high school and university levels, and members of the community wishing to research their documentary heritage.
4. There are no provisions to display more than a few of the over 1000 artifacts the State Archives holds in the Public Trust. These artifacts are among the most important objects in Hawai‘i’s rich and diverse history, and includes: The Buke Mahele, Royal Hawai‘ian seals, flags from all of Hawai‘i’s Governments, moon rocks from Apollo 11 and 17, and numerous treaties and documents signed by Foreign Heads of State.
5. Physical space constraints are also impacting the staff through a lack of facilities to conduct proper archival processing and conservation of the materials; and greatly limiting our ability to engage more volunteers to assist staff, thereby reducing the number of possible records that could be made available to the public. With additional physical space to harness the additional resource of volunteers and interns, it would save the archives expending the funds necessary to hire additional staff to execute on our mandate.
6. The space constraints of the Public Archives also greatly hinders its ability to collect the archives of the many diverse subgroups within the various communities of Hawai‘i that have added to our shared history and culture. As such, archives that document the contributions and struggles of aging, under-represented, and marginalized segments of the community are lost; and with these losses, so are the collective memories of a people that these records document.
7. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly disrupted the public’s ability to travel, resulting in reduced access to their history and documentary heritage, up to and including a complete inability to conduct research. This impairment has highlighted the need to place more of

these unique and irreplaceable records online for free, unfettered public access twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week from anywhere in the world. As a vast majority of the most important records exist only in paper format, this requires mass digitization of fragile documents. The current facility cannot provide the needed space, power or technological capabilities to grow the digitization infrastructure to provide large scale access to records protecting the public's rights, identity, property and history.

8. The staff at the State Archives wants to do more, provide more, and serve more public and government stakeholders. They humbly request the resources needed to connect the People of Hawai'i with their documentary heritage -- regardless of their location, ability to travel, hours of employment, or economic status -- through expanded access and services to address their needs in the 21st century.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter

SB-2713

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 11:59:01 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/4/2022 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
AGS- Jansen, Dr. Adam	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am available for questions regarding DAGS/State Comptroller testimony