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*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o
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KALI WATSON
CHAIRMAN, HHC
Ka Luna Ho'okele

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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawaii'i

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TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
HEARING ON APRIL 17, 2023 AT 10:30AM IN CR 225

HCR 125

April 17, 2023

Aloha Chair Shimabukuro, Vice Chair Fevella, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) submits comments on HCR 125 requesting DHHL to identify resources needed to execute a plan to repair homes for safe habitation. More specifically, HCR 125 request that DHHL identify resources needed to execute a plan that 1) systematically identifies unoccupied Department of Hawaiian Homes Lands properties in disrepair to confirm the occupancy status, lease status, and reasons for the current status, 2) assist current lessees in assessing what repairs are needed to make their homes safe and habitable, 3) connects identified lessees who are in need of help with applicable sources of funding, such as the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996, 4) manages alternative sources of funding, 5) follows up to facilitate and expedite pending lease transfers and 6) conducts contested case hearings, as needed.

DHHL's ability to have adequate staff positions and human resources, greatly impacts the diligence and efficiency of executing a plan to repair homes for safe habitation. DHHL needs to fill a minimum of two (2) FTE positions for the Compliance team, five (5) FTE Office Assistant positions for the neighbor island district offices, five (5) FTE positions for Homestead Services Division's (HSD) Administrative services branch, and two (2) FTE positions for HSD's Application branch. DHHL may need to consider contracting out or hiring staff that has development and repair expertise to assess homes.

The two (2) FTE positions for the Compliance team would conduct surveys of the homestead communities to confirm properties that have been abandoned/unoccupied and to generate report, draft necessary letters advising lessee(s) of violation, prepare case for contested case hearing (if necessary), and present case before the Hawaiian Homes Commission or Hearings Officer. The five (5) FTE Office Assistant positions would provide an office assistant at each of the neighbor island district offices to do non-lease transaction activities.

As DHHL prepares for the acceleration of lease awards statewide, HSD will need additional staff at all DHHL offices to provide necessary services for lessee beneficiaries regarding lease transfers/successorships/amendments, processing of designation of successors, etc. Additional staff for HSD's Application branch should be considered because when DHHL issues lease awards in mass amounts, applications for placement on the DHHL waiting list typically increases.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

HCR-125

Submitted on: 4/11/2023 4:09:17 PM

Testimony for HWN on 4/17/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

HCR-125

Submitted on: 4/12/2023 10:29:39 AM

Testimony for HWN on 4/17/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion K A Kapuniai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**STRONG SUPPORT - HCR 125 CLEARLY SETS A PROCESS TO ACCOMPLISH
THE PURPOSE OF THIS HCR!**

Thank you, M Kapuniai

LATE

HCR-125

Submitted on: 4/17/2023 12:00:21 AM

Testimony for HWN on 4/17/2023 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly Anne Dahilig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a constituent from Senate District 24 and would like to testify in support of HCR 125.

I have lived in Kane'ohe my entire life. Ever since I could remember, houselessness has always been an issue in my community. But in recent years, my concerns have not gone away. Rather, they have only continued to grow. High inflation and the lack of realistically affordable housing jeopardize the progress made in reducing the rate of houselessness. Native Hawaiians along with Pacific Islanders account for the majority of the houseless population. The plan outlined in HCR 125, if carried out successfully, could potentially create more housing for houseless individuals who qualify for leases, as well as assist in funding the maintenance of homes.

According to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL), there were 23,787 applications requesting residential homestead leases on its waiting list as of June 30th, 2022. HCR 125, along with the \$600 Million Act 279 Plan signed into law on July 11, 2022, would be a positive step towards shortening the waiting list.

If I may admit one concern, it is that the tasks designated for the DHHL are too much for the department to handle alone. If possible, DHHL should aim to cooperate with community-based organizations when developing its plan to meet the criteria of the resolution.

Mahalo for your consideration.