

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o
Hawai'i*

SYLVIA J. LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ka Hope Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina
'o Hawai'i*



KALI WATSON
CHAIRMAN, HHC
Ka Luna Ho'okele

KATIE L. DUCATT
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRMAN
Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawai'i

P. O. BOX 1879
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIRMAN
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS AND
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
HEARING ON FEBRUARY 6, 2024 AT 1:00PM IN CR 224

SB 2779, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

February 6, 2024

Aloha Chairs Shimabukuro and Chang, Vice Chairs Fevella and Hashimoto, and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) supports this bill which would require the DHHL to build sufficient rental housing, including rental apartment units, and rent-with-option to buy housing units, to satisfy the housing needs of native Hawaiians on the waitlist for homestead leases.

Section 207.5 of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act explicitly authorizes the DHHL to develop multifamily units for housing Native Hawaiians. The disposition of multifamily units, including rentals, are to be prescribed by administrative rules. DHHL rules for planned communities, multi-family complexes, and rental housing, can be found at Title 10, Chapter 7, of the Hawaii Administrative Rules.

The DHHL is currently utilizing a multi-pronged approach toward addressing the DHHL applicant waiting list as well as encumbrance and expenditure of funds allocated through Act 279, SLH 2022. This bill further emphasizes the legislature's support of DHHL in this effort toward addressing the DHHL waiting list.

DHHL also finds that SB 3213, which has been introduced for this current legislative session, would be complementary toward the intent of this bill as it would provide a dedicated alternative source of funding other than DHHL Trust funds to develop rental units.

On January 26, 2024, the Hawaiian Homes Commission approved a motion to enter into an Option to Purchase agreement with K D WAIPOULI LLC, a Hawaii limited liability company, for 258,929 square feet of land in Kapaa on the island of Kaua'i – along with improvements located thereupon and to convert to a Low-Income Housing

Tax Credit Rent With Option to Purchase Project for the DHHL Kauai Island Waiting List. While there are more details that must be explored and reviewed for this project, the Commission's decision on this matter indicates an effort to deliver a more diversified portfolio of housing options to native Hawaiian beneficiaries.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Testimony Before the
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
Tuesday, January 6, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.
By
Maile Lu'uwai, President
Keaukaha Pana'ewa Farmers Association

RE: SB 2779 Opposition Testimony

Aloha Chair Shimabukuro, Vice Chair Fevella and Committee Members:

The Keaukaha Pana'ewa Farmers Association (KPFA) is a Hawaiian Homes Commission Act Beneficiary Association and Homestead Association controlled by beneficiaries, as defined by the Hawaiian Home Lands Recovery Act, 109 Stat. 537. KPFA is registered with the U.S. Department of Interior, 43 CFR §§ 47.10 and 48.6.

We oppose SB 2779. SB 2779 requires the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to address the housing needs of native Hawaiians on the homestead waitlist (waitlist beneficiaries). SB 2779 then states that DHHL shall build rental housing. Under legal terms, the word 'shall,' as used in SB 2779, is an imperative command, indicating that the directive is mandatory and not permissive. We believe the state has no legal authority to require DHHL to address housing needs and build rental housing for waitlist beneficiaries.

Second and most importantly, the directive requiring DHHL to address the needs of waitlist beneficiaries by building rental housing appears in conflict with and dilutes the stated purpose of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act. DHHL's use of Hawaiian Home Trust lands, personnel, federal funds, and other funding significantly diverts DHHL's resources, and thus, this directly impacts DHHL's ability to build permanent housing and/or provide homestead lots to waitlist beneficiaries.

Mahalo,



Maile Lu'uwai
President
Keaukaha Pana'ewa Farmers Association





Senate Committee on Housing

Hearing: Tuesday, February 6th, 2024

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2779: RELATING TO HAWAIIAN HOMELANDS

The Hawaii State Youth Commission (HiYC) was established to “advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the state.” We are writing in support of SB2779, but with suggestions.

The youth of today are already faced with the trials and tribulations of trying to find homes. Native Hawaiian youth, on top of being born with 131 years of systemic oppression on their shoulders, they still have to face the fact that it will be near impossible to find a home in Hawai'i. This fact either leads native Hawaiians into poverty, or to move out of the place that they call home. In the bill, it states that as of December 31, 2022, there were 29,300 native Hawaiians on the Department of Hawaiian Homelands application waitlist. It is now 2024, and there are no signs of that number decreasing.

Furthermore, the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act had been put in place for the perpetuation of native Hawaiians. Yet, the number of native Hawaiians that live in poverty continues to grow, along with the percentage of Hawaiians who leave Hawai'i. It is clear that the State is failing to provide solutions at the same rate as the issue itself is growing. We, the youth of Hawai'i, are supporting this bill as a temporary solution. However, the suggestion is that the Committee on Housing should consider making these housing units free for native Hawaiians, as was originally intended for Hawaiian Homesteads.

We believe that the housing crisis is a generational matter, therefore, if nothing is done about this quickly, it will disproportionately impact the upcoming generation of native Hawaiians who will be looking for homes. It is the government's responsibility to protect and serve not only youth, but the native Hawaiian youth as well. This is why we urge the Committee on Housing to pass this bill, along with the suggestion that the units be free for the people on the application waitlist.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony in support of this important bill.

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission

hawaiistateyc@gmail.com

SB-2779

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 11:08:35 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
De Mont Kalai Manaole	Testifying for Hoomana Pono, LLC	Support	In Person

Comments:

We STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill, since HHCA Section 207.5 already allows for rental, and the HAR Section 10-7-41.

We believe that the one size fits all mentality has FAILED to effectively end the DHHL "Death-List", which is turn-key homes.

We NEED to allow Trust Beneficiaries to have a variety of choices that will suit the individual needs of each Trust Beneficiary.

The "MAJORITY VOICES" especially coming from Homesteaders, should NOT outweigh the minority voice of Waitlisters.

Please pass this bill.

SB-2779

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 4:51:52 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kade Yam-Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for SB NO. 2779, a bill relating to Hawaiian home lands and the housing needs of native Hawaiians. As a native Hawaiian who has not been provided housing by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL), I believe that this bill is crucial for addressing the housing crisis faced by our community.

As of December 31, 2022, there were approximately 29,300 native Hawaiian adults on the DHHL's waitlist for homestead leases. This backlog has resulted in a severe housing shortage for native Hawaiians, contributing to the already alarming homelessness crisis in our state. The fact that more than two thousand beneficiaries have passed away while waiting for housing is simply unacceptable.

I am particularly concerned about the effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, which has further exacerbated the housing struggles faced by native Hawaiians on the waitlist. Many individuals and families are struggling to pay rent and are at risk of becoming homeless. The federal government stimulus package provided some relief, but it is clear that a long-term solution is necessary.

SB NO. 2779 addresses this urgent issue by requiring DHHL to build sufficient rental housing, including apartment units and rent-with-option-to-buy housing units, to meet the housing needs of native Hawaiians currently on the waitlist. This not only provides immediate relief to those in need but also offers a pathway to homeownership through the rent-with-option-to-buy program.

I urge you to support this bill and work towards its swift passage. By ensuring that DHHL fulfills its mandate to provide housing for native Hawaiians, we can begin to alleviate the housing crisis and improve the lives of our community members. Together, we can create a brighter future for native Hawaiians and preserve the cultural and historical significance of our lands.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

KADE YAM-LUM

SB-2779

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 6:16:06 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Every opportunity needs to be provided for those on the waitlist, whether it's subsidy for down payment or the rent to buy option. These are great bills that needs to be in the forefront and bring justice for those who've been on the waitlist far too long. How is it that anyone outside of Hawai'i can come in and buy up property, not even live in it, while Native Hawaiians continue to wait. Something must be done and this is a good option.

SB-2779

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 6:43:12 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justin Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Requires the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to build sufficient rental housing, including rental apartment units, and rent-with-option-to-buy housing units, to satisfy the housing needs of native Hawaiians on the waitlist for homestead leases

SB-2779

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 7:46:21 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lu Ann Mahiki Lankford-Faborito	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Definite strong support for housing our native hawaiiians, including waitlisters.

SB-2779

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 8:32:50 AM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jan K Makepa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Jan Makepa, a resident of Wai‘anae Valley homstead and I OPPOSE SB2779. The department needs to find alternate ways to build Single family Dwelling homes on lands provided by DHHL. NOT look for a fast tract, quick fix projects like MFD, Rentals or Rent to Owns.

Testimonies from those who have already gone through or currently going thru the Rent with Option to Purchase programs has already complained of the faults within the program.

People want SFD but are made to make the choice of it’s either this or nothing at all. ‘A‘ole!

Mahalo, Jan Makepa

SB-2779

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 1:59:44 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Inaba	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB 2779 concerning Hawaiian Home Lands. Any allocation of land to native Hawaiians from the designated list should strictly adhere to the provisions outlined in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920. The primary purpose of the homesteading program is to promote the economic self-sufficiency of native Hawaiians by providing them with land, as opposed to rental homes. The HHCA not only aims to allocate land but also offers additional benefits such as financial assistance through direct loans or loan guarantees for home construction.

Deviating from the specifications outlined in the Act does not contribute to the well-being of native Hawaiians; instead, it hampers their progress. The current rental programs managed by DHHL hinder the financial advancement of beneficiaries, as exceeding income thresholds disqualifies them from the rental assistance. Consequently, beneficiaries are forced to relocate when their financial status improves, creating an impediment to their overall prosperity.

February 4, 2024

Testimony for SB 2779 Relating to Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

He Mele komo a he mele aloha no na kupuna o ke au i hala Aloha mai kakou.

Aloha,

My name is Cindy Freitas and I'm a Native Hawaiian descended of the native inhabitants of Hawai'i prior to 1778 and born and raised in Hawai'i.

I am also a practitioner who still practice the cultural traditional customary practices that was instill in me by my grandparents at a young age from mauka (MOUNTAIN TO SEA) to makai in many areas.

I firmly oppose SB 2779 regarding Hawaiian Home Lands for the following reasons:

Any distribution of land to native Hawaiians from the designated list must strictly adhere to the provisions set forth in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920. The primary goal of the homesteading program is to foster the economic self-sufficiency of native Hawaiians by providing them with land rather than rental homes. The HHCA not only focuses on land allocation but also extends additional benefits, such as financial assistance through direct loans or loan guarantees for home construction.

Straying from the specifications outlined in the Act does not contribute to the well-being of native Hawaiians; instead, it impedes their progress. The existing rental programs overseen by DHHL act as a hindrance to the financial advancement of beneficiaries, as surpassing income thresholds renders them ineligible for rental assistance.

Consequently, beneficiaries are compelled to relocate when their financial status improves, posing a barrier to their overall prosperity.

Mahalo,

____/s/____

Cindy Freitas

SB-2779

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 6:58:10 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Shimabukuro, Vice Chair Fevella: Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya, former DHHL Commissioner for Oahu, and beneficiary as I oppose this Bill.

It does not bring the waitlist reduction down, renters does NOT take our waitlisers off the waiting list and further om August 2022 DHHL Commissiners voted and approved the strategic plan for Act 279 to seek to reduce our waitlisers in homes and NOT rentals. In 2022, Governor Ige approved the Commissions plan but in 2023 Governor Green continues to place his staff to deviate from this Act 279 strategic plan.. At first it was interim Ikaika Anderson speaking at the 2023 WAMN Committee lying to the Senate which I had to stand up from the audience and bring this to light what Anderson had mentioned of Commission giving him the authority to deviated from the Act 279 which was already adopted in December 2022. I knew that in the WAMN Committee telling the Senators the truth it would not take me for my reappointment to the Commission seat in June 2023by going against the Governor and his administration.

But I truly beleive in honestly and wil continue to speak on behalf of our waitlisers and advocate for our beneficiaries. Today, this Chairman Watson is doing the same thing is working deviating into the Govrnor's Plan. He should not wear a developer hat but follow th Act 279 adopted in December 2022 and represent the beneficiareues. This is not a business that he thinks he's running but a department. under the authority of the Commissioners and the Hawaiian Homes Act.

Many of the Chairman efforts will benefit the developers! Vote No to this SB2799, thank you very much for your time and consieration. Please stand for the many beneficairees it's such a dangerous times in the DHHL department staff and beneficairees!

Mahalo Pumehana,

Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya

SB-2779

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:06:56 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa duarte	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I, Theresa Duarte oppose to the rent with option to purchase. I am currently in the program of Villages of Lai Opua phase 1 in Kealakehe. And we are going thru so much with the Landlord and the management team. Our lease is under California. We haven't received confirmation on our recertification for a new year. We are on our third year of fifteen years and it feels like we're walking on eggs shells. There is no communication between landlord/ tenants. Our homes haven't been maintained for over a year. They say this program is to help native Hawaiians but it's not. Trust me.

Mahalo!

Aloha e Senator Decoite, Assistant Majority Floor Leader & Chair Committee on EEDT
Senator Maile Shimabukuro, Chair Committee on HAW, Senator Chang, Chair Committee on HOUSING,

I am Patrick Kahawaiolaa, a native Hawaiian, As defined pursuant to the HHA 1920 as amended July 9, 1921, and the current president of the Keaukaha Community Association.

I am here to strongly OBJECT to SB 2779 for the following reasons:

The representation of Bill 2779 expressed by the Legislature finds that as of 12/31/2022,....

29,300 native Hawaiians were on the application wait list for Residential, Agricultural, or Pastoral Homesteads;

[This measure goes on to **represent** that the homeless crisis in Hawaii is fourth in the Nation and that this longstanding issue of the backlog of the waitlist only **exacerbates** this crisis and treats the native Hawaiians unfairly]....

With all due respect, the **crisis of the long waitlist has been exacerbated by the State of Hawaii and the DHHL...** Please Senator, stop acting like ostriches, with your collective **"heads in the sand"...** all you need is to look at the recent \$348m settlement of the **Kalima v. State** only approximately 3,100 wait list applicants was involved and the 23 years that it took to reach resolution of this debacle...clearly was not a **"benefit to the native Hawaiian beneficiaries"** nor anything of their own design...The State and the DHHL failed to do their job.

How did this body come to the **conclusion** that in 2022 the waitlist did not decrease!! when it went down by at least 2,000 by your own **estimations**, because as this Bill mentions, in 2021 the State knew of 2000 **qualified** native Hawaiians **DIED ON THE WAIT LIST...in Kalima case...**

I've been around a little and have been a **product of the homesteads ma Keaukaha** for over 70 years... when our trust lands were taken for the expansion of the Hilo Airport, Hilo landfill, Hilo Sewage Treatment Plant, The Hilo Flood Control and the list keeps going

this measure goes on to **express** that even the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic (2019), that those waiting and struggling to pay their rent, that somehow it motivated the federal government to create a stimulus package, to **offer relief specifically**, for native Hawaiians on the wait list....

again **with due respect** the stimulus package was offered to millions of AMERICANS of which the native Hawaiians are and entitled to receive those stimulus checks...Stop talking or comparing Apples to Oranges

How can the State of Hawaii and the DHHL, **ameliorate** this situation? PLEASE ...

Not by a **requirement (mandate)** to satisfy the housing needs of the native Hawaiians on the wait list to **"put our people, our Lahui back into tenement buildings from which they came from"...**

Alii Prince Jonah Kuhio, saw his people **"languishing" in tenement buildings** and in his struggle to **rehabilitate** his people the Lahui of about that time was around 40K, based on the historical records, 21 years more or less after the **illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893.**

In my humble opinion §2 of this Bill 2779 is extremely demeaning and hurtful when this legislation **MANDATES (SHALL) build all kinds of RENTAL SCHEMES** ...to build **sufficient** rental housing, including apartment units, rent -with-option-to-buy units, to satisfy the housing needs of native Hawaiians currently on the wait list for homestead leases...

These RENTAL OPTIONS takes away our ability to exercise our cultural and traditional rights to get back to the land (**soil**)...to plant (**kanu**) to produce our traditional crops...as most native Hawaiians born and raised on the homesteads knows the moololo of Haloa...

First born of our Hawaiian gods Papa and Wakea...who is the ancestor of the Hawaiian people...

In the words of Alii Prince Kuhio... at the signing of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920...

"...the methods to rehabilitate our Race... is to return our people to the soil..."...

not back a 104 years later to **tenement buildings** ...because this State of Hawaii and DHHL in order to perpetual systemic racism against the indigenous native Hawaiians, as defined in the HHCA, 1920 §201(a)...**"native Hawaiian means...any descendant of not less than one half the blood of the races inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands previous to 1778"**,

and I will end with...HHCA, 1920, §207(a)...**"the department is authorized to lease to native Hawaiians the right to the use and occupancy of a Tract or Tracts of Hawaiian home lands, within the following acres...."**

So!! To reiterate our OBJECTIONS TO SB2779...LAND NOT RENTALS

In the inception of the Green Administration, when then Ikaika Anderson selected by Governor Josh Green to becoming the next Director of the DHHL, in his questioning before the Committee of Hawaiian Affairs, one question asked by Senators was "... will he follow the strategic plan approved by the Hawaiian Home Commission 2022, in the outgoing Aila administration???... which in relation to spending Act 279 funds... Rentals would not be an option ...**because it will not remove native Hawaiian waiting on the list... they will remain on the wait list... do not deviate from the proposed plans approved...**

Yet these same legislators along with the new Director Kali Watson, who clearly stated when being... asked...**"...after leaving the Directorship under the Cayetano administration, I've now become a housing developer... and than since he's being Director... the DHHL ...he is in the process of buying an 82 unit Condominium on the island of Kauai... even when the Commissioner of that island along with the majority of those on the wait list for Kauai said No.... He and the DHHL has moved more like a low income public housing authority by proposing rental schemes as opposed to giving qualified beneficiaries, the promise from Prince Kuhio and the provisions of the HHCA,1920...to be awarded a (TRACT) LAND... NOT RENTALS...and it's sad when the benefits to those on the wait list is being diminished... and hope among the waitlisted has now vanished as thoughts of being a leaseholder to past to the next generation, through succession, vanishes now and their outlook is to live in a Tenement building...**

I can be reached at (808) 937-8217

May the Great protect all for who you are,

Patrick Kahawaiolaa

Aloha Chair Maile Shimabukuro and Vice Chair Kurt Vella, Hawaiian Affairs Committee. I oppose this Bill for the following reasons:

NO WAITLIST REDUCTION:

The intent and purpose of SB 2779 is to *reduce the waitlist* through the issuance of lease awards by offering rentals, placing beneficiaries in apartments and offering "rent with option to purchase" units. Please note, these policies will have the opposite effect of this Bill's intended purpose.. Using trust assets to create rental units will **NOT** reduce the waitlist because it does not result in the issuance of lease awards to beneficiaries. Likewise, "Rent with Option to Purchase" delays the issuance of leases by 15 years due to federal HUD requirements. In addition, under this model our people are viewed as **tenants** not lessees for the entire 15 years. Therefore, they are not afforded the protections of being a beneficiary. In recent public testimony to the Commission, current and past participants of the program spoke of being subjected to "horrific" conditions, arbitrary and seemingly punitive decision making by management companies that are headquartered on the mainland. These practices have the effect of anchoring our beneficiaries to poverty as a result of questionable practices that fail to encourage the pursuit of financial wellness, growth and resiliency. Further note, during the entire 15 year period, rental payments are not applied toward the purchase of the home.

ACT 279 - PERMITTED INTERACTION GROUP:

In August of 2022, the Hawaiian Homes Commission approved the implementation of Act 279. Act 279 seeks to reduce a waitlist that currently exceeds 29,000 and continues to grow. In 2020, SMS was contracted to conduct a survey whereby 4,982 waitlisters responded. This survey served as a primary tool in decision making by the Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) tasked with implementing ACT 279. In December of 2022, Governor Ige approved the findings of the Commission.

BENEFICIARY SURVEY RESULTS - RENTALS, APARTMENTS, RENT WITH OPTION TO PURCHASE

ACT 2779 states in part, the DHHL *"shall build sufficient rental housing, including apartment units and rent with option to buy units to satisfy the needs of native Hawaiians currently on the waitlist for homestead leases."* As stated above, rentals do not result in the issuance of leases. "Rent With Option to Purchase," delays lease awards by 15 years and imposes unnecessarily cumbersome burdens upon our beneficiaries.

In addition the language in this Bill runs contrary to the data contained in the 2020 Beneficiary Survey. With regard to rentals, apartments, condominiums, Rent With Option To Purchase, I provide the following: 1.) Only **2.1%** surveyed want affordable rentals. 2.) Only **0.5%** desire living in a condominium, apartment or multi-family complex, 3.) The number rises to a mere **0.8%** when the offer includes participating in the "Rent With Option To Purchase" program. On average **54%** want single family residential units, while **58%** want residential lots, most of whom reside on Oahu. In addition, **84%** of respondents want "homes" that are 3 bedrooms, 2 baths or greater, while **94%** want

leases that they can pass on to their successors or family members. On all levels, this Bill moves the needle in the wrong direction. In addition, we are attaching ourselves to a LITEC model that favors certain developers to the detriment of our beneficiaries. This narrow and one sided view ignores the voices of our people. It limits what is possible and attempts to relegate them to settling for less. Therein lies the tragedy of what this has become.

RECOMMENDATION FOR CONSIDERATION:

I respectfully offer for your consideration, deleting all references to rental housing, apartment units and rent with option to purchase for the reasons stated above. And instead, consider amending the Bill to include:

1. Ensure compliance with the implementation Act 279 Plan as approved by the Hawaiian Homes Commission in August 2022, whose findings were approved by Governor Ige in December 2022.
2. Utilize trust assets, formulate plans, proposals and budget requests that result in the immediate reduction of the DHHL Native Hawaiian Beneficiary waitlist.
3. Utilize the 2020 beneficiary survey to guide decision making. Consult Native Hawaiian beneficiaries/waitlisters as deemed necessary to ensure we are serving in their best interest.
4. Consider all models of development and financial opportunities that raises our beneficiaries toward achieving their goal of acquiring lease awards, attaining physical, emotional and spiritual wellness by "returning them to the soil" as Prince Kuhio envisioned. As a result, I offer the following for further consideration:
 - Explore Development models such Habitat for Humanities, Mutual Self Help and Affordable Housing organizations.
 - Utilize NAHASDA and other funds for mortgage down payment assistance.
 - Aggressively pursue and establish partnerships with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI)
 - Remain open to suggestions, ideas and discussions that improve the manner in which we serve one another in achieving these goals.

Pau: Mahalo and Aloha,
Randy Awo, Hawaiian Homes Commissioner/Beneficiary

SB-2779

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 9:57:57 AM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Shimabukuro, Chair Chang, Vice-Chair Fevella, Vice-Chair Hashimoto, and Honorable Committee Members:

My apologies for this late testimony -- I respectfully present this testimony to SUPPORT SB2779, which would require the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to build sufficient rental housing – including rental apartments and rent-with-option-to-buy housing units to meet the housing needs of DHHL’s beneficiaries on the waitlist for homestead leases.

The DHHL “Wait List” totaled approximately 27,000 beneficiaries in 1995 – and that figure has NEVER decreased. Actually, that number has exploded to approximately 29,000 waiting for residential, agricultural or pastoral leases to be made available. This bill, once passed and if allowed to complete the “cross over process” for hearing in the House chambers would effectively give Waitlisted beneficiaries more housing options – and hopefully shrink that waiting list. As my family and I have ALWAYS maintained, providing housing options for our Native Hawaiian community makes sense not only from a humanitarian standpoint and to partially rectify the injustices committed against Hawaiians, but also frees up housing options for other segments of Hawai`i’s population.

For these key reasons and in the interest of reducing Hawai`i’s DHHL waiting list AND our state’s houseless population, we urge your Committee to please pass SB2779 and allow it to move forward during this Session.

Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting SB2779.

Nancy A. Jones

PO Box 1462, Wai`anae, HI 96792 / Email: nancyhydroalt@gmail.com

SB-2779

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:04:12 AM

Testimony for HWN on 2/6/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zeb Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Shimabukuro, Chair Chang, Vice-Chair Fevella, Vice-Chair Hashimoto, and Honorable Committee Members:

My apologies for this late testimony -- I respectfully present this testimony SUPPORTING SB2779, which requires the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to build sufficient rental housing – including rental apartments and rent-with-option-to-buy housing units to meet the housing needs of DHHL’s beneficiaries on the waitlist for homestead leases.

In 1995, the DHHL “Wait List” totaled approximately 27,000 beneficiaries – and that figure has NEVER decreased. That figure has now mushroomed to approximately 29,000 waiting for residential, agricultural or pastoral leases to be made available. This bill, once passed and if allowed to complete the “cross over process” for hearing in the House chambers would effectively give Waitlisted beneficiaries more housing options while also hopefully shrink that waiting list. As my family and I have ALWAYS maintained, providing housing options for our Native Hawaiian community makes sense not only from a humanitarian standpoint and to partially rectify the injustices committed against Hawaiians, but also frees up housing options for other segments of Hawai`i’s population.

For all of these reasons and in the interest of reducing Hawai`i’s DHHL waiting list AND our state’s houseless population, we urge your Committee to please pass SB2779 and allow it to move forward during this Session.

Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting SB2779.

Zebuel “Zeb” C. Jones

PO Box 1462, Wai`anae, HI 96792 / Email: zebbe3442@gmail.com