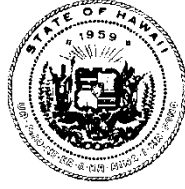


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



HAKIM OUANSAFI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Tuesday, February 4, 2025
1:00 p.m. – Room 225, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
SB 1412
RELATING TO THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY

Honorable Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto and members of the Senate Committee on Housing, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on **Senate Bill (SB) 1412**, which would incorporate a definition of “housing project” in section 356D-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), and further our agency’s development efforts. The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) **strongly supports** this measure and is grateful to the Legislature for its steadfast commitment to addressing Hawaii’s affordable housing crisis.

The HPHA is committed to ensuring safe, decent, and affordable housing for Hawaii’s most vulnerable populations, including families earning less than 30% of the area median income, individuals with disabilities, and the elderly. Through our public housing and rental assistance programs, we serve thousands of residents statewide, providing not only shelter but also access to economic opportunities, community stability, and essential services.

Purpose and Impact of HB 1093

SB 1412 would replace the definition of “housing” or “housing project” found in Section 356D-11, HRS, and all other references to it, with a standardized definition under Section 356D-1, HRS. This measure will:

- Streamline statutory language to ensure consistency across HPHA's enabling statutes.
- Aligns with the intent of Act 251, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022.
- Enhances HPHA's ability to advance its redevelopment initiatives, which focus on deconcentrating poverty while preserving and increasing the state's inventory of deeply affordable housing units.

The concentration of poverty in traditional public housing developments has long been a barrier to economic mobility, limiting families' access to job opportunities, quality healthcare, and high-performing schools. In recognition of this challenge, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has encouraged public housing agencies nationwide to incorporate mixed-income and mixed-finance models as a means of fostering financially viable and socially integrated communities.

Hawaii has taken bold steps to implement these best practices, and thanks to the steadfast support of the Green Administration and the Legislature, HPHA has successfully launched multiple redevelopment projects statewide. SB 1412 will further support these efforts by ensuring our statutory framework reflects modern, flexible, and financially sustainable housing solutions.

HPHA is deeply committed to ensuring that all residents—especially those struggling to find stable housing—have access to safe, affordable homes that offer pathways to economic security and social mobility. SB 1412 is an important step in that direction, ensuring clarity, consistency, and efficiency in the administration of housing redevelopment projects statewide. We strongly support this measure and respectfully urge its passage.

Mahalo for your time and consideration on this important legislation, and for your continued commitment to increasing affordable housing opportunities for the people of Hawaii.