



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**
Before the Senate Committee on
Commerce and Consumer Protection

In Consideration of Senate Bill No. 332
RELATING TO FORECLOSURES

To Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga and the honorable members of the committee,

We are writing on behalf of Lahaina Strong, an organization deeply rooted in our community's resilience and advocacy. Originally formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and revitalized after the devastating fires of August 8, 2023, Lahaina Strong has become the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 20,000 supporters. Our mission is to amplify local voices and champion community-driven solutions, which are more critical than ever as we continue rebuilding and recovering.

Lahaina Strong, stands in **support of Senate Bill 332** which addresses the urgent need to protect local residents from the devastating impacts of a looming foreclosure crisis on Maui. With the foreclosure moratorium ending, our community is facing another wave of grief as the economic impacts of the August 8th wildfire continue to unfold.

Without intervention, disaster capitalism threatens to exploit this crisis, allowing outside investors to purchase foreclosed properties and profit at the expense of local families.

SB332 ensures that foreclosed properties cannot be bundled together for auction. By requiring individual property auctions, local residents have a fairer chance to submit competitive offers. Bundled auctions only benefit investors, shutting out families who want to rebuild and remain in their community. Additionally, this bill prioritizes giving tenants, community organizations, and government entities the first opportunity to purchase foreclosed properties. This approach ensures that local homes remain in service to local people.

When paired with the work of community land trusts, this measure can help create a pool of permanently affordable housing for local residents and generational families in Lahaina.

We respectfully request the Legislature **support Senate Bill 332** to protect local residents, prevent predatory real estate practices, and preserve the integrity of our community.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your commitment to helping communities like Lahaina recover and rebuild.

Sincerely,

Lahaina Strong

SB-332

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:22:21 PM

Testimony for CPN on 1/28/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Riley Bond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My nam is Riley Bond and I strongly support of SB332, which seeks to prevent the displacement of families and preserve homeownership in Hawaii.

SB332 addresses these issues by requiring foreclosed homes to be sold individually and giving local families, affordable housing nonprofits, and community land trusts a fair opportunity to purchase them. This ensures homes remain accessible to residents rather than being lost to speculative investors.

This bill is essential to stabilizing our communities and keeping families in Hawaii. I urge you to pass SB332.

Mahalo,
Riley Bond

Lahaina, Maui

SB-332

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:49:31 PM

Testimony for CPN on 1/28/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justin Hughey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Jarrett Keohokalole and members of the committee

I am writing in **strong support of SB332.**

The foreclosure moratorium on Maui ended January 4th and people on the ground are anticipating a foreclosure crisis as economic impacts of the fire continue. Not only do we need to prepare for the continued economic impacts from the Lahaina wildfire, we also are going to see the national economy slide into the abyss from Trump's five trillion dollar tax cuts for the wealthy. Every Republican President since Hoover that has cut taxes on the wealthy has produced a recession. Without intervention, we know disaster capitalism will result in investors taking advantage of the crisis to purchase foreclosed properties and profit off them later.

My name is Justin Hughey and I am a 48 year old Special Education Teacher who lives in Wailuku on Maui. I moved here to take my first teaching job at King Kamehameha III Elementary in 2006. The cost of living was so high that I went into debt very quickly and had to work nights waiting tables as a second job in order to rent a one bedroom apartment and live paycheck to paycheck. I never gave up the dream of home ownership and started looking into very few options for affordable housing. I joined a seminar and learned about a new Community Land Trust called Na Hale O Maui. In 2010 there were a lot of foreclosed homes because of the current recession. John Anderson, then the current Executive Director expressed that this was a way to transform foreclosed homes into permanent affordable housing in perpetuity. I immediately started the paperwork to get on the pre-approved buyers list. Somehow my efforts and good fortune sprung myself to the top of the list and I was able to purchase their first home. The house is located at 37 Poniu Circle. It is a 3 bed, 2.5 bath, 1,521 square, two car garage just walking distance to downtown Wailuku. The house was built in 1988 but went into foreclosure. I was told the bank wanted to sell it for \$475,000 but ended up selling it to Na Hale O Maui for \$375,000. Na Hale O Maui then sold the home to me for \$270,000. The non for-profit owns the land on a 99 year lease at forty dollars a month with an option for another 99 years. I can sell the house to my kids if I wish. I own the house, Na Hale O Maui owns the land. The house today if it was on the market is listed on the internet for \$961,000 dollars. I can't just sell the house and keep the profit. I collect shared equity and whenever I sell it, it has to go to either my kids or a list of reapproved Na Hale O Maui buyers who will be able to purchase it at a truly affordable rate. The concept is that every home they purchase will be affordable in perpetuity. My mortgage is \$1,361.00. You can't find a one bedroom apartment, anywhere, at this rate. My wife, whom I met after I bought the house is a teacher as well. We each pay about \$600 a month for housing.

We both wanted to have children and if it wasn't for this truly affordable home, we would have moved to the mainland. We now have a five year old boy named Jasper and a three year old boy named Oskar. All the rooms are finally filled up. We are all so grateful. It was like winning a lottery ticket.

Governor Green suspended many state laws in his emergency proclamation to produce so called affordable housing. I am not seeing a lot of truly affordable housing being produced. With the high cost of the land and materials, I have not seen a better way of producing truly affordable housing than through community land trusts. The school I was working at burned down in the Lahaina wildfire. I was able to transfer to a school close to home but a lot of people I worked with in Lahaina were forced to leave. Now I teach at Kahului Elementary and even in central Maui I am working with children who's parent are struggling to find affordable options. Affordable housing is also a major factor in the fact that Kahului Elementary started the year with thirteen school wide employment vacancies.

We need courageous as well as creative leadership, now more than ever. Thank you for hearing this bill. Making it easier for community land trusts to purchase foreclosed homes is a great start. We can make sure the local homes stay in local hands by: Prohibiting foreclosure properties from being bundled together. Giving tenants, community organizations, and the city or state the first opportunity to purchase. This gives locals a fighting chance at making sure the local homes serve local people. There are so many more hard working families like mine that deserve a chance at truly affordable housing.

Kind Regards, Justin Hughey