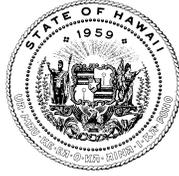


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o
Hawai'i*

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



KALI WATSON
CHAIRPERSON, HHC
Ka Luna Ho'okele

KATIE L. LAMBERT
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIR
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, CHAIR
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HOUSING AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
HEARING ON MARCH 11, 2025 AT 1:05PM IN CR 225

HB 606, HD 1, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

March 10, 2025

Aloha Chairs Chang and Richards, Vice Chairs Hashimoto and San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **strongly supports** this bill which extends the Act 279 Special Fund to 6/30/2028, 2) deposits funds into and appropriates funds out of the Act 279 Special Fund to eliminate its waitlist, 3) requires DHHL to submit a strategic plan detailing the anticipated uses of the funds appropriated, 4) requires an annual report, and 5) sunsets 6/30/2028.

DHHL continues to make progress regarding the encumbrance of funds, the expenditure of funds, and the delivery of lots pursuant to Act 279, SLH 2022. Attached is the Annual Activity Report as required under Act 125/24 (Act 279, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022). HB606, HD1, provides sustained legislative action to fulfill the State's trust obligations under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended, and the Hawaii State Constitution. This bill will ensure that DHHL has adequate time to encumber and expend the necessary funds and will secure additional funds that will allow DHHL to continue to address the DHHL applicant waiting list.

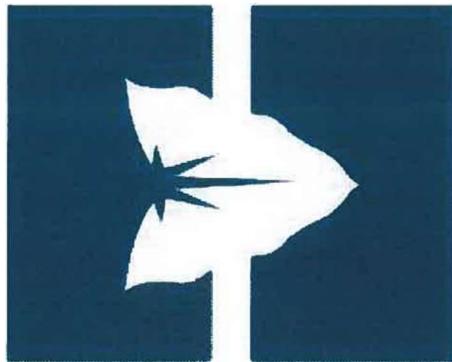
Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
Annual Activity Report

As required by:

Act 125/24

(Act 279, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022)



HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS TRUST

Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

In 2022, the Hawai'i State Legislature appropriated \$600 million through Act 279 to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. The purpose of this funding is to reduce the Hawaiian Homes waitlist. To this end, the Department has been actively pursuing new lot development projects as well as awarding all available lots to beneficiaries on the waitlist.

Section 5 of the Act requires the Department to submit an annual report to the legislature on the first day of each regular session that includes:

1. An accounting of the expenditures for the purposes of this Act in the previous fiscal year; and
2. The number of applicants on the waiting list assisted.

Below please find a report of expenditures and encumbrances for fiscal year 2024 (ending June 30, 2024) as well as the projected number of applicants who will benefit from these development projects.

FY24 Encumbrances & Expenditures

Contracts	\$318,937,382.14
Purchase Orders	\$ 7,618,283.00
Expenditures	\$ 36,905,557.31
Total E&E	\$363,461,222.45

FY24 Accounting of Expenditures

Amount	Vendor Name
10,000.00	ACM Consultants
139,131.83	Austin, Tsutsumi & Assoc., Inc.
239,447.34	Bowers & Kubota
1,479,887.34	DDC2 LLC
12,462,753.53	DDC3 LLC
181,126.05	Hawaiian Dredging Construction
385,705.73	Hawaiian Electric
8,672,549.28	Maui Kupono Builders, LLC
344,482.00	NANA MUA LLC
5,800.00	Ponsar Valuation LLC
12,967,391.50	Title Guaranty of Hawaii
17,282.71	Townscape
36,905,557.31	Total

Projected Number of Applicants on Waitlist Assisted

Proj # of Applicants	Development Name
16	Panae'wa Subsistance Ag
24	La'i 'Ōpua
25	Kahikinui
52	Pu'uhona Phase 1
68	Honomū/Maku'u
185	Total



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 606_HD1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOMELANDS

Senate Committee on Housing
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 11, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Conference Room 225

Aloha e Chairs Chang and Richards, Vice Chairs Hashimoto and San Buenaventura, and the Senate Committees on Housing and Hawaiian Affairs:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB606_HD1**, which would provide critical support to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) by: (1) extending the Act 279 Special Fund to June 30, 2028, (2) depositing funds into and appropriating funds out of the Act 279 Special Fund to increase DHHL lease awards to waitlisted beneficiaries, and (3) requiring DHHL to submit a plan and report on its use of Act 279 funds.

As detailed in a recent study published by the Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i (UHERO), as of 2023, the consequences of unaffordable housing continue to show up in out-migration, homelessness, and more families being priced out of the local market."¹ For example, in 2022, more than 67,000 former Hawai'i residents moved to other states, with the high-cost of housing identified in surveys as a leading cause of out-migration.² **As a result of the cost driven out-migration, more Native Hawaiians now live outside of Hawai'i than in Hawai'i.**³

DHHL plays a vital role in addressing the housing needs of Native Hawaiians and reversing this disturbing trend of Native Hawaiians being priced out of their ancestral homelands. Historic underfunding and marginalization of DHHL has led to today's contemporary crisis where the number of qualified beneficiaries vastly outnumbers the agency's ability to provide habitable land and housing. However, Act 279 is an important step towards meeting the

¹ UHERO Report at p. 1.

² UHERO Report at 7.

³ OHA Press Release, *New census data confirms more Native Hawaiians reside on the continent than in Hawai'i* (Sept. 22, 2024), <https://www.oha.org/news/new-census-data-more-native-hawaiians-reside-continent/>.

State's trust responsibilities to Native Hawaiians under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act and the Hawai'i Constitution to return land to and provide housing for Hawai'i's first peoples.

OHA stands in strong support of HB606_HD1 and urges the Committees to pass this bill. Mahalo nui loa for considering this testimony.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 8:38:30 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Young	Testifying for Faith Action for Community Equity	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Kristen Young and I am in **strong support of HB606**, which allocates **\$600 million to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL)**. This funding is essential to addressing the **long-overdue need for housing among Native Hawaiians**.

Currently, **29,000 Native Hawaiians remain on the DHHL waitlist**, many of whom have waited decades. When factoring in their ‘ohana, the true number impacted is **far greater**. Meanwhile, Hawai‘i’s soaring cost of living continues to **push Native Hawaiians out of their homeland**. According to **Hawai‘i Migration Flows data**, **more Native Hawaiians are leaving the state than returning**, a crisis that threatens not just individuals, but the future of our communities and culture.

This displacement is especially unjust when considering that **Hawaiian land and culture are central to the state’s largest industries—tourism and the military**. The **tourism industry generates billions annually**, marketing Hawaiian identity—**our language, hula, food, and aloha spirit**—while Native Hawaiians struggle to afford housing. At the same time, the **U.S. military occupies thousands of acres of Hawaiian land**, often under leases as low as **\$1 per year**, further compounding the inequity.

HB606 is more than a housing bill—it’s an investment in Hawai‘i’s future. Stable housing strengthens families, keeps keiki in schools, and allows our lāhui to thrive. Funding DHHL will not only provide homes but also **ease pressure on the broader housing market**, benefiting **all Hawai‘i residents**. If we fail to act now, the **next generation of Native Hawaiians may have no choice but to leave**.

The **State of Hawai‘i has a clear obligation to fulfill the promise of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act. Act 279** was a step forward, but it **only addressed a fraction of the need**, funding **just over 6,000 homes**. **HB606 is a critical opportunity to uphold that responsibility**, ensuring Native Hawaiians can remain **in the land of their ancestors, where they rightfully belong**.

I respectfully urge this committee to **pass HB606 and take a stand for housing, justice, and Hawai‘i’s future**.

Mahalo for your time and leadership.

Kristen Young
Faith Action for Community Equity
Honolulu, HI 96813



March 10, 2025

**Testimony in Support of HB606
Senate Committees on Hawaiian Affairs & Housing**

Aloha Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Shane Pale, and I submit testimony on behalf of Kūpa'a Lāhui Alliance in strong support of HB606. This bill is not just about housing—it's about securing the future of Native Hawaiians and ensuring that Hawai'i remains a home for its people, not just for tourists and outside investors.

1. HB606 Addresses the Native Hawaiian Diaspora

Hawaiians are being displaced at alarming rates. More Native Hawaiians now live outside of Hawai'i than in their homeland—a direct result of skyrocketing housing costs and the lack of affordable options. The State of Hawai'i has an obligation to ensure that Native Hawaiians can live in the land of their ancestors. HB606 is a necessary step in stopping the forced outmigration of our people.

2. Addressing the 29,000+ on the Waitlist Helps Solve Hawai'i's Housing Crisis

Hawai'i is facing an extreme housing crisis, with the median home price now at \$1.1 million. For the 29,000+ Native Hawaiians still waiting for DHHL homesteads, this cost makes homeownership nearly impossible. Funding DHHL and providing housing for these families will reduce pressure on Hawai'i's overall housing market, offering relief to all local residents.

3. Hawaiian Lands & Hawaiian Identity Drive Hawai'i's Economy

Hawai'i's two largest industries—tourism and the military—operate on stolen Kanaka Maoli lands.

- The military controls thousands of acres of Hawaiian land, often leased for as little as \$1 per year.
- The tourism industry generates billions annually by commodifying Hawaiian identity—using our culture, language, hula, and 'āina as marketing tools, while many Native Hawaiians struggle to afford housing.

Hawaiians have given more to this state than any other group, yet we are being systematically displaced from our homeland. It is time for the state to fulfill its commitments under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act and reinvest in the people whose identity sustains Hawai'i's economy.

4. The \$600M is an Investment in Hawai'i's Future

HB606 is not just a housing bill—it's an economic investment.

- Job creation – Home construction supports contractors, local laborers, and small businesses.
- Stronger communities – Stable housing leads to better educational outcomes, economic mobility, and reduced homelessness.
- Economic return – Every dollar invested in housing leads to increased consumer spending, local business growth, and lower state costs for social services.

This is not about giving Native Hawaiians a handout—it's about ensuring that the people who built this place, who continue to give to this place, have the ability to stay. I strongly urge the committee to pass HB606 and take a stand for housing justice, economic stability, and the future of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Shane Pale

Shane Pale

Kūpa'a Lāhui Alliance

Tel. 808.457.2350 | www.kupaalahuialliance.org

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 7:31:42 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonah Cummings (Hilina'i)	Testifying for The Queens Court	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Hilina'i,

As a member of the queens court and individual Individually I'm in support of HB606.

Mahalo nui...

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 7:38:27 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kailana Moa-eli	Testifying for The Queen's Court	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I'm Kailana Moa-Eli, founder of the Queens Court, a proud Pro-Hawaiian Kanaka-based organization. We firmly believe in the benefits of Hawaiian homesteads, providing our people with a place to call home on our own lands.

Our priority is to reduce the waitlist numbers, which will help alleviate some of the pressing issues we face today. That's why we wholeheartedly support this bill, which aims to address the housing needs of Native Hawaiians currently on the waitlist for homestead leases ¹.

We're eager to see the positive impact this bill will have on our community. Mahalo for your attention to this important matter!

Mahalo,
Kailana Moa-Eli

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:45:26 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon	Testifying for Queens Court	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Shannon Watson and I'm with Queens Court and I Support this bill especially to kokua our lahui. Ke aloha no.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 4:58:07 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

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

Comments:

Strong support to assist DHHL in matters to reduce the waitlist

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 10:33:21 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Spear	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of this bill. The fact that Native Hawaiians are disproportionately unhoused on their own lands and are being priced out of Hawai'i at unprecedented rates is deeply shameful and must be remedied. Allocating additional funding to DHHL to provide long-overdue housing to Hawaiians on the HHL waitlist should absolutely be a priority for the state.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:09:32 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Analiene Beeler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of HB606. This would put Hawaiian land back in Hawaiian hands while simultaneously relieving homelessness and unjust economic disparities. I only see benefit from this bill being passed: not only for native Hawaiians, but for students and all other people who would benefit from decreased pressure on the housing market.

Thank you.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:09:48 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronnie Hoglen Jr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in full support of this HB606

Hawaiians need affordable housing and their promised lands they have waited long enough!!

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:09:49 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karim Hanna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

please support. We need to keep hawaiians in hawaii.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:24:13 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Antone Aku	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Board Members,

My name is Antone Aku, 38 years old, born and raised on O’ahu. I am a Hawaiian Homestead Beneficiary waitlister along with my mom (40 years on the waitlist) and my two older siblings. I fully support this measure to get Hawaiians off the waitlist and into homes ASAP. I don't want to die on the waitlist like many of my uncles have. I want to continue to live in Hawaii, on Hawaiian homestead and to pass down my homestead to my children. Please pass this bill so that more Hawaiians can come home from the continent and live in Hawaii. Without Hawaiians, there is no Hawaii. Mahalo.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 12:06:48 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keola Castro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii's Housing crisis is at an all time high. Lawmakers need to do everything in their power to mitigate this crisis by providing adequate funding and land to house struggling, tax paying Hawaiians who are being outpriced and displaced. There are very few jobs in Hawaii that can get people above the low income bracket. Security and Sustainablity should be legislations top priority.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 12:12:10 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anita Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 606. This bill will provide funding and guidelines to provide long overdue housing for Hawaiians on the DHHL waitlist. This is especially urgent now with the escalating price of housing which means more families need to move away from their homeland to find affordable housing. All Hawaiians should be able to live in their homeland and have the security of home ownership.

Thank you for supporting this bill.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 1:01:01 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Puppione	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need to keep at this until we get it right. The waitlist is too long. People have waited too long. "Justice too long delayed is justice denied."-MLK

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 3:01:19 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Fonarow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee on Hawaiian Affairs and Committee on Housing,

My name is Amy Fonarow. I am a student of Hawaiian history and a former resident of Oahu and Maui, and I am writing in support of Bill HB606.

Native Hawaiians have waited long enough for homes promised to them generations ago. There will always be some reason to not come through and instead divert this money elsewhere. Let's please break that pattern this time and help the kanaka maoli and their descendants stay in the land of their ancestors.

Without Hawaiians in Hawai'i, the archipelago becomes two-dimensional . . . shadows cast by all those who've been forced to disperse elsewhere because of folks with more money.

Please make the security, the well-being, and the future of Native Hawaiians a top priority by supporting Bill HB606.

Mahalo nui loa for your thoughtful consideration.

Mālama pono,

Amy Fonarow

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 4:14:37 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kaiulani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support funding DHHL. MAHALO!

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 4:48:11 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gordon B. Lindsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support hb606

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 5:12:52 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaylene Sheldon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Committee On Housing & Committee of Hawaiian Affairs

My name is Kaylene Kauwila Sheldon and I am writing to you in support of HB 606 HD1, which eliminates the waiting list. Too many kanaka are dying on this waiting list. Prince Jonah Kūhio Kalanianaʻole had a vision and dream as he saw a hostile take over by the United States, he saw his people marginalized and struggling. It is said that Prince Jonah had a deep love for his people; He was so committed to supporting the rehabilitation of his people and is attributed with the following quote: “The Hawaiian race is passing. And if conditions continue to exist as they do today, this splendid race of people, my people, will pass from the face of the earth...” Please make things pono and continue the foundation that our aliʻi set forth.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kaylene Kauwila Sheldon

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 5:54:20 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
francine Aarona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill so that more of our people of Hawaiian decent are able to have an opportunity to qualify for a home.

many have waited too long and the state needs to fulfill their commitment to our decedents of Hawaiian ancestry.

mahalo Ke Akua,

Francine Aarona

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 7:29:21 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronnie K. Kikala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Ronnie K. Kikala, support HB606! ‘Ae HB606, e holomua!

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 8:05:56 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelani Montas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support our Kanaka Maoli community through this bill.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 7:55:59 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandie Banis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Brandie,

As a member of the Queens Court and as an individual I am in support of HB 606.

Mahalo nui

Brandie Banis

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 8:47:13 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aidan Sites	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Aidan Sites, and I am writing in **strong support of HB606**, which allocates **\$600 million to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL)**. This funding is essential to addressing the **long-overdue need for housing among Native Hawaiians**.

Currently, **29,000 Native Hawaiians remain on the DHHL waitlist**, many of whom have waited decades. When factoring in their ‘ohana, the true number impacted is **far greater**. Meanwhile, Hawai‘i’s soaring cost of living continues to **push Native Hawaiians out of their homeland**. According to **Hawai‘i Migration Flows data**, **more Native Hawaiians are leaving the state than returning**, a crisis that threatens not just individuals, but the future of our communities and culture.

This displacement is especially unjust when considering that **Hawaiian land and culture are central to the state’s largest industries—tourism and the military**. The **tourism industry generates billions annually**, marketing Hawaiian identity—**our language, hula, food, and aloha spirit**—while Native Hawaiians struggle to afford housing. At the same time, the **U.S. military occupies thousands of acres of Hawaiian land**, often under leases as low as **\$1 per year**, further compounding the inequity.

HB606 is more than a housing bill—it’s an investment in Hawai‘i’s future. Stable housing strengthens families, keeps keiki in schools, and allows our lāhui to thrive. Funding DHHL will not only provide homes but also **ease pressure on the broader housing market**, benefiting **all Hawai‘i residents**. If we fail to act now, the **next generation of Native Hawaiians may have no choice but to leave**.

The **State of Hawai‘i has a clear obligation to fulfill the promise of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act. Act 279** was a step forward, but it **only addressed a fraction of the need**, funding **just over 6,000 homes**. **HB606 is a critical opportunity to uphold that responsibility**, ensuring Native Hawaiians can remain **in the land of their ancestors, where they rightfully belong**.

I respectfully urge this committee to **pass HB606 and take a stand for housing, justice, and Hawai‘i’s future**.

Mahalo for your time and leadership.

Aidan Sites

aidanasites@gmail.com

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:20:41 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo, and **I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB606**. I am a Kanaka Maoli, a lineal descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and I serve as an Executive Commission Member of the Sierra Club of Hawai‘i and a Board Member of the Hawai‘i Workers Center.

HB606 is a critical step toward justice for Native Hawaiians. It allocates \$600 million to address the growing waitlist of over 29,000 beneficiaries still waiting for homes promised under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act. These homes are not just shelter; they are a means for our people to remain connected to our lands, culture, and identity.

For too long, while tourism and the military have profited from Hawaiian lands and cultural identity, Native Hawaiians have been displaced from our ancestral home. Generations of families have been left waiting, facing barriers to housing security in our own homeland. HB606 is an opportunity to right these wrongs and ensure that Native Hawaiians can live, thrive, and remain in Hawai‘i nei.

I urge the committee to pass HB606 and fulfill the long-overdue promise to our people. Your support can make a tangible difference in the lives of thousands of Native Hawaiians who deserve the opportunity to call their homeland home.

me ke aloha ‘āina,
Nanea Lo
Mō‘ili‘ili, HI 96826
Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Executive Committee Member
Board Member, Hawai‘i Workers Center
Kanaka Maoli/Lineal Descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom

LATE

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 2:20:39 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Testimony submitted * copy of doucment

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:21:08 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Douglas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB606. The State must make right on what is owed to the Native Hawaiians.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 6:03:04 PM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Marquez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kākou,

Please continue to support this very important bill. Hawaiians NEED housing in Hawai'i, it only makes sense!!!

Mahalo for your time,

Malia Marquez

TO: Senate Hawaiian Affairs Committee

Chair Richards, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, Member DeCorte, Member Ihara, Member Keohokalole

TO: Senate Housing Committee

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, Member Aquino, Member Fevella, Member Kanuha

FROM: Germaine Meyers

Nanakuli Hawaiian Homestead Lessee
and DHHL Agriculture Waitlister

RE: HB606, HD1 (HSCR1127)

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOMELANDS.

Extends the Act 279 Special Fund to 6/30/2028. Deposits funds into and appropriates funds out of the Act 279 Special Fund to eliminate its waitlist. Requires the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to submit a strategic plan detailing the anticipated uses of the funds appropriated. Requires an annual report. Sunsets 6/30/2028. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

I'm in **STRONG OPPOSITION** of HB606 HD1, in consideration of the actions by the current DHHL Chairman leading Administration and the HHC

The **ORIGINAL** Strategic Plan (SP) and Budget to Implement Act 279 was submitted to the legislature on December 6, 2022. It was approved by the Hawaiian Homes Commissioners of 2022, as led by DHHL Chairman William Aila, Jr.

Stewart Matsunaga was the Land Development Division (LDD) Administrator that completed the SP and Budget with Chair Aila and the Commissioners. He worked for DHHL for over 40 years from 1981 through January 2024. He worked most of the years for LDD as the Administrator. His resume is attached.

Below is a budget summary and the total lots planned to be developed by County. Each lot would assist one applicant on the waitlist. Also below are the anticipated rental units to be developed on Oahu only, which does NOT remove an applicant from the waitlist. Lastly, below includes the planned Statewide land/project acquisitions which estimates the development of 300 additional lots.

ORIGINAL STRATEGIC PLAN TO IMPLEMENT ACT 279 (2022)

Summary of Lot Development Projects Statewide, Act 279		
County	Number of Lots	Budget \$
Hawaii	440	
Maui	572	
Honolulu	1,525	
Kauai	190	
TOTAL	2,727	
Statewide Land/Project Acquisition	*300	
*Estimated Lots		
TOTAL	3,027	
**136 Rental Units on Oahu in Maili		
**Will NOT remove Applicant from Waitlist		
TOTAL BUDGET FOR ALL OF THE ABOVE		\$540,000,000
10% to address barriers to homeownership		\$60,000,000
TOTAL		\$600,000,000

Stewart Matsunaga, LDD Administrator, consistently provided Act 279 progress status reports to the HHC at every monthly meeting throughout the year 2023. It included a spreadsheet of the strategic plan projects and budget, encumbered funds, projected encumbered funds, and projected lots.

The last report from Matsunaga was provided to the HHC on December 18, 2023. Matsunaga was out for medical leave during the HHC meetings in January and February 2024, which ended in his retirement (date unknown). During Matsunaga’s absence, Administration did NOT provide the monthly Act 279 progress status report of the strategic plan and budget.

At the March 18, 2024 HHC meeting, **Kalani Fronda** presented various LDD reports under the office of the chairman, but no report for Act 279. **At the April 22, 2024 HHC meeting, Fronda was introduced as the new Acting LDD Administrator.** Again, no Act 279 progress status report. From March 2024 to present date, Fronda NEVER provided the HHC an Act 279 monthly progress status report of the strategic plan projects and budget approved by the HHC.

For FY2023 (ending 6/30/2023), DHHL submitted its **Act 279 Annual Report to the legislature.** The report was dated January 17, 2024 and it **aligns with Matsunaga’s last report to the HHC on December 18, 2023,** as follows:

Report Year	Encumbrances and Expenditures	Projected Number of Applicants on Waitlist Assisted
FY2023	\$192,749,999	1,489

In Matsunaga’s last report to HHC on December 18, 2023, he reported the following:

Encumbered To Date FY2024 (7/1/23-6/30/24)	\$2,000,000	Related to 75 Lots
Project highlights from 11/14/23-12/12/23: Requested for Release of Act 279 funds to encumber the following for FY2024 (7/1/23-6/30/24)	\$238,959,000	Related to 775 lots
Additional Projected Encumbrances for FY2024	\$324,748,240	Related to 504 lots

Based on Matsunaga’s last report to HHC on December 18, 2023, the **ORIGINAL Act 279 Strategic Plan and Budget (2022)** were on-course to be accomplished, to encumber \$600,000,000 by the deadline and assist the projected number of applicants on the waitlist with a lot and 99-year lease.

Shockingly, Fronda’s Act 279 Annual Report to the legislature dated January 15, 2025, to report FY2024 encumbrances and expenditures of \$363,461,222.45, will only assist 185 applicants on the waitlist.

Report Year	Encumbrances and Expenditures	Projected Number of Applicants on Waitlist Assisted
FY2024	\$363,461,222	185

I’ve combined the two Act 279 Annual Reports to the legislature below:

Report Year	Encumbrances and Expenditures	Projected Number of Applicants on Waitlist Assisted	Date Submitted	LDD Administrator
FY2023	\$192,749,999	1,489	1/17/2024	Matsunaga 1981-12/2023
FY2024	\$363,461,222	185	1/15/2025	Frona 3/2024-Present
TOTAL	\$556,211,221	1,674		

The FY 2024 Annual Report under Fronda’s LDD administration fails to provide clarity if it includes the budgeted \$60,000,000 to address barriers to home ownership.

Almost all of Act 279 appropriations of \$600M have been encumbered yet DHHL will assist significantly less applicants on the waitlist than the ORIGINAL Act 279 Strategic Plan and Budget (2022) by 1,353 less applicants.

It’s worth noting the following incidents occurred after the HHC approved the ORIGINAL Act 279 Strategic Plan and Budget (2022) which were submitted to the Legislature on December 6, 2022.

January 2023	Ikaika Anderson, Interim Chair of HHC No West Hawaii Commissioner
February 2023	Ikaika Anderson, Interim Chair of HHC New West Hawaii Commissioner Appointed. Makai Freitas, 2/20/2023
March 2023	3/21/2023 Ikaika Anderson last HHC meeting as Interim Chair 3/28/2023 Kali Watson first HHC public hearing as Chair
June 2023	Russell Ka’upu, Oahu Commissioner, Last month as commissioner. Ka’upu resigned to accept a full-time position at DHHL under Chair Watson administration.

July 2023	Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya, Oahu Commissioner, last month as commissioner. Governor Green and Chair Watson did not extend her term, as others were.
August 2023	2 vacant Oahu Commissioner seats.
September 2023	New Oahu Commissioner appointed. Walter Kaneakua, 9/17/2023. New Oahu Commissioner appointed. Sanoe Marfil, 9/17/2023.
November 2023	Chair Watson creates a PIG to recommend changes (deviations) to Act 279 Strategic Plan and Budget. Assigns 4 Commissioners. Watson (PIG chair), new commissioners Freitas, Kaneakua, and Marfil.
December 2023	Stewart Matsunaga, LDD Administrator, last HHC meeting. Last Act 279 progress status report from Matsunaga of strategic plan projects, budget, encumbrances, projected encumbrances, and projected lots—applicants assisted on waitlist. Matsunaga worked for DHHL for over 40 years.
January 2024	PIG report with proposed changes (deviations) to Act 279 Strategic Plan and Budget for review. Matsunaga absent from HHC meeting. No Act 279 progress status report of projects and budget from this month to present, March 10, 2025.
February 2024	PIG report with proposed changes (deviations) to Act 279 SP and Budget approved.
March 2024	Kalani Fronda gives miscellaneous LDD reports to Commission. No Act 279 report.
April 2024	Frona new LDD Administrator.
May 2024	Randy Awo, Maui Commissioner, last month as commissioner.
June 2024	Zachary Helm, Molokai Commissioner, last month as commissioner. No Maui Commissioner.
July 2024	New Maui Commissioner appointed. Archie Kalepa, July 15, 2024. New Molokai Commissioner appointed. Lawrence Lasua, July 15, 2024.
August 2024	Chair Watson creates another PIG to recommend changes (deviations) to Act 279 Strategic Plan and Budget. Assigns 3 Commissioners. Kaneakua (PIG chair), new commissioners Kalepa and Lasua.
October 2024	PIG report with proposed changes (deviations) to Act 279 Strategic Plan and Budget for review.
November 2024	PIG report with proposed changes (deviations) to Act 279 SP and Budget approved.
January 2025	Frona submits for review 2025 schedule of projects for awards, 2,400+ awards, 13 projects. According to the report, 1,484 lot awards will be made from January 2025 through October 2025. They reflect the projects encumbered on Matsunaga's FY2023 Annual Report to the legislature and projects on the ORIGINAL strategic plan and budget. Also noted on the schedule were 1,276 awards to be made in December 2025--all on Maui, and all not included with the FY23 or FY24 encumbrance reports to the legislature.
February 2025	Frona submits for review Future Development Projects proposed that require funds.

Act 279 changes (deviations) to the strategic plan and budget initiated by both PIGs, the report is confusing. Also changes made during the meetings are difficult to follow since some Commissioners don't speak into the microphone.

Frona never provides monthly Act 279 Strategic Plan and Budget progress status reports, before or after the two (2) PIGs.

Projects on Oahu on the ORIGINAL Act 279 SP and Budget were removed and total applicants on Oahu assisted were significantly decreased, yet Oahu have the highest number of applicants on the waitlist.

The ORIGINAL Act 279 SP and Budget should never have been changed. Matsunaga had 40 years+ of experience managing DHHL projects and budgets. He was familiar with our DHHL lands and the opportunities for development were only limited due to lack of funding. Matsunaga was part of the Master planning statewide, all regional and all island plans. He honored the beneficiary survey results of 2020 and the Commissioners of 2022.

For these reasons, I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB606 HD1.

Stewart Matsunaga

 ACTING PLANNING AND DEV COORDINATOR

 KAPOLEI

[MESSAGE ME](#)

Summary

Over 40 years of service aimed at providing astounding service to the native Hawaiian community through the development of infrastructure for homestead projects and subdivisions for residential, agricultural, and pastoral purposes, as provided by the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended.

Overview

40

YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

40

Work History



Acting Planning and Development Coordinator

State Of Hawaii Department Of Hawaiian Home Lands

91-5420 Kapolei Parkway

01.2019 - Current

- Land Development Division is responsible for the development of onsite and offsite infrastructure to create and support residential, agricultural and pastoral lots for beneficiary homestead 99-year leases.
- Land Development Division is also responsible for the Repair, Operations, and Maintenance of water systems, sewer system components, drainage facilities, roadway infrastructure including sidewalks, curbs, street trees.
- Managed a division consisting of 18 staff positions.
- Managed development and Capital Improvement budgets ranging from \$50,000,000 to over \$600,000,000.



Masterplan Community Development Manager

State Of Hawaii Department Of Hawaiian Home Lands

Honolulu, HI

07.1991 - Current

Managed Masterplanned Community Branch consisting of 4 staff. Various staff have been detailed in and out of this branch.

Masterplanned Community Branch focused on planning, design, infrastructure construction and house construction on large developments, statewide.

Masterplanned Community Development Manager would be placed in Planning Development Coordinator (PDC) in an "Acting" capacity, during periods when PDC position was vacant.



Acting Planning and Development Coordinator

State Of Hawaii Department Of Hawaiian Home Lands

Honolulu, HI

02.1998 - 09.2018

same as prior, except that staffing numbers and budgets are variable.



Various

State Of Hawaii Department Of Hawaiian Home Lands

Honolulu, HI

06.1981 - 01.1988

Positions held:

Agriculture Resource Specialist, Planning and Development Office, now Planning Office

Agriculture Advisor, District Management Division, now Homestead Services Division

Property Manager, Income Property Division, now Land Management Division

Education



No Degree - Geography

University of Hawaii At Manoa, Honolulu, HI

Graduate Assistant in Geography

Hydrology

Soil Physics



Bachelor of Science - Horticulture

University of Hawaii At Manoa, Honolulu, HI
05.1979

 **Bachelor of Arts - Geography**

University of Hawaii At Manoa, Honolulu, HI
05.1975

 **High School Diploma -**

Kalani High School, Honolulu, HI
06.1971

Skills

- Competitive Seal bid, Competitive Sealed Proposal and Professional Services...
- Personnel management
- Project management
- Budget Planning and executio
- Public and community interac

Additional Information

Held position of Acting Chairman, Hawaiian Homes Commission on two separate occasions in 2022 and 2019.

While the periods were short, the experience provide a glimpse of the complexity and difficulty in managing the Hawaiian homes Trust.

Timeline



Acting Planning and Development Coordinator - State Of Hawaii Department Of Hawaiian Home Lands

01.2019 - Current



Acting Planning and Development Coordinator - State Of Hawaii Department Of Hawaiian Home Lands

02.1998 - 09.2018



Masterplan Community Development Manager - State Of Hawaii Department Of Hawaiian Home Lands

07.1991 - Current



Various - State Of Hawaii Department Of Hawaiian Home Lands

06.1981 - 01.1988



University of Hawaii At Manoa - No Degree, Geography



University of Hawaii At Manoa - Bachelor of Science, Horticulture



University of Hawaii At Manoa - Bachelor of Arts, Geography



Kalani High School - High School Diploma,

Stewart Matsunaga

Acting Planning and Dev Coordinator

Contact me

SEARCH BY

Skills

School

Job

Name

Company

BOLD.PRO

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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

January 17, 2024

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President, Hawai'i State Senate
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, HI 96813

The Honorable Scott Saiki
Speaker, Hawai'i State House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Senate and House,

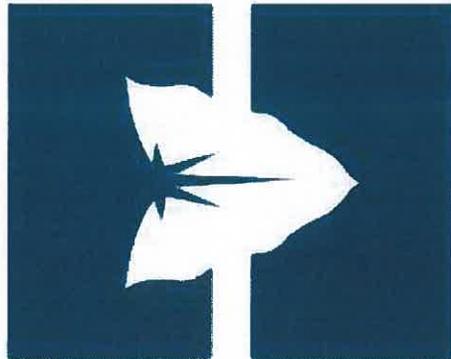
On behalf of the Hawaiian Homes Commission and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, I am transmitting the Annual Activity Report as required under Act 279, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022. In accordance with Section 93-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, I am also informing you that the report may be viewed online at <https://dhhl.hawaii.gov/act279/279activityreport2024>.

Mahalo,

Kali Watson
Chair

**Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
Annual Activity Report**

**As required by:
Act 279, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022**



HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS TRUST
Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

In 2022, the Hawai'i State Legislature appropriated \$600 million through Act 279 to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. The purpose of this funding is to reduce the Hawaiian Homes waitlist. To this end, the Department has been actively pursuing new lot development projects as well as awarding all available lots to beneficiaries on the waitlist.

Section 5 of the Act requires the Department to submit an annual report to the legislature on the first day of each regular session that includes:

1. An accounting of the expenditures for the purposes of this Act in the previous fiscal year; and
2. The number of applicants on the waiting list assisted.

Below please find a report of expenditures and encumbrances for fiscal year 2024 (ending June 30, 2023) as well as the projected number of applicants who will benefit from these development projects.

FY24 Encumbrances & Expenditures

Contracts	\$89,484,469.28
Purchase Orders	\$93,868,417.03
Expenditures	\$10,397,113.31
Total E&E	\$193,749,999.62

FY24 Accounting of Expenditures

Amount	Vendor Name
8,250,000.00	HHFDC
7,881.91	TOWNSCAPE, INC.
9,457.25	TOWNSCAPE, INC.
2,009,157.03	TITLE GUARANTY ESCROW
2,009,157.03	FIRST HAWAIIAN BANK
6,124.42	TOWNSCAPE, INC.
(2,009,157.03)	TITLE GUARANTY ESCROW
29,405.00	AUSTIN, TSUTSUMI & ASSOC.,INC.
2,531.51	TOWNSCAPE, INC.
28,728.53	AUSTIN, TSUTSUMI & ASSOC.,INC.
768.08	TOWNSCAPE, INC.
33,080.00	CITY & COUNTY OF HONOLULU
14,100.00	BOWERS + KUBOTA CONSULTING INC
5,879.58	TOWNSCAPE, INC.
10,397,113.31	

Projected Number of Applicants on Waitlist Assisted

Proj # of Applicants	Development Name
161	Pu'uhona Homestead Subdivision
50	Honokowai Subsistence Ag Lots
450	East Kapolei II Master Planned Community
82	Hanapepe Residence Lots
207	Wailuku
168	Kaumana
311	Waiehu Mauka
60	Kaupea, Phase 2
1,489	Total

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KALI WATSON
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DEPUTY TO THE CHAIR
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, CHAIR
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
HEARING ON FEBRUARY 11, 2025 AT 2:00PM IN CR 325

HB 606, HD 1, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOMELANDS

February 10, 2025

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **strongly supports** this bill which extends the Act 279 Special Fund to 6/30/2028, 2) deposits funds into the Act 279 Special Fund and appropriates funds out of the Special Fund for DHHL to eliminate its waitlist, 3) requires DHHL to submit a strategic plan detailing the anticipated uses of the funds appropriated, 4) requires an annual report, and 5) sunsets 6/30/2028.

DHHL continues to make progress regarding the encumbrance of funds, the expenditure of funds, and the delivery of lots pursuant to Act 279, SLH 2022. Attached is the Annual Activity Report as required under Act 125/24 (Act 279, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022). HB606, HD1, provides sustained legislative action to fulfill the State's trust obligations under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended, and the Hawaii State Constitution. This bill will ensure that DHHL has adequate time to encumber and expend the necessary funds and will secure additional funds that will allow DHHL to continue to address the DHHL applicant waiting list.

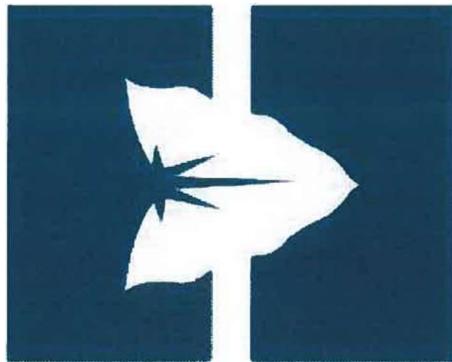
Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
Annual Activity Report

As required by:

Act 125/24

(Act 279, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022)



HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS TRUST

Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

In 2022, the Hawai'i State Legislature appropriated \$600 million through Act 279 to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. The purpose of this funding is to reduce the Hawaiian Homes waitlist. To this end, the Department has been actively pursuing new lot development projects as well as awarding all available lots to beneficiaries on the waitlist.

Section 5 of the Act requires the Department to submit an annual report to the legislature on the first day of each regular session that includes:

1. An accounting of the expenditures for the purposes of this Act in the previous fiscal year; and
2. The number of applicants on the waiting list assisted.

Below please find a report of expenditures and encumbrances for fiscal year 2024 (ending June 30, 2024) as well as the projected number of applicants who will benefit from these development projects.

FY24 Encumbrances & Expenditures

Contracts	\$318,937,382.14
Purchase Orders	\$ 7,618,283.00
Expenditures	\$ 36,905,557.31
Total E&E	\$363,461,222.45

FY24 Accounting of Expenditures

Amount	Vendor Name
10,000.00	ACM Consultants
139,131.83	Austin, Tsutsumi & Assoc., Inc.
239,447.34	Bowers & Kubota
1,479,887.34	DDC2 LLC
12,462,753.53	DDC3 LLC
181,126.05	Hawaiian Dredging Construction
385,705.73	Hawaiian Electric
8,672,549.28	Maui Kupono Builders, LLC
344,482.00	NANA MUA LLC
5,800.00	Ponsar Valuation LLC
12,967,391.50	Title Guaranty of Hawaii
17,282.71	Townscape
36,905,557.31	Total

Projected Number of Applicants on Waitlist Assisted

Proj # of Applicants	Development Name
16	Panae'wa Subsistance Ag
24	La'i 'Ōpua
25	Kahikinui
52	Pu'uhona Phase 1
68	Honomū/Maku'u
185	Total

TESTIMONY OF KA LĀHUI HAWAI'I
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2025

Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Time: 1:05 PM

Place: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference, State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

IN SUPPORT OF HB 606 HD1

Aloha Chair Chang, Chair Richards, Vice Chair Hashimoto, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Honorable Members of the Committees,

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i strongly supports HB 606 HD1, which extends the Act 279 Special Fund and ensures continued funding for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to fulfill its obligation to the indigenous peoples of Hawai'i. This bill is a critical step toward addressing Hawai'i's housing crisis and fulfilling the promises of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA) and the Hawai'i State Constitution.

The ongoing housing crisis has forced thousands of Kanaka Maoli to leave their homeland due to the high cost of living and lack of affordable housing. The DHHL has been underfunded for decades and meanwhile the Hawaiian diaspora continues to grow - cutting cultural and familial ties to 'āina for generations.

There are currently 29,000 Native Hawaiians on the DHHL waitlist. The estimated cost to eliminate the waitlist is over \$6 billion, requiring sustained legislative action. The average Native Hawaiian household has 4.1 individuals, meaning that funding housing for these 29,000 applicants would directly house over 118,900 people. Fully funding DHHL will not only provide housing but will also stimulate the economy, create jobs, and reduce dependence on public assistance.

The passage of HB 606 HD1 is essential to fulfilling the State's trust obligation and ensuring that Native Hawaiians can remain in their homeland. Ka Lāhui Hawai'i urges the legislature to support this bill and take action to address the long-standing housing crisis affecting our people and to fulfill the promise.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i

Me ka 'oia 'i' o,



Healani Sonoda-Pale

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:16:53 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madeleine Longoria Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a resident of Hawai'i Island, zip code 96725 and I'm writing to support this House Bill 606.

This bill will allocate \$600 million to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to provide long-overdue housing for 29,000+ Native Hawaiians who are still waiting for homesteads. It has taken long enough and is time to move forward with promises from decades ago.

By moving forward on this bill, we will also ease the housing shortage which is now a major crisis. There is not sufficient housing at acceptable and affordable rates for current residents. While this bill won't solve every housing issue, it is a piece to the greater solution and is a step in the direction we need to move.

Thank you,

Madeleine

Dear Honorable & Honest Members of The Hawaii State Legislature,

I write to fiercely oppose House Bill No. 606 (H.B. 606), “Relating to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands,” a bill that’s less about housing native Hawaiians and more about letting white-collar criminals at DHHL fleece the trust while treating beneficiaries like they’re too stupid to see the scam. Under Kali Watson, millions roll in, the waitlist festers, and the dead pile up—yet H.B. 606 hands these crooks more rope. Here’s why you should torch it or summon real accountability:

- **Waitlist Limbo, Death’s Dividend:** DHHL’s 29,000 waitlisters—11,441 on O’ahu (HPR, 2024)—rot while Act 279’s \$600 million served just 6,075 (21%). Over 2,000 died since 2022 (KHON2, 2025), and Watson shrugs, “A ton of people are dying every day” (Civil Beat, 2024). H.B. 606 stretches the fund to 2028 (Section 2) with no \$6 billion guarantee (Section 1). Are they banking on kūpuna dying to dodge the problem?
- **Kali Watson, Master of Misdirection:** Watson crows about 3,100 lots from 1995–1998 (Lambda Alpha, 2023), but his \$600 million settlement then synced with trust failures—\$1.2 million misspent by OHA (2019 audit). Now, Act 279’s \$600 million feeds private developer schemes—\$561 million more, he begs (HPR, 2023). Who’s cashing out—beneficiaries or his Hawaiian Community Development Board pals?
- **Act 279’s Black Hole:** Of Act 279’s \$600 million, \$193 million is “spoken for”—\$160 million to private cronies, \$94 million for land like Wai’ehu (HPR, 2023). Only 7,800 lots planned, not 29,000. H.B. 606’s vague appropriations (Sections 5 and 6) and toothless reports (Sections 3 and 4) scream cover-up. Honolulu rail’s \$330 million insider overages say it all—money vanishes when oversight’s a joke.
- **Commercial Cash, Beneficiary Crumbs:** Nānākuli Village Center and Ka Makana Ali’i pump millions into DHHL via triple net leases—tenants like Longs Drugs and Macy’s pay rent, taxes, and upkeep for pure profit. Ka Makana Ali’i’s 65-year lease nets \$200 million (DHHL, 2014); 2022 lease revenue hit \$13.5 million (DHHL Audit, 2022). Where’s it go? Not to beneficiaries—no homes, no checks—just Watson’s murky “operations.” White-collar theft, plain as day.
- **Trust Trashed, Corruption Reigns:** Only 14% of DHHL leases go to native Hawaiians (Star-Advertiser, 2019), despite federal rules. The 2019 Kalaeloa solar deal to a Canadian firm over local Edward Maria oozed favoritism. H.B. 606’s no-bid free-for-all (Section 1) and UHERO’s 20–30% inflated construction costs (2021) guarantee profiteering. They think Hawaiians won’t notice the grift?
- **Legislative Charade:** An effective date of July 1, 3000 (Section 8)? A typo or a spit in the face. Even fixed, dragging this to 2028 with no \$6 billion lock-in is a dodge.

DHHL's \$328 million Kalima settlement (2020) proves they've screwed beneficiaries for decades—why trust these suits now?

- **Economic Smoke Screen:** H.B. 606 promises jobs (Section 1), but 65,000 of 200,000 DHHL acres lack pipes or power (Ka Wai Ola, 2023). Haseko's 211 acres (Civil Beat, 2024) need \$561 million more—taxpayers pay, developers pocket, beneficiaries get squat. Same old scam.

Legislators, this is a slap to native Hawaiians—DHHL's white-collar crooks rake in Nānākuli and Ka Makana Ali'i cash while treating beneficiaries like dumb marks. H.B. 606 greenlights the heist. Summon the doge—unleash a relentless probe into Watson's books, Act 279's ghost funds, and every commercial dollar. Lock in \$6 billion, enforce ironclad oversight, and jail these frauds if they're guilty. Anything less, and you're letting them laugh all the way to the bank on Hawaiian backs.

Sincerely,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM
Kingdom of The Hawaiian islands, H.I.
Ohana Unity Party, Chairman
www.OhanaUnityParty.com

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:21:34 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
maxine kahaulelio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

as a lessee who has been on the list from 1960, strongly supports HB606. the time has come to give back to our Hawaiian people all the monies and Land that have been stolen back to the true owners of this Land called Hawaii Nei, Kanaka Maoli, Ku Ki'a Moke O Hawaii, Holomua Legislators

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:25:23 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luanna Peterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Luanna Peterson and I strongly support HB606. This bill is not just about housing—it is about justice, dignity, and the survival of the Native Hawaiian people.

The cost of living in Hawai‘i is prohibitive for the majority of its people and feels like a violation of basic human rights. I am struggling to survive, and provide for my family despite my education, and full time employment. I am a local girl and know Hawai‘i as my only home. As an ally, and non-indigenous guest here, I feel that Native Hawaiians, especially, should not have to struggle to exist in their own homeland. Yet, rising costs—driven by unchecked foreign investment, short-term rentals, and the overwhelming military presence—have made it nearly impossible for many in our lāhui to afford a stable home.

The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act was meant to ensure that Native Hawaiians have access to safe, affordable housing, yet the continued failure to fund the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands undermines this promise. Over 29,000 Native Hawaiians remain on a waitlist for homesteads while luxury developments and outside interests continue to profit from stolen land. This is not just an economic issue; it is a deep injustice that must be corrected.

A thriving Kanaka Maoli population strengthens all of Hawai‘i. When Native Hawaiians have access to stable housing, we are able to perpetuate our culture, traditions, and values—benefiting not just our own families but the entire lāhui. HB606 honors the vision of Prince Kūhiō by ensuring that Native Hawaiian families can live with dignity in their own homeland.

I urge you to pass HB606 and take meaningful action to right these historical wrongs. We cannot allow another generation of Native Hawaiians to be displaced from their ‘āina. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Luanna Peterson

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:32:15 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dianne Deauna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the members of the Senate HWN/HOU Committees:

I strongly support this bill as it guarantees funding for Native Hawaiians to finally get the homes they have waited generations for.

HB-606-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:05:02 AM

Testimony for HWN on 3/11/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rochelle Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HB606 to provide substantial & adequate Housing to Native Hawaiians thru DHHL so we may Live & flourish in our Native land, called Hawaii Nei, so we do not have to move away from our 'Aina.

MAHALO