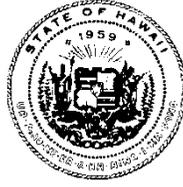


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



HAKIM OUANSAFI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO:

25:OED

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Thursday, March 27, 2025
3:30 p.m. – Room 308, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
SB 65, SD2, HD1
RELATING TO HOUSING

Honorable Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill (SB) 65, SD2, HD1, which appropriates funds to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority for the rehabilitation, remodeling, renovation, and repair of housing units. The HPHA **strongly supports** the passage of this measure and is grateful to the Legislature for its steadfast commitment to addressing Hawaii's housing needs.

The HPHA is dedicated to providing Hawaii's residents with safe, affordable housing and fostering equitable living environments free from discrimination. Through our public housing and rental assistance programs, we serve some of the state's most vulnerable populations, including families earning less than 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI), individuals with disabilities, and elderly residents.

The age of Hawaii's public housing inventory presents significant challenges. Many properties were constructed over 50 years ago and require extensive updates to remain safe and habitable, and the HPHA faces a capital needs backlog of approximately \$720 million. Additional funding is urgently needed to address this backlog and to ensure public housing units remain safe, decent and sanitary and available to those who need them most. As the HPHA relies on federal funding for approximately 90% of its operations, and as this funding is tied to unit occupancy, the rehabilitation of vacant units is critical to maximizing federal support. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) does not subsidize vacant units,



and HPHA's administrative fees to pay staff are also tied to occupancy, compounding the urgency of this work.

The Legislature's support over the past two years, combined with Governor Green's prioritization of affordable housing, has led to remarkable progress in reducing the number of vacant public housing units. In the past year alone, 214 units were rehabilitated and made available to our most disadvantaged families. This funding would build on that momentum by addressing critical rehabilitation needs such as lead abatement, electrical and plumbing upgrades, roof replacements, spall repairs, painting, unit modernization, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). While ADA compliance remains a significant expense, the average cost of renovating a unit, excluding ADA-related improvements, is approximately \$73,000.

The HPHA remains deeply appreciative of the Legislature's dedication to advancing affordable housing and addressing the needs of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents. With your continued support, the passage of SB 65, SD2, HD1 would allow us to further our mission of providing safe, decent, and affordable housing for those in need.

Thank you again for your thoughtful consideration of this measure and for your unwavering commitment to supporting public housing in Hawaii. We look forward to continuing our partnership to improve the quality of life for all residents.



MAKAKILO/KAPOLEI/HONOKAI HALE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 34

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BLVD SUITE 160 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
PHONE (808) 768-3710 • FAX (808) 768-3711 • INTERNET: <http://www.honolulu.gov>

RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING THE FUNDING FOR THE REPAIR AND ACTIVATION OF THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY UNITS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

Whereas, the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 (“Board”) is a citizens’ advisory board whose purpose is to “increase and assure effective citizen participation in the decisions of government” per the City and County of Honolulu’s Neighborhood Plan of 2008; and

Whereas, the state of Hawaii is grappling with an ongoing homelessness crisis, with a growing number of individuals, including seniors and low-income families, struggling to secure affordable housing; and

Whereas, the Board recognizes that approximately 400 of our district neighbors are unsheltered, and nearly three thousand individuals across the state face similar hardships, making it exceedingly difficult for them to access nutritious food and essential resources (Point In Time Count 2024); and

Whereas, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) provides the most affordable housing options available to the community, with tenants paying only 30% of their income for rent, making these units accessible to individuals experiencing homelessness, seniors on fixed incomes, and families with very low incomes; and

Whereas, a significant number of HPHA units remain vacant due to health and safety issues, preventing these units from being occupied by those in urgent need of housing; and

Whereas, these HPHA units represent “low-hanging fruit” that can be swiftly repaired and made available for residents in need, as they are already built and only require necessary repairs to meet health and safety standards; and

Whereas, immediate legislative funding would allow for rapid repairs, making these units available far more quickly than starting new construction or waiting for permits, thus offering an expedited solution to housing the homeless and those at risk of homelessness; and

Whereas, the swift activation of these HPHA units will help meet the housing needs of the most vulnerable residents, including homeless individuals, seniors with limited incomes, and families struggling to make ends meet; and

Whereas, by allocating funding for the repair and activation of these units, the state can maximize the use of existing infrastructure and provide safe, affordable housing options to those in need as quickly as possible; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 supports the funding for the repair and activation of Hawaii Public Authority Units to address homelessness; and be it

Resolved, that we urge the prompt release of these funds to facilitate the repair process and bring these housing units into safe, livable conditions as soon as possible to address the critical housing needs of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents; and be it

Resolved, that the board supports the intent of [SB65 \(2025\) Relating to Housing](#); and be it

Ordered, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, Honolulu Council Members, Area Legislators, and all Neighborhood Boards.

Adopted by the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board No. 34 at its February 26, 2025 Regular Board Meeting, 8-0-0 (**Aye**: Dudley, Ferreira, Khan, Lidstone, Moon, Singleton, Taala, Paris; **Nay**: None; **Abstain**: None)



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 65 SD2 HD1: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: House Committee on Finance

FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: **Thursday, 3/27/25, 3:30 PM;** Room 308 & Videoconference

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members, Committee on Finance:

Catholic Charities Hawaii **supports SB 65 SD2 HD1**, which appropriates funds to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) to rehabilitate, remodel, renovate, and repair housing units.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH), a community-based organization, has provided social services in Hawaii for over 77 years, assisting 40,000 people annually. Our services target the most vulnerable in Hawaii, including elders, veterans, children, families, houseless individuals, and immigrants. Creating affordable housing and ending homelessness are among our top priorities.

We support this funding since this will expedite opening up affordable rental units which can assist to house homeless persons and many elders who face homelessness. The HPHA offers the most affordable housing available to the community. Tenants pay only 30% of their incomes for rent. This makes these units affordable even to homeless persons, seniors struggling with limited income, and very low-income families. However, many units cannot be occupied due to health and safety issues in the units. These units must be brought into shape ASAP to house our state's residents with extremely limited incomes.

These units are “low hanging fruit” that should be immediately repaired to add them to our inventory of safe and decent housing. These units do not need to wait years for permits or construction. Legislative funding would make them available very fast compared with funding for new construction.

Catholic Charities Hawaii urges your support for \$10 million to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority. This will bring hope to so many local families and kupuna.

If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 527-4813.



Kunia Village Title Holding Corporation
PO BOX 100
Kunia, HI 96759
808-228-0272

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON FINANCE**

SB 65 SD 2 HD1 Relating to Housing

Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

My name is Stephanie Whalen, President of the Kunia Village Title Holding Corporation. I am testifying in strong support of SB65 SD2 HD1 Relating to Housing. The Kunia Village is the former Del Monte agricultural worker camp with accessory agricultural buildings. It is owned and operated by Kunia Village Title Holding Corporation, a subsidiary of Hawaii Agriculture Research Center. Its goal is to provide the infrastructure needed for agriculture such as work force housing, community support facilities and value-added opportunities for agricultural businesses.

In 2017 with partners, it was able to renovate 82 units of a total of 135 for agricultural workers; it included renovation of 47 units and new construction of 35 units at a cost of ~\$34M (\$414,600 per unit). Funding is through 2-1% loans of \$3M each from USDA, state and federal tax credits, historic tax credits, energy tax credits, developer and owner loans and a conventional bank loan.

It has been self-financing the repair and renovation of the remaining 53 units- one at a time with a line of credit. These included the oldest units dating back to the 1920s. Finding financing to rehabilitate very old homes is very difficult. This measure would provide that needed funding. Recent funding has been focused on improving the existing infrastructure: potable and wastewater which are privately provided.

The village has been able to rehabilitate about 1 unit every year as repairs to infrastructure and normal maintenance occupies much of its resources. **Currently 82% of the units are rented to low (35) or extremely low (67) income tenants.**

With the infrastructure already in place rehabilitating additional units is certainly more cost effective than new construction if the funds were available.

Agricultural workers are among the lowest paid in the state, which excludes them from conventional rental housing. The Kunia Village has been extremely beneficial to this needy group of Oahu's labor force. However, it needs reasonable access to funding for the rehabilitation of its remaining units. Then these units can be brought to standards more efficiently and economically to provide additional units for our agricultural workers.

Thank you for this opportunity **to strongly support SB65 SD2 HD1.**

TO: Senator Stanley Chang, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing

SB65 SD2 HD1 — Relating to Housing
Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 3:30 PM
Hawai'i State Capitol, House Conference Room 308

Testimony **IN SUPPORT** of **SB65 SD2 HD1**

My name is Jessa Tadeo, and I am a social work graduate student attending the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I have had experience throughout my college career working with low-income and houseless adults, children, and families. I have had my practicum with The Institute for Human Services (IHS) and have been employed with the Boys and Girls Club of Hawai'i (BGCH) for two years. Majority of the population of youth that I work with at my employment are children who live in poverty. The views I express in this testimony are my own and do not represent my school, IHS, or BGCH. I am expressing my **strong support for Senate Bill 65** relating to Housing, as it positively impacts the quality of life for families.

Many of the individuals I worked with at IHS have struggled immensely to get themselves out of the vicious cycle of houselessness. Some have been houseless for years, even decades. However, the housing units that they receive may not reflect an improvement in their quality of life (since houselessness is an umbrella term for social issues such as high cost of living, medical issues, substance use, mental health problems, etcetera).

A common factor I noticed in families/individuals living in low-income areas or on the streets is that at some point, they have accepted that “this” is all they will get. Low-income residents and houseless individuals deserve to have *homes* that are safe, not just a house, which fosters better quality of life.

For these reasons, a bill such as SB65 needs to be implemented as it fosters the notion of low-income/houseless individuals and families to want better for themselves because they deserve better—especially after getting used to receiving the “scraps” and facing dehumanization and/or stigma for their status. This is why **I support SB65**.

Thank you for your time,
Jessa Tadeo
Social Work Student