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- See others' testimony and get the status of bills and resolutions
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Contact Us!

Senator Roz Baker

Chair, Commerce and Consumer Protection

6th District:

South and West Maui

Phone: (808) 586-6070

Toll Free: 984-2400 ext. 66070

senbaker@capitol.hawaii.gov

Aloha and e komo mai!

It's an honor and privilege to represent you and our South and West Maui communities in the Hawai'i State Senate! The 2013 legislative session is almost at the half-way point. We've heard lots of bills and are scheduling more before our March 1, 2013 decking deadline. Mahalo to all of you who have taken time out of your busy schedules to be involved in the legislative process and our community. I appreciate hearing your thoughts, ideas and concerns about our community and the issues before us. You can always find up-to-date information on specific bills by using the Legislature's website at www.capitol.hawaii.gov.

Here's a mini update on legislative happening so far. I have introduced bills on a wide range of topics that directly affects our Maui Ohana from beach nourishment for Kā'anapali Beach to mandatory mediation for homeowners stuck in a judicial foreclosure. This bill will ensure homeowners are provided all the options to which they are entitled as well as unclogging the judicial calendars. I've also introduced bills to require compassionate care for sexual assault victims in all of Hawaii's emergency rooms and establish a Special Emergency Medical Response Vehicle Unit (SRV) stationed in Ma'alaea to enhance EMS services in South and West Maui. In addition, I've introduced a bill to increase the tax on other tobacco products equal to the tax on cigarettes so that youth won't be tempted to try a "cheaper" product. The increase will be deposited to the Hawai'i Cancer Research special fund for their cessation research and initiatives.

I value your thoughts as we strive to make Hawai'i a better place. If we can be of assistance, please contact us. My knowledgeable staff is always happy to help.



Staff from left to right: Alika Ke-Paloma, Chris Delaunay, Sen. Roz Baker, Calla McCarthy, Kelli-Rose Hooser, Katie Southwick, and Janice Salcedo.

Again, mahalo for giving me the privilege of representing you at the State Capital.

A hui hou,

Enhancing Health Resources on Maui

One of my main goals this session is to make sure that the people of Maui have the quality health care services they deserve.

SB498 SD1, which I introduced this session, authorizes the establishment of a Special Emergency Medical Response Vehicle Unit for the Maui EMS system to be based in Ma`alaea. Modeled after successful units on Oahu and mainland, this special response vehicle (SRV), is an SUV equipped with all the appropriate life-saving, emergency response equipment and staffed by an advanced life support (ALS) trained paramedic. The SRV's ability to respond quickly when resident ambulances are out of the district or when called to remote areas is vital to stabilizing patients in the initial stage of injury, illness, or cardiac arrest ultimately helping to save many lives. We talk a lot about the use of extenders in healthcare. That's what the SRV will be to the emergency medical system in south and west Maui.

I am happy to report that SB 498 SD1 has passed both the Health and Ways and Means committees in the Senate. After it passes third reading in the Senate (probably on March 5), SB498, SD2 will crossover to the House to be heard and acted upon there.

Another bill, **SB 1306 SD1**, aims to assist the acute care hospitals of Hawai`i Health Systems Corporation including Maui Memorial Medical Center to remain financially viable in today's challenging healthcare climate. This bill is enabling legislation. It will facilitate serious discussions and thorough due diligence between HHSC (West Hawai`i, Hilo and Maui regions) and the non-profit Banner Health Systems delineating what Banner brings to the table and how it will impact healthcare services in the affected regions. If discussions are successfully concluded, Banner Health Systems could lease the hospital facilities and manage the delivery of care there. This bill will facilitate HHSC's acute care hospitals and feeder critical access hospitals on Maui and Big Island to create a public-private partnership to provide Hawai'i's neighbor island hospital facilities with financial support, both operating and capital for facility improvements, in order to ensure sustainable access to high quality medical services for Maui and Hawai`i island residents. The bill passed the Senate Health Committee and is before Ways and Means. It is a work in progress as there remain unanswered questions and concerns from our current hospital employees and others. For our neighbor island hospitals to become private entities is a major decision and all stakeholders must be involved in the discussion. Our current funding from the State budget for hospital services on the neighbor islands is inadequate and unsustainable. The status quo will not take us where we need to go to provide additional services, upgrade our facilities and provide healthcare services in the most effective and efficient, medically appropriate manner. I invite all to engage in the discussion.

My bills to increase access to breast and cervical cancer and colon cancer detection and treatment are also moving through the Legislature. Also, tobacco control measures round out a healthy Hawai`i package.

Opening Day 2013



From left to right: Marvin Moniz, Andrew Kutsunai, Roz, Robert Kawaguchi and JoAnn Inamasu



From left to right: Governor, Sen. Keith-Agaran, Sen. Baker, Sen. English and Lieutenant Governor Tsutsui

Preserving what Maui has to Offer

Some of Maui's most breathtaking views and recreational sanctuaries are its coastlines and beaches. These areas are worth protecting and preserving for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors alike. With that in mind, Rep. McKelvey and I have introduced bills that will assist in bringing the sand back to Kā`anapali Beach and allowing the State to acquire a parcel of land located at Lipoa Point. The Senate bills are **SB497, SD1** and **SB 1372, SD1** respectively.

Maui has the highest rate of beach erosion in the State of Hawai`i. In particular, Kā`anapali Beach has experienced chronic erosion that has degraded parts of the beach and has damaged shoreline infrastructures and amenities. I believe that Kā`anapali Beach is worth rehabilitating, because it is a vital environmental, recreational, economic and cultural resource for our island. Moreover, Kā`anapali Beach contributes over \$2 million to the State and Maui County economies. **SB497, SD1** appropriates funds for an environmental impact statement associated with a planned beach nourishment project at Kā`anapali Beach on the island of Maui. I am happy to report that on February 15, 2013, SB497, SD1 sent to the Senate Ways and Means Committee, which scheduled a hearing on February, 22, 2013. State funds will be matched dollar for dollar by private funds from the members of the Kā'anapali Operations Association Inc.

SB1372, SD1 allows the State to acquire a parcel of land located at Lipoa Point. Lipoa Point is nationally recognized as a marine preserve that is known for its rich resources, historical and archaeological sites. It is one of the most popular recreational areas for residents and visitors of the island of Maui. On February 12, 2013, the Senate Water Land Committee voted to pass the bill on to the next committee, Ways and Means.

SB1371, SD1 requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to accommodate the mooring of native Hawaiian canoes owned by nonprofit entities and used for educational purposes in small boat harbors. This bill will help to educate the community on Hawaiian culture and help to preserve the history of voyaging canoes. It is our duty to help preserve as much of the Hawaiian culture as we can so future generations can learn and experience it. SB 1371, SD1 will restore a sense of place to Lahaina Small Boat Harbor.

Bills to Repeal PLDC Advance

Both House and Senate are working in concert to repeal the Public Land Development Corporation (PLDC), Chapter 171C, HRS (also known as Act 55, SLH2011). The community has overwhelmingly expressed significant dissatisfaction regarding the establishment of the PLDC. Of specific concern were the exemptions granted to the corporation effectively bypassing county plans as well as subdivision and zoning codes. Although the PLDC's intended purpose of spurring economic development and improving recreational opportunities by using public lands was commendable, I share the concerns of my constituents that the PLDC had been granted excessive powers without sufficient safeguards. I co-introduced 3 of the 10 Senate bills to repeal the PLDC and restore transferred staff and funds to their original positions in DLNR.

On February 19, 2013 the Senate unanimously passed **SB 707, SD1** to repeal the PLDC. A similar bill, **HB 1133**, to repeal the PLDC passed on February 14, 2013 and awaits action in the Senate.

Steps Closer to South Maui (Kīhei) High School

There *is* progress toward construction of a high school in South Maui! Late last year, Governor Abercrombie accepted the Final EIS for the Kīhei High School. The Land Use Commission has scheduled a tentative hearing, mid-June, on the DOE's application to have land reclassified from agriculture to urban, obtaining the required district boundary amendment. And Governor Abercrombie heard our pleas for funding and included in his executive biennium budget \$130M for construction of Kīhei High School. The funds are in the second year of the biennium, beginning 7/1/2014, to ensure all preliminary land use and permits are completed so the project can break ground.

The funds requested are for a design-build project. This is the most cost effective way to complete the high school. Estimates are for savings of at least \$22M over a traditionally funded project. The House considers the executive budget (HB200) first and so our lobbying effort is focused there. Mahalo to Rep. Ing, who sits on House Finance Committee, and the Kīhei High Action Team (KHAT), for helping educate our House colleagues on the need for these funds. Andrew Beerer's graphics to convey the story is excellent. A copy is attached. In addition, I submitted a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) request to the Senate Ways and Means Committee to reinforce the Governor's budget request for a high school in Kīhei. I'm working to educate Senate Ways and Means members on the importance of this lump sum allocation for the high school project. There are still a lot of fiscal unknowns for the budget. We need to keep our lobbying effort going as the effort shifts from the House to the Senate and on to the budget conference.

The Kīhei -Makena region in South Maui has experienced a significant amount of growth in population over the past decade and projections suggest an increase of 28% from the 2010 population by 2025. This growth in population has already overwhelmed our high schools due to an increase in student body. Consequently, our community will be challenged with building a high school in Kīhei to alleviate the overcrowding at Maui High School and Baldwin High School and absorb an anticipated influx of new students into the area.

I am hopeful that Ways and Means and Finance Committees will support the request for funds to construct Kīhei High School and will include the monies in the final version of the budget, HB 200. Thank you to the Kīhei High Action Team and others in the community who have worked hard in support of this project. Kīhei High School is well within our reach if we continue to work together and encourage Legislators to act this session. IMUA!

GUBERNATORIAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE KĪHEI HIGH SCHOOL FINAL EIS

On behalf of the Governor, the Office of Environmental Quality Control analyzed the Kīhei High School final environmental impact statement, pursuant to Section 11-200-23, Hawai'i Administrative Rules. The Governor determined that the Final EIS was acceptable pursuant to Section 343-5(b), Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

The proposed Kīhei High School project site encompasses 77.2 acres of undeveloped land on the mauka side of Pi'ilani Highway across from the Pi'ilani Village residential subdivision in the Kīhei-Mākena region; it will serve grades 9-12 in the South Maui Region. Site improvements would include construction of approximately 215,000 SF of buildings to support an enrollment capacity of 1,650 students and approximately 206 supporting faculty and staff. The campus also will include athletic fields (e.g., tennis, track and field, football, soccer, baseball and softball fields, and swimming pool) and associated infrastructure improvements (e.g., new roadways, utilities, drainage, wastewater and water systems). An extension of Kūlanihāko'i Street mauka of Pi'ilani Highway will serve as the main campus access road. It is a goal of the proposed development that the school will not only serve the enrolled youth, but be a center for the Kīhei community. Kīhei High School will provide opportunities for employment (both short and long-term) within the Kīhei-Mākena area.

Mandatory Foreclosure Mediation

In our continued efforts to help keep Hawai'i residents in their homes, I am pleased to share SB1370. This will expand the availability of mandatory mortgage foreclosure dispute resolution to homeowners in judicial foreclosure. Current law only provides dispute resolution (aka mediation) in non-judicial or power of sale foreclosures. Recent studies conducted by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), have shown that nearly 70% of homeowners who received counseling from a HUD-certified counselor obtained a mortgage remedy and 56% were able to become current on their mortgages.

The passing of this measure would require a lender, at the discretion of the homeowner, to participate in mediation. This can help Hawai'i homeowners avoid foreclosure or lessen damages in the foreclosure process prior to a ruling against the homeowner in circuit court. The property must have been the person's primary residence for at least 200 days immediately preceding the date that the notice is served. The bill has been crafted to also give an opportunity to those cases pending an initial court hearing. Access to a HUD-certified counselor is part of the dispute resolution process.

The passage of this measure will continue our fight to lower the number of foreclosures throughout Hawai'i and lessen homeowners' risk of losing their homes.

The Hawai'i Foreclosure Information Center

Help for distressed homeowners is just a mouse click away! Thanks to the new one stop Hawai'i Foreclosure Information Center (HFIC) and public awareness campaign launched by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Aimed at supporting homeowners who are struggling with their mortgages, HFIC provides links to resources and valuable information regarding options for home loans in default and how to avoid possible scams. HFIC will even help you find a certified housing counselor to work with! There's up-to-date usable information at your finger tips.

For homeowners who are behind on their mortgages and are fearful of accepting phone calls or opening mail from their mortgage companies, this informative, easy to use resource is for you. Part of a nationwide settlement earlier this year, Hawai'i homeowners whose loans are serviced by Ally Financial Inc./GMAC Mortgage, Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo or Citibank have the opportunity to secure loan modifications, rate reduction or some compensation for previously foreclosed houses. The FAQ's and links to the most current information are on the website, <http://hawaii.gov/dcca/hfic>.

The Hawai'i Foreclosure Information Center website also contains the link to file complaint if you think you have been target of a scam. Remember scammers prey on those who are looking for help or are in a tough situation. If someone asks for money up front to "help" you with a refinance or a loan modification, it's probably a scam. They'll take your money but won't deliver. Scams aren't always easy to spot—it helps if you know the warning signs and what to look for.

The Hawai'i Foreclosure Information Center has helpful information to help spot a scam.

Check out <http://hawaii.gov/dcca/hfic> or call 1-800-394-1902 for more information.

