



**HAWAII COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

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JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

CHASON ISHII
CHAIRPERSON

CRAIG K. NAKAMOTO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Statement of
CRAIG K. NAKAMOTO
Executive Director
Hawaii Community Development Authority
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Friday, March 7, 2025
1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
GM 688
**Consideration and Confirmation to the Hawai'i Community
Development Authority (Pulehunui District), Gubernatorial Nominee,
DEBRA CABEBE, for a term to expire 06-30-2028.**

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee. The Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) supports GM 688, that considers the confirmation of Debra Cabebe as the Pulehunui resident community representative on the HCDA Board.

Ms. Cabebe is currently serving as an interim board member and participates in the board's discussions, engages, and supports HCDA in fulfilling the responsibilities of the HCDA.

We look forward to working with Ms. Cabebe as we continue to plan the development of the Pulehunui Community Development District, including getting her feedback on the community outreach plan for HCDA's work in the district. In her role as the Chief Executive Officer of Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. she also brings to the HCDA board the economic development perspective.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for Ms. Cabebe's nomination.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Testimony of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Friday, March 7, 2025
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
GM 688
**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the
Hawai'i Community Development Authority (Pulehunui), Gubernatorial Nominee,
DEBRA CABEBE, for a term to expire 06-30-2028.**

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante and members of the Committee.

I support the confirmation of Ms. Debra Cabebe to the Pulehunui Board of the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA).

Debbie has been honored by Pacific Business News as one of the Most Admired Leaders in Hawai'i as well as Maui Nonprofit Executive Director of the Year. She directs one of Maui's largest nonprofit organizations and is a past chair of the Maui County Council on Aging and past president of the Maui Nonprofit Directors Association and has also served with the Hawai'i Community Action Partnership Directors Association, as well as numerous other organizations and programs.

With her extensive background and leadership experience in strategic planning, program development and risk management, I am confident that Ms. Cabebe has the skills and qualifications to serve on the Pulehunui Board for the Hawai'i Community Development Authority.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer my support.



Friends

of the Children's
Justice Center of Maui

2103 Wells Street, Suite 101, Wailuku, HI 96793

Phone: (808) 986-8634

Email: paul@mauicjc.org ~ Website: www.mauicjc.org

February 26, 2025

Senate Confirmation Hearing Before the Senate, Water, and Land Committee

Dear Confirmation Committee Chair Inouye,

I am writing to express my support of Ms. Debbie Cabebe for confirmation to the Hawai'i Community Development Authority Pulehunui Board. I have worked with Ms. Cabebe in her capacity as Maui Economic Opportunity's (MEO) Chief Executive Officer for about nearly a decade. In that time I have had the pleasure of working closely with her in my capacity as the Executive Director of The Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui (FCJC). Debbie is currently a member of the FCJC board of directors.

The mission of the FCJC is to: 1) Provide support for the healing of abused and neglected children, 2) Promote prevention of child abuse and neglect, and 3) Provide assistance to the Children's Justice Center of Maui. Given that the mission of MEO is to strengthen the community while helping people in need restore their hope, empowering them to reach their potential and enrich their lives, it is abundantly clear to me that both Ms. Cabebe's personal endeavors and MEO's goals are strongly aligned with that of FCJC. This has made it a pleasure to serve together on the board of Maui Non-Profit Director's Association (MNPD).

During our time on the MNPD, Ms. Cabebe served as both Vice President and, later, President, pointing to her growing leadership skills and ability to take initiative. MNPD accomplished a number of things, including: advocating for all non-profit organizations on Maui, training non-profit org staff on advocacy work, disseminating informational resources, and grant writing. The breadth of work involved has primed Ms. Cabebe to step into a new role on the Hawai'i Community Development Authority Pulehunui Board.

One of her major roles on the Board was in leading overall strategic planning and reevaluating the mission statement into one that the Association felt fully captured their objectives. Both strategic planning and reevaluation are highly valuable skills that would contribute positively to the Authority's goal of reviewing and making recommendations for Pulehunui community development projects on Maui.

I strongly recommend Ms. Cabebe for this role and urge the committee to consider her confirmation. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have further questions.

Sincerely, *Paul Tonnessen*

Paul Tonnessen
Executive Director, Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui
paul@mauicjc.org, (808)463-4636

March 7, 2025

Senate Committee on Water and Land
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senatore Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair



Working together for Kapolei

Friday, March 7, 2025, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room #415 and via video conference

RE: GM Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Community Development Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee, MIKI'ALA LIDSTONE, for a term to expire 06-30-2027.

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante and members of the Committee,

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director and CEO of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce. The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce advocates for businesses and economic growth in the West O'ahu region, including Waipahu, Kapolei, 'Ewa Beach, Honokai Hale, Ko Olina, Nānakūli, Wai'anae, and Mākaha. The Chamber works on behalf of its members and the business community to improve the regional and state economic climate and help West O'ahu businesses thrive. We are a member-driven, member-supported organization representing the interests of all types of businesses: small, medium, or large, for-profit, or non-profit businesses, or sole proprietorships.

On behalf of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for Miki'ala M. Lidstone's for the position of Cultural Specialist at the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA). Miki'ala is an esteemed member of the Kapolei Chamber and serves as the Executive Director of Ulu A'e Learning Center. She possesses a profound understanding of Native Hawaiian traditions, language, and cultural protocols, which she has actively preserved and perpetuated throughout her career. Her leadership in the Native Hawaiian community is evident through her many roles, including as kumu hula of Hālau 'o Kaululaua'e, Co-Vice Chair of the Kapolei, Makakilo, Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board #34, and a dedicated advocate for Pu'uokapolei in Kapolei Regional Park.

Each year, Miki'ala spearheads two significant community cultural events—Makahiki ma Kapolei and the Kapu'uola Hula Festival—providing opportunities for both residents and visitors to engage in authentic Hawaiian cultural experiences. In addition, she conducts cultural workshops, advises on land stewardship, and collaborates closely with the community to ensure that development efforts remain rooted in Native Hawaiian values and customs.

With her deep cultural expertise, extensive leadership experience, and unwavering commitment to the Native Hawaiian community, Miki'ala is an outstanding candidate for this role. Her ability to integrate cultural integrity with forward-thinking development will be a valuable asset to HCDA. I strongly support her appointment and am confident in her ability to make meaningful contributions to the agency's mission.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Kiran Polk
Executive Director & CEO

GM-688

Submitted on: 3/2/2025 12:23:40 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Grant Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Sir: I have had the pleasure of working with and knowing Ms. Debra Cabebe for many years in her capacity as CEO of Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO) on Maui. I am the recently retired executive director of Hale Manaolu, a non-profit affordable housing developer and provider on Maui, and our organization worked closely with Ms. Cabebe and her team at MEO on the planning and entitlements for a new affordable housing community in Wailuku Maui called Hale Mahaolu Ke Kahua. Ms. Cabebe is hugely committed to the betterment of our community. She is a kind and unselfish leader who always keeps her team focused on the mission and she has spent her entire career making life better for those least able to fend for themselves. I have no hesitation in providing you with my highest recommendation for Ms. Cabebe's continued involvement with the Hawaii Community Development Authority as a member of its board of directors.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Grant Chun



February 26, 2025

Senate Confirmation Hearing Before the Senate, Water, and Land Committee

Dear Confirmation Committee Chair Inouye,

I am writing to express my support of Ms. Debbie Cabebe for confirmation into the Hawai'i Community Development Authority Pulehunui Board. I have worked with Ms. Cabebe in her capacity as Maui Economic Opportunity's (MEO) Chief Executive Officer for at least eight years. In that time I have had the pleasure of working closely with her as MEO's insurance broker on behalf of Atlas Insurance, Inc.

Given that the Authority reviews and makes recommendations for potential projects on Maui, organization and attention to detail would be highly valuable assets. Ms. Cabebe has, through her many years of experience, developed a strong skill set that matches this need. For example, she comes with over 25 years of experience at MEO having served as Human Resource Manager, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Executive Officer. In all of these roles, she has managed over 200 employees, 35 state, county, and federal programs, necessitating coordination and strong leadership. Each program facilitated by MEO requires evaluation of services for continued improvement. Ms. Cabebe meticulously reviews reports and makes recommendations on changes to current operations or plans for future implementation. Given the nature of MEO's work for the community, Debbie has a keen understanding of federal, state and county funding and regulatory requirements. The ability to understand and navigate these systems, would greatly benefit the Pulehunui Board.

When working with Ms. Cabebe in my capacity as insurance broker, I provide data on their numerous insurance policy renewals, and she is comprehensive in her review and decision making. This further supports her diligence and accuracy. A particularly outstanding quality that I can attest to personally is her consistent focus on negotiating the most efficient policy for her constituents— an admirable quality.

I strongly recommend Ms. Cabebe for this role and urge the committee to consider her confirmation. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Davis

Carolyn Davis
Executive Vice President, Atlas Insurance, Inc.
cdavis@atlasinsurance.com, (808) 533-8627

GM-688

Submitted on: 3/4/2025 2:19:37 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gil Keith-Agaran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Inouye, Vice-Chair Elefante, and members of the committee.

I wholeheartedly support the nomination of Debbie Cabebe to the Hawaii Community Development Authority (Pulehunui District) board. Debbie has been the Chief Executive Officer of Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.(MEO) since April 2017, and was recently honored as one of 27 Most Admired Leaders in Hawai'i by Pacific Business News. I have known Debbie, her family and her spouse's family for many years-- the Cabebe clan have been active contributors to the cultural fabric of the Filipino community on Maui and MEO and its programs have long been foundational for the local safety net for our kupuna, our children and working families. Debbie would bring to the district board her knowledge, experience and familiarity with our island, its people and leaders, and the stakeholders who will benefit from the proposed land uses in the Pulehunui area. Debbie is a fine choice and I applaud her willingness to serve.

Mahalo,

Gil Keith-Agaran

GM-688

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 7:35:05 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Yamasaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairwoman Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Senate Water and Land Committee:

I am in strong support of the nomination of Debra Cabebe to the Hawaii Community Development Board and the Pulehunui Board of Directors. I have known Debra for many years here on the island of Maui and have found her to be an honest, intelligent, hardworking, and empathetic leader.

Debra currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Maui Economic Opportunity,(MEO) a large health and human services not for profit organization on Maui. During and after the Maui Wildfires, Debra exemplified superior leadership in guiding MEO to be one of the lead agencies in helping get critical resources to the West Maui and UpCountry residents. Maui is very honored to have a leader like Debra and she will bring a wealth of experiences in community outreach and Board strategic thinking.

Thank you for your time