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Statement of
DEAN MINAKAMI
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

April 04, 2025 at 10:46 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 211

In consideration of
H.B. 833 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** HB 833 HD1 SD1, which authorizes the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) to establish a five-year Community Land Trust Equity Pilot Program to provide community land trusts with a line of credit to fund the acquisition, rehabilitation, renovation, or construction of housing for certain households and report to the Legislature regarding the pilot program. It also appropriates funds from the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund (DURF) for the establishment of the pilot program, which sunsets on 6/30/2030.

HHFDC concurs that community land trusts (CLTs) may be beneficial in helping to preserve affordable for-sale housing over the long term. We would gladly work with CLTs to establish financing programs that support our shared mission of providing affordable housing to Hawaii residents.

We note that prioritizing applications that require "the least amount of state funding per unit, per year" is problematic because DURF does not provide ongoing subsidies. In addition, prioritizing applications that require the least amount of state funding per unit will give preference to smaller and higher AMI units at the expense of lower AMI and larger households. We suggest that the language be **amended** to prioritize applications that most efficiently use funds, as this will allow HHFDC to consider the duration of the loan, size of units, and amount of funding requested per unit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

HB-833-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2025 5:08:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2025 10:46:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Trotto	Testifying for Na Hale O Maui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki and members of the Ways and Means Committee. My name is Michael Trotto a resident of Kihei Maui. I'm presently the Vice President of Na Hale O Maui, a Community Land Trust that is providing affordable homes in perpetuity to Maui's residents. My testimony today is in favor of the passage of HB833. This measure will go a long way to assist Community Land Trusts to achieve their goals in providing the much needed affordable homes here in Maui County. Thank you for your kind attention to this matter and I respectfully request that you pass this legislative bill. Mahalo.

Michael Trotto

HB-833-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2025 3:17:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2025 10:46:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Croly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure to aid Community Land Trusts to further their mission to provide affordable housing in perpetuity. These efforts often don't fit conventional financing and having alternative means of financing the purchase and rehabilitation of properties can be most helpful.

HB-833-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2025 7:02:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2025 10:46:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Mather	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Moriwaki

My name is Jen Mather, and I am testifying in strong SUPPORT of HB833 as a community land trust homeowner and a board member of Nā Hale o Maui Community Land Trust. Today, however, I submit this testimony as an individual, speaking on behalf of myself and my ‘ohana.

My children and I are kānaka ‘ōiwi, and our ‘āina kūpuna is Lāhainā. Nearly four years ago, rising costs, speculative market forces, and the lack of truly affordable homes forced us to leave our ancestral home. After years of bouncing from place to place, we finally found that elusive sweet spot—earning just enough to qualify for a mortgage, but not too much to disqualify us under the county’s AMI guidelines. In 2024, after nearly nine years on the qualified buyer's list, we were selected for one of two homes sold by Nā Hale o Maui. Since July 2024, we have proudly called Wailuku our home.

For families like mine, community land trusts (CLTs) are not just about homeownership—they are about stability, security, and staying rooted in the place we are cosmogonically connected to. CLTs provide a proven, long-term solution by keeping housing affordable in perpetuity and ensuring that local families are not priced out of their own communities.

Nā Hale o Maui, Maui’s first and only county-wide CLT, has been a lifeline for many families over the past two decades. By removing homes from the speculative market and preserving their affordability for future generations, Nā Hale o Maui has helped local families stay on Maui despite the crushing cost of housing.

The devastating August 2023 fires in Lāhainā made painfully clear how vital community-driven housing solutions are. Many homeowners in Nā Hale o Maui’s CLT program lost everything. While insurance may help some rebuild, others are stuck in limbo—uncertain if they’ll ever be able to return. Without immediate action, many families—who once had the security of homeownership—may be forced to leave Maui entirely.

In response to this crisis, the Lahaina Community Land Trust (LCLT) was recently established to ensure Lāhainā’s lands remain in local hands and are developed for the benefit of Lāhainā’s people, not outside investors or corporate interests. This is a critical step to prevent predatory land grabs and give displaced families a direct role in rebuilding their community in a way that

honors Lāhainā's rich history and cultural heritage. But as a newly formed organization, LCLT faces significant funding and resource challenges.

HB833 is a necessary step in strengthening the CLT model in Hawai'i. By creating the Community Land Trust Equity Pilot Program, this bill would provide CLTs like Nā Hale o Maui and Lahaina Community Land Trust access to a low-cost line of credit, allowing them to acquire, rehabilitate, and develop more affordable homes. This funding would help keep local families in their communities and prevent further displacement at a time when many are at risk of losing everything—not just their homes, but their connection to the place that raised them.

Now more than ever, we need to invest in solutions that prioritize people over profit. HB833 provides a pathway for Hawai'i to protect its families from the instability and predatory forces of the real estate market, ensuring that housing remains affordable for generations to come.

I urge you to pass this measure and take a stand for the future of homeownership in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Me ka ha'aha'a pau 'ole,
Jen Mather

HB-833-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2025 9:13:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2025 10:46:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz and members of the committee,

I am writing in strong **support of HB833.**

Thank you for hearing this bill today! This bill has received a lot of support progressing through both the House and Senate. If passed into law this bill would significantly help community land trusts like Na Hale O Maui's put hard working local families into truly affordable housing.

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

Governor Green suspended many state statutes in his emergency proclamation to produce so called affordable housing. I am not seeing a lot of truly affordable housing being produced. With the high cost of the land and materials, I have not seen a better way of producing truly affordable housing than through community land trusts. We need courageous as well as creative leadership, now more than ever. With the Republican's pushing for another great depression we will have the opportunity to turn a tsunami of foreclosures into permanent affordable housing in perpetuity. This is one step in the right direction.

Kind Regards, Justin Hughey