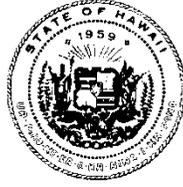


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Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Tuesday, February 4, 2025
1:00 p.m. – Room 225, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
SB 1413
RELATING TO THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY

Honorable Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto and members of the Senate Committee on Housing, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support** of Senate Bill (SB) 1413, which seeks to streamline the handling of abandoned or seized property at federal public housing projects, ensuring the efficient use of limited resources while maintaining safe and habitable housing for our residents.

The HPHA is committed to providing safe, affordable housing and fostering equitable living environments free from discrimination. Through our public housing and rental assistance programs, we serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community, including families earning less than 30% of the area median income, individuals with disabilities, and the elderly.

SB 1413 would create a new section in Chapter 356D, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to establish clear procedures for the management of abandoned or seized property in federal public housing projects. This measure:

1. Allows HPHA to sell, donate, or dispose of abandoned or seized property, ensuring that units can be quickly returned to productive use for families in need.

2. Requires HPHA to notify the known owner of any abandoned or seized property, ensuring fair and transparent handling.
3. Establishes clear procedures for individuals entitled to claim such property, providing a consistent and efficient process.

This language is substantially based on existing law under Section 356D-56.1, HRS, which governs abandoned or seized property in State-Family public housing projects. Applying similar provisions to federal public housing projects will create uniformity in HPHA's policies while improving operational efficiency.

HPHA's public housing projects do not have on-site storage facilities, making it extremely challenging to retain abandoned or seized property for extended periods. SB 1413 addresses these challenges by:

- Reducing the storage period to five calendar days prior to disposition, ensuring that units can be prepared more quickly for new tenants.
- Eliminating the requirement for a public auction when the estimated value of the abandoned property is less than \$500, preventing unnecessary administrative burdens and costs.

With over 45,000 tenants across the state and thousands of families still waiting for housing, HPHA is dedicated to maximizing efficiency in our public housing operations while upholding fairness and transparency. SB 1413 is a common-sense measure that aligns with best practices, ensures consistency between state and federal public housing policies, and allows HPHA to better serve Hawaii's low-income families. We strongly support this measure and respectfully urge its passage.

Mahalo for your time and consideration of this important legislation, and for your continued commitment to increasing affordable housing opportunities for the people of Hawaii.