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IN REPLY REFER TO:

Statement of
DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

March 15, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 225

In consideration of
H.B. 1748 HD1
**RELATING TO THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS FOR
AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**

The HHFDC ***strongly supports*** H.B. 1748 HD1, which authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds for low-income rental housing projects or units, with the bond proceeds to be deposited into the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF).

RHRF provides loans to fill financing gaps to enable the development, preservation, or rehabilitation of affordable rental housing projects.

A continuous stream of RHRF is needed to support the ongoing development of affordable rental projects in the production pipeline.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1748 HD1: AUTHORIZING THE ISSURANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

TO: Senate Committee on Housing
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Tuesday, March 15, 2022; 1:00 pm; via videoconference**

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Kanuha, and Members, Committee on Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support** of HB 1748 HD1, authorizing GO bonds with the revenue going to the rental housing revolving fund. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are also a member of Partners in Care (PIC).

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 70 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has a long history of working in the areas of affordable housing and homelessness.

CCH strongly supports GO bond funding to the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF).

Hawaii's developers are ready to build affordable rentals for our struggling families and elders. Last year, the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) awarded \$83 million for projects totaling 512 units. However, many other proposed projects could not be funded: \$269 million was requested to build another 2,200 units! An additional allocation of funds to the RHRF will continue to create affordable rentals giving hope to stressed families. We urge that the immediate and ongoing needs of our residents for affordable rentals should be a priority in allocating CIP funding.

The legislature is concerned about the ALICE population. Some may face homelessness as rents and the cost of living increase. Creating affordable rentals is one major factor of the cost of living over which the Legislature has some control. We also are greatly concerned about our kupuna who are at great risk due to limited incomes. Seniors like a 63 year old woman who came to our Housing Assistance Program since she was renting a room from her niece but wanted her own place. We counseled her and helped her to apply for rentals. However, with the long wait lists for an affordable unit, she eventually became homeless due to overcrowding and safety issues. She was living in her car when she called us with awesome news. She had gotten a unit at a senior housing project in Pearl City, funded by the RHRF! She was even willing to give up her car in order to pay the rent and remain independent with her limited income.

Hawai'i's people, communities, and especially our most vulnerable, depend on all of us to continue to pay attention to affordable housing especially as our economy improves. We urge your support for a significant allocation for the construction of affordable rentals.

Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at alohabettylou@hotmail.com or (808) 373-0356 if you have any questions.



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PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Continuum of Care

Our mission is to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation and the coordination of integrated responses.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1748 HD1: AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

TO: Senate Committee on Housing
FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)
Hearing: **Tuesday, March 15, 2022; 1:00 pm; via videoconference**

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Kanuha, and Members, Committee on Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support** of HB 1748, HD1, authorizing the issuance of GO bonds for the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF). Partners In Care (PIC), is the Oahu Continuum of Care and coalition of more than 60 non-profit homelessness providers and concerned organizations working together to end homelessness.. We urge your continued prioritization of GO bond funding for affordable rental production to prevent homelessness and give hope to the people of Hawai'i.

We cannot afford to stop investing in affordable housing development. 60% of Hawaii's families pay more than one-third of their income on rent. Hit hard by the pandemic, many remain in financial jeopardy. Growing homelessness is a real concern. Building affordable rentals builds resiliency for the future, as well as bringing hope to Hawaii's families. The Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF) is the major pathway for the State to promote the development of affordable rental units. RHRF has build thousands of units, yet 20,000 rentals are still needed by 2025 for Hawaii's lower income families (making approximately \$61,000/year or less).

Partners In Care urges your support for a strong allocation to the RHRF to increase its capacity to fund thousands of units of additional housing, with additional funds.

Partners In Care is also very concerned about increasing homelessness for elders. Vulnerable elders on walkers sometimes come into emergency shelters. Besides continuing to be the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic, elders face significant health trauma from homelessness. **Studies predict almost a 300% increase in elderly homelessness over the next 10 years.** Even worse, these projections were prior to the pandemic which has hit older workers hard.

Housing is healthcare—and can prevent much more expensive institutionalization for Hawai'i seniors. Partners In Care urges your strong support for GO bond funding for affordable rentals. Besides the important economic impact, this funding will provide hope to our struggling families, elders and disabled persons.

Mahalo

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1748, HD 1

TO: Chair Chang, Vice-Chair Kanuha, & Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz
Grants & Advancement Manager

DATE: March 15, 2022 (1:00 PM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports** HB 1748, HD 1, which authorizes, and appropriates funds for, the issuance of general obligation bonds into and out of the rental housing revolving fund (RHRF) for low-income rental housing projects.

HHRC underscores the finding language noting that the demand for the RHRF exceeds available supply and that an additional allocation of funds from the RHRF will help build additional affordable housing units. The state should issue sufficient taxable general obligation bonds into the RHRF to maximize available federal affordable housing dollars.

HHRC Executive Director Heather Lusk currently serves as Board Chair of [Partners in Care O'ahu](#), a planning, coordinating, and advocacy alliance that develops recommendations for programs and services to fill needs within O'ahu's continuum of care for homeless persons.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions. Many of our program clients and participants have also been deeply impacted by trauma, including histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.