

Hawaii State Senate
Committee on Agriculture
Tuesday, February 3, 2015
2:45 pm
Conference Room 414

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT SB 521, AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE BONDS TO WAIMEA NUI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Aloha Chairman Ruderman, Vice Chairman Riviere, and Distinguished Members of the Hawaii State Senate Committee on Agriculture.

My name is Richard Ha and I am a Native Hawaiian veteran and farmer on Hawaii Island. I have long been an advocate of the 'rubbah slippah' folks on Hawaii Island. I continuously advocated that food security and energy security are vital to keeping prices low enough for the 'rubbah slippah' folks to survive and then have the opportunity to thrive in Hawaii

Please accept my testimony in support of S.B. 521, Authorizing the Issuance of Special Purpose Revenue Bonds to Waimea Nui Community Development Corporation. This group of motivated homesteaders and beneficiaries of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920 have spent the past five years working as a community to develop and implement a series of projects that reinvigorate agriculture in Waimea.

The Waimea Nui Community Development Corporation is led by a team of capable Hawaiian Homesteaders who have proven themselves to be successful business men and women and who are more than capable of successfully operating the community-based economic development activities that they have started. These are men and women care deeply about their community, about their neighbors, about their region, and their island and continuously demonstrate their commitment through their actions.

While others talk about what needs to be done, Waimea Nui Community Development Corporation and the Waimea Hawaiian Homestead Association are out in their community doing what needs to be done. In the past three years, through the Farmers for the Working Class program, for example, the group has grown the number of farms on homestead ag lots from 2 to 24. There is a lot that can be replicated and learned from these men and women who are so committed to revitalizing Hawaii Island's agricultural capacity and improving the financial sustainability, health, education, and housing capacity of their community, region, and island.

As someone who continuously advocates for the "rubbah slippah" folks on Hawaii Island, I ask that you support this measure.

TESTIMONY OF TRUSTEE ROBERT K. LINDSEY, JR.

IN SUPPORT OF SB 521
AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL PURPOSE REVENUE BONDS TO
WAIMEA NUI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Aloha Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Riviere, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture:

My name is Bob Lindsey, Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Trustee for Hawaii Island. Today, I wish to share my testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB 521 as an individual member of the OHA Board of Trustees.

In my time of service to OHA's beneficiaries for the past 7 ½ years, I have always enjoyed and supported our beneficiaries who have "carried the ball" in their own communities and have strived to better the conditions of those whom they serve. In this particular case, the Waimea Nui Development Corporation has been reviving ideas left dormant from decades before. These ideas and very practical dreams of the Waimea community are slowly coming to life due their efforts and the effort of those beneficiaries of that community and beyond. The realization of Waimea Nui, its ongoing projects and future projects are a result of public and private partnerships. These projects are successful and the future of Waimea Nui is bright.

The issuance of Special Purpose Revenue Bonds for this project will assist that community to create more agricultural and economically sustainable initiatives for itself and to move forward. This Waimea community is traditionally a paniolo and mahi `ai town, a town of cowboys and farmers. They are looking for a hand up not a hand out. I urge you to pass SB 521.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via my Honolulu office at 808-594-1882.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.