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**PRESENTATION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON WATER & LAND
AND CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2016
Wednesday, February 10, 2016
2:05 p.m.

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1840, RELATING TO SUNSET MEMORIAL
PARK.**

TO THE HONORABLE RYAN I. YAMANE, CHAIR,
AND TO THE HONORABLE ANGUS L.K. McKELVEY, CHAIR,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES:

The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs ("Department") appreciates the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1840, Relating to Sunset Memorial Park. My name is Catherine Awakuni Colón, Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, offering comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1840 provides that the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, in consultation with the State's Comptroller, develop strategies for the upkeep, repair, and maintenance of Sunset Memorial Park in Pearl City, and submit a report of findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2017.

As the Committees may be aware, the Department has been grappling with issues relating to this cemetery for a number of years, and has been exploring a variety of options to ensure that the cemetery is maintained appropriately and is safe for and accessible to families and loved ones. The Department is aware, for example, that family members have expressed interest in assisting with the upkeep on a volunteer basis provided they have clear authority to perform these services. The Department is amenable to exploring this and all other options, including consulting with the State's Comptroller.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1840. I will be happy to answer any questions the Committees may have.

Nanette N. Napoleon

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February 7, 2016

TESTIMONY In Support of HB1840

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2016, 2:05 p.m.
Committee: Water & Land, Chair: Rep. Ryan Yamane
Committee: Consumer Protection & Commerce, Chair: Rep. Angus L.K. McKelvey

Dear Committee Memebers,

In my professional capacity as the director of the Hawaii Cemetery Research Project for the past 30 years, I have documented and studied more than 300 historic cemeteries in Hawaii. In addition, I have more than 15 years experience as a cemetery trustee and have extensive knowledge of standard cemetery practices.

Over the years I have received dozens of calls about Sunset Memorial Park from people who have ancestors buried there who have had various concerns about the poor physical conditions an/or mismanagement of the cemetery. Many of these issues have been covered by the media.

Last year, the physical conditions of the cemetery reached an all-time low when subterranean water flows during a prolonged rainy period resulted in more than 50 grave markers sinking into the ground. In addition, standard maintenance of the site has been greatly reduced, resulting in grass and weed growth that is way below standard cemetery maintenance practices. The cemetery, in my estimation, is now a serious safety hazard for all visitors to the site.

I strongly feel that HB1840's directive that DCCA, in consultation with the comptroller, to conduct a formal and thorough study of the cemetery is long, long overdue and will result in a much needed assessment of the cemetery's viability to operate as a licensed business entity.

I strongly urge you to pass HB1840.

Sincerely,

Nanette Napoleon

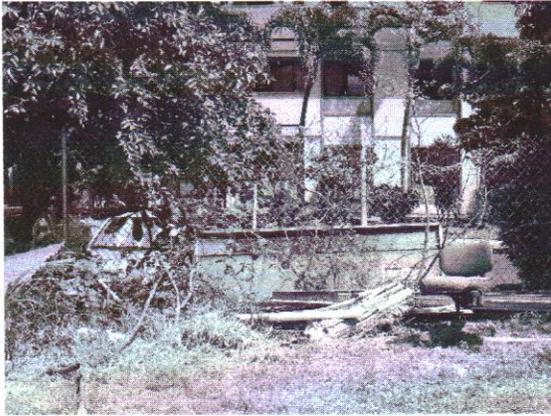
Director
Hawaii Cemetery Research Project



Sunken markers and overgrown grass and weeds are prevalent.



Ruins of former office that was destroyed by fire in 2014 and other dilapidated structures.



Large piles of junk and mausoleum with missing roof and crypt doors.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 10:38 PM
To: waltestimony
Cc: foodsovereignty@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1840 on Feb 10, 2016 14:05PM

HB1840

Submitted on: 2/8/2016

Testimony for WAL/CPC on Feb 10, 2016 14:05PM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mitsuko Hayakawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Thank you for hearing this bill. As a member of the Pearl City community, I appreciate the State's assistance in providing adequate recommendations. Sunset Memorial Park has been neglected too long and it's current leadership weak. Mahalo for your support.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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TESTIMONY OF

LARRY S VERAY

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND;

CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

ON HB1840 RELATING TO SUNSET MEMORIAL PARK

FEBRUARY 9, 2016

Chair McKelvey, Chair Yamane and members of each committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1840.

Although I am the Chair for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board #21, I am submitting this testimony as an individual providing you my past actions leading the Pearl City Neighborhood Board and those related issues with the Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery. Our PCNB Health, Education and Welfare Committee documented numerous complaints over this past year from the community specifically many families who have suffered from previous owners neglect to maintain satisfactory operations of Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery.

I personally interviewed several family members and it was totally heart breaking to hear stories from many that can't find their love ones. Numerous family grave sites with head stones and urns have either disappeared or have been stolen from the property. Some of these headstones have sunken into wet ground and grounds collapsed due to collapsing coffins that were buried on the property. There is no current record of where people have been buried due to a fire that destroyed the main office on the property.

I personally facilitated a Pearl City Neighborhood Board Special Meeting on October 10, 2015 bringing over a 150 families and individuals together with our legislators to work this problem. It was clearly a huge undertaking to try to find solutions to bring the cemetery up to State standards and discovering numerous liability issues with the many volunteers who have struggled to help cut grass, add soil, find sunken headstones and retrieve stolen urns.

I am personally requesting the State Legislature to in act immediate legislation for a long-term solution to support the Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery and develop a strategy for the upkeep, repair and maintenance of the Cemetery.

On behalf of myself and all the grieving families who routinely look for their love ones at the cemetery; I urge you to pass HB1840.
Mahalo for your support.

Very respectfully,

Larry S. Veray

Dear Water and Land Committee and Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing this bill. Sunset Memorial Park has been neglected too long. It is unfair for families with loved ones buried there that it has not received upkeep attention for many years. Thank you again for your support in restoring Sunset Memorial Park as it is long overdue.

Mahalo,

Connie Herolaga

Dear Water and Land Committee and Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing this bill. Sunset Memorial Park has been neglected too long. It is unfair for families with loved ones buried there that it has not received upkeep attention for many years. Thank you again for your support in restoring Sunset Memorial Park as it is long overdue.

Mahalo,

Maureen Andrade