



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

February 3, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Nadine K. Nakamura, Chair
House Committee on Housing

The Honorable Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
House Committee on Water and Land

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **HB 1649 – RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 3, 2022, 9:00 a.m.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports the intent of this bill and respectfully offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require State agencies to report annually to the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness on any vacant State land that could be utilized for the construction of affordable housing. The bill takes effect upon its approval.

In December 2021, the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) – a 27-member advisory council chaired by the Coordinator – adopted policy priorities for the 2022 legislative session, including a specific focus on scaling low-income affordable housing for people transitioning from homelessness.

Identifying vacant State lands that are suitable for development will support this goal.

The Coordinator notes that public lands have supported low-income housing for people transitioning out of homelessness through programs such as the Ohana Zones pilot program. Examples of Ohana Zones permanent housing projects such as [Kamaoku Kauhale](#), [Huliau](#), [Kealaula at Pua Loke](#), [Kumuwai](#), and [Hale Maluhia](#). The [Hawaii Interagency Council on](#)

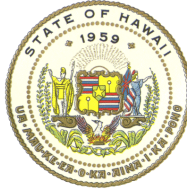
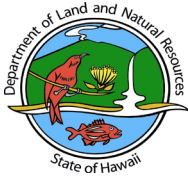
[Homelessness annual legislative report](#)¹ provides a detailed overview and evaluation of the Ohana Zones pilot program.

If this measure moves forward, the Coordinator suggests establishing one Full-Time Equivalent (1.0 FTE) position and sufficient appropriations to support the collection and compilation of information from State agencies and produce the annual report to the Legislature. The Coordinator requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

¹ Report available at: <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/HICH-Report-to-2022-Legislature-FINAL.pdf>

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committees on
HOUSING
and
WATER AND LAND**

**Thursday, February 3, 2022
9:00 AM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 423, Via Videoconference

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1649
RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

House Bill 1649 proposes to: (1) require each state agency to submit to the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness an annual report on any vacant state land suitable for the construction of affordable housing within its jurisdiction or the jurisdiction of any of its attached offices, branches, commissions, or other agencies; and (2) require the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to compile the agency reports and submit an annual report of their findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) acknowledges the intent of this measure and provides the following comments.**

The bill lacks specificity as to how each state agency determines which vacant lands are suitable for the construction of affordable housing. Accordingly, each state agency is left to its own definition and discretion of which lands may be suitable to the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness, thus resulting in inconsistency, variation and possibly contradiction amongst the state agencies' reports. The Department respectfully suggests that there should be a pre-determined and common understanding of enumerated, explicit, and detailed parameters to be gathered by the state agencies that would be beneficial in identifying parcels of land suitable for the governor's coordinator's evaluation and purpose. Essentially, the bill as currently drafted is too vague and ambiguous to implement.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

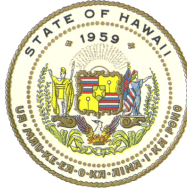
SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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February 3, 2022

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura, Chair

House Committee on Housing

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair

House Committee on Water & Land

Via Videoconference

RE: H.B. 1649, Relating to Affordable Housing

HEARING: Thursday, February 3, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Nakamura, Chair Tarnas, and Members of the Joint Committees,

I am Ken Hiraki, Director of Government Affairs, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawai'i, and its over 10,800 members. HAR **supports** House Bill 1649, which requires state agencies to report annually to the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness on any vacant state land that could be utilized for construction of affordable housing.

Homeownership is one of the most important ways for families to build wealth, connect more deeply with their communities and support the economic growth of the State. Unfortunately, that goal has become difficult for many families in Hawai'i, which has the highest cost of living in the country and high housing prices.

According to the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism's 2019 report on Housing Demand in Hawai'i, the state needs up to 46,000, housing units to meet demand in Hawai'i by 2030. Ultimately, we have a housing supply problem, and this measure is a creative approach to address those challenges. Land costs are a large part of the development cost of housing, so by identifying and utilizing State lands to build affordable housing would help address our State's housing challenges.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.