

# STATE OF HAWAI'I OFFICE OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

JOSH GREEN, M.D. GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE

LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Telephone: (808) 587-2846

Fax: (808) 587-2824 Web: https://planning.hawaii.gov/

Statement of MARY ALICE EVANS, Interim Director

before the

#### SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Thursday, March 14, 2024 9:30 AM State Capitol, Conference Room 229

in consideration of

## BILL NO HB2801, HD1 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED FINANCING.

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection:

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** HB2801, HD1, which allows condominiums to be eligible for commercial property assessed financing.

Use of commercial property-assessed financing (C-PACER) to fund qualified capital improvements was authorized by the Legislature in Act 183, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022. C-PACER financing can help property owners finance the installation of critical fire safety, energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, and resiliency measures at more attractive rates and terms than may be available with conventional financing.

However, the current statute does not clearly specify whether residential condominium properties can be considered commercial properties for the purpose of using C-PACER financing to make these types of improvements. This bill clarifies that intent and eligibility, so that condominium properties can use C-PACER financing to make their buildings safer and more sustainable.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



JOSH GREEN, M.D. GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

**SYLVIA LUKE**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

# STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKUʻĀINA 'O HAWAIʻI OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA

NADINE Y. ANDO DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

**DEAN I HAZAMA**DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310 P.O. BOX 541 HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809 Phone Number: (808) 586-2850

Phone Number: (808) 586-2850 Fax Number: (808) 586-2856 cca.hawaii.gov

#### **Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

#### **WRITTEN ONLY**

Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Thursday, March 14, 2024
9:30 a.m.
Via Videoconference

## On the following measure: H.B. 2801, H.D.1, RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED FINANCING.

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nadine Ando and I am the Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (Department). The Department supports this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to allow condominiums to be eligible for commercial property assessed financing.

The Department appreciates and supports the intent of the bill to provide financing for projects for condominium associations with six or more units and encourages continued communication between condominium associations and their owners of financing undertaken for projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



JOSH GREEN, M.D. GOVERNOR

> SYLVIA LUKE LT. GOVERNOR

MARK B. GLICK CHIEF ENERGY OFFICER

(808) 451-6648 energy.hawaii.gov

Telephone:

Web:

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

## Testimony of MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

## before the SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Thursday, March 14, 2024 9:30 AM State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

In Support of HB2801, HD1

#### RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED FINANCING.

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports HB 2801, HD1, that allows condominiums to be eligible for commercial property assessed financing (C-PACER).

HSEO's testimony is guided by its statutory duties under HRS §196-72, in which the Chief Energy Officer of the Hawaii State Energy Office shall "coordinate the State's energy programs with ... the political subdivisions of the State, departments of the State" and "assist public agencies in the implementation of energy assurance and energy resilience."

HSEO is supportive because increased financing resources made available by this measure could allow participants to improve their commercial facilities with loans for safety and energy upgrades, thus achieving several public objectives more quickly and potentially at a reduced cost. Nationwide, over \$4 billion have been invested in over 2,000 C-PACER projects,<sup>1</sup> and prior to 2019 only one C-PACER project defaulted.<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://www.epa.gov/statelocalenergy/commercial-property-assessed-clean-energy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://eta-publications.lbl.gov/sites/default/files/cpace-special-assessmentv3.pdf

JOSH GREEN, M.D. GOVERNOR SYLVIA LUKE LT GOVERNOR



JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA CHAIR

GWEN S YAMAMOTO LAU EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Testimony of

Gwen Yamamoto Lau Executive Director

Hawai'i Green Infrastructure Authority before the

#### SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Thursday, March 14, 2024, 9:30 AM State Capitol, Conference Room 229 in consideration of

## House Bill No. 2801, HD1 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED FINANCING

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2801, HD1, relating to commercial property assessed financing. The Hawai'i Green Infrastructure Authority (HGIA) **strongly supports** this bill which will allow condominiums to be eligible for the commercial property assessed financing program.

Act 183, SLH 2022 authorizing commercial property assessed financing also known as Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy & Resiliency (C-PACER) in Hawaii was signed into law on June 27, 2022. C-PACER is a <u>commercial</u> financing program and the statute requires lender consent. Because this financing mechanism is a <u>voluntary</u> special assessment similar to a property tax, the existing statute requires each County to pass an ordinance approving C-PACER and enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with HGIA.

The City & County of Honolulu passed Bill 56 on December 6, 2023 authorizing C-PACER to finance qualifying improvements on eligible properties. As the bill was being heard by the Committees and City Council, it became evident that this financing program could also benefit Condominiums in need of installing fire safety measures or upgrading resiliency, energy and/or water efficiency measures, by providing longer terms over the useful life of the equipment being installed, thereby making this financing option more affordable to condo owners.

Special assessments will not be placed on the real property tax bills of the individual condo owners and will therefore not interfere with mortgages over said units being sold in the secondary market. C-PACER may in fact help make condos become or remain insurable by providing the financing needed to make necessary upgrades and repairs, thereby assisting our local banks, credit unions and mortgage bankers, as their mortgages over units in these projects will be or remain eligible for sale in the secondary market.

In 2023, C-PACE financing helped bridge the financing gap on a Los Angeles County commercial real estate project, replacing more expensive debt and improving the cash flow of the project: <a href="https://www.bizjournals.com/losangeles/news/2023/05/01/c-pace-financing-program-helps-bridge-la-cre-proje.html">https://www.bizjournals.com/losangeles/news/2023/05/01/c-pace-financing-program-helps-bridge-la-cre-proje.html</a>.

While negotiating a Memorandum of Agreement with the City after the passage of Bill 56, due to its limited resources and the complexity of the financing program, the City indicated its preference to outsource all aspects of the C-PACER program to the Authority. Other Counties have also indicated a similar preference. As such in order to accommodate the Counties' request, we respectfully request the following amendments:

Repeal all commercial property assessed financing related language in Section 46-80.

Make amendments to the following definitions under Section 196-61, as follows:

<u>"Assessment" means an assessment imposed by the authority on a benefitted commercial property pursuant to section 196-64.5.</u>

"Commercial property" means:

- (1) A[a] ny existing or new non-residential real property [not defined as a residential property, and shall include] including any property where there is a leasehold or possessory interest in the property[and any];
- (2) Any multi-family dwelling or townhouse consisting of five or more units [as well as agricultural];
- (3) Any long-term care or assisted living facility;
- (4) Any condominium property regime consisting of six or more units; or
- (5) Agricultural property.

"Commercial property assessed financing assessment" or "special assessment" means the [non-ad valorem special tax] annual assessment [that secures], secured by a lien on a property, for the repayment of financing obtained by an owner of commercial property for a qualifying improvement [and that appears on a property tax bill.] that is billed and collected by the authority.

"Commercial property assessed financing lender" means a financial institution as defined pursuant to section 412:1-109, or a private or public lender approved by the authority, as the administrator of the

commercial property assessed financing program, to originate commercial property assessed financing assessment contracts, and [which] that may include any successor or assignee of the lender as provided in the commercial property assessed financing assessment contract.

"Commercial property assessed financing program" means a program to finance qualifying improvements on commercial properties that are repaid through [a non-ad valorem special tax] an assessment imposed by the authority on the commercial property owner's property [tax bill].

["County director of finance" or "county director of budget and fiscal services" means the officer or officers of the county charged with the responsibility of administering the real property taxation function of the county.]

["Non-ad valorem special tax assessment" means a special tax assessment or governmental charge levied by the county as provided in section 196-64.5 on a benefitted commercial property that appears on a property tax bill.]

"Option to purchase" means a legally binding agreement between a buyer and a seller[, which] that gives the buyer the option, but not the obligation, to purchase the solar energy system or other installed equipment at an agreed upon price, prior to the maturity date of the power purchase agreement or energy performance contract.

Make the following amendments to Section 196-64.5:

#### "[+]\$196-64.5[+] Commercial property assessed financing program.

(a) [Any county having a charter may authorize the authority, pursuant to this section, to offer a commercial property assessed financing program within its jurisdiction and may contract with the authority for that purpose, and any county having a charter may enact its own commercial property assessed financing program pursuant to this section and section 46-80(b) and (c).] There is established a commercial property assessed financing program to be administered by the authority to enable owners of qualifying property to access non-traditional financing for qualifying improvements. Program financing shall be secured by a voluntary assessment imposed on the benefitted property that is secured by a statutory lien; provided that the statutory lien shall have

priority over all other liens except the lien of property taxes and other assessments lawfully imposed by governmental authority against the property.

- (b) [The] In administering the commercial property assessed financing program, the authority [, as the administrator of the commercial property assessed financing program, shall coordinate with each county to bill and collect a non-ad valorem special tax assessment on a benefitted commercial property as a repayment mechanism on the real property tax bill or stand-alone bill. The non-ad valorem special tax] may impose a governmental lien to secure commercial property assessed financing against real property specially benefitted pursuant to the program established by this section. Commercial property assessed financing shall be secured by the voluntary governmental lien and repaid in assessment installments in accordance with the commercial property assessed financing assessment contract and billed and collected by the authority. The principal amount of a financing made pursuant to this section shall be a governmental lien against each lot or parcel of the property and assessed for a period beginning on the date of the notice of the assessment and ending once payment is made in full or otherwise satisfied in accordance with the commercial property assessed financing assessment contract; provided that the lien shall have priority over all other liens except the liens for property taxes and assessments lawfully imposed by governmental authority against the property; provided further that for multiple liens of assessments, the earlier lien shall have priority over the later lien. Neither the governmental lien nor the assessment for repayment on a benefitted commercial property pursuant to this section shall [not be] constitute a [generally applicable] tax upon the real property [but shall be collected in the same manner as real property taxes as a result of a benefit to the commercial property owners for qualifying improvements.] within the meanings of any constitutional or statutory provisions. Furthermore, the requirement of lender consent pursuant to subsection (c)(6) shall be satisfied for the priority of the lien to be valid.
- (c) The authority shall design  $\left[\frac{a}{a}\right]$  the commercial property assessed financing program authorized under this section  $\left[\frac{and\ section\ 46}{a}\right]$

- 80 (b) that addresses] to address market needs while attracting private capital [and]; provided that [shall,] the program, at a minimum, shall include the following elements:
  - (1) A commercial property owner, who owns qualifying property in the state of Hawaii, along with a commercial property assessed financing lender approved by the authority, may apply to the authority for approval to utilize property assessed financing to pay the cost of qualifying improvements and enter into a commercial property assessed financing contract with a commercial property assessed financing lender and the authority;
  - [±](2) A commercial property assessed financing lender may enter into a commercial property assessed financing assessment contract to finance or refinance a qualifying improvement only with the recorded owner of the affected commercial property and the authority. Each commercial property assessed financing assessment contract shall be executed by the authority as the administrator of the commercial property assessed financing program. A commercial property assessed financing assessment contract shall require the authority to assign, pledge, and transfer revenues to be derived from commercial property assessed financing assessments to one or more commercial property assessed financing lenders as security for their direct financing of qualifying improvements. The obligation of the authority to transfer the revenues to one or more commercial property assessed financing lenders shall be evidenced by the commercial property assessed financing assessment contract as an instrument of indebtedness in a form as may be prescribed by the authority. No other bonds shall be required to be issued by the State, the authority, any county, or any other public entity in order to cause qualifying improvements to be funded through a commercial property assessed financing assessment contract;

- [2] (3) Qualifying improvements shall be affixed to a building or facility or affixed to real property, subject to the commercial property assessed financing assessments;
- [3] (4) Before entering into a commercial property assessed financing assessment contract, the commercial property assessed financing lender shall reasonably determine that:
  - (A) The commercial property owner is able to borrow the amount of the property assessed financing using reasonable commercial underwriting practices;
  - (B) All property taxes applicable to the commercial property, and any other assessments levied on the same bill as property taxes, are paid; and
  - (C) There are no involuntary liens applicable to the commercial property, including but not limited to construction liens, that will not be paid or satisfied upon the closing of the financing;
- [4] (5) The commercial property assessed financing assessment contract shall include the amount of an annual assessment, including interest, over a fixed term that [will appear as a non-ad valorem special tax assessment on the commercial property owner's tax bill or stand-alone bill annually; ] shall be billed annually or as otherwise specified by the authority, and collected by the authority in accordance with the commercial property assessed financing lender's amortization schedule;
- [5] (6) The commercial property assessed financing assessment contract, or summary memorandum of the contract, shall be recorded by the commercial property assessed financing lender in the public records of the State [or of the county within which the commercial property is located] within five days after execution by the parties to the contract. The recorded contract shall provide constructive notice of the levy of, and obligation of the commercial property owner to pay, the commercial property assessed financing assessment. The entire principal amount of the commercial property assessed financing

assessment [to be levied on the commercial property] contract shall be a [non-ad valorem special tax assessment and a] governmental statutory lien against the commercial property [on a parity with the lien of general real property taxes and the lien of any other assessments levied under section 46-80, from] that shall be assessed for a period beginning on the date of recordation entered into pursuant to this section [until] and ending once paid or satisfied in accordance with the commercial property assessed financing assessment contract; provided further that the lien shall have priority over all other liens except the lien for property taxes and other assessments lawfully imposed by a governmental authority against the property;

- [6](7) Before entering into a commercial property assessed financing assessment contract for any commercial property, the commercial property owner shall [provide]:
  - (A) Provide the authority and the commercial property assessed financing lender with evidence of the written consent of each holder or loan servicer of any mortgage that encumbers or otherwise secures the commercial property, where the consent is in the sole and absolute discretion of each holder or loan servicer of a mortgage on the commercial property, at the time of the execution of the commercial property assessed financing assessment contract by the parties; provided that the consents shall be in a form prescribed by the authority; and
  - (B) Agree to the commercial property assessed financing

    lender's remedies if a default occurs, including

    foreclosure, in accordance with the terms and conditions

    of the commercial property assessed financing contract;
- [7] (8) At or before the time a purchaser executes a contract for the sale and purchase of any commercial property for which a [non-ad valorem special tax assessment has been levied] statutory lien has been recorded under this part and has an unpaid balance due, the seller shall give the prospective

- purchaser a written disclosure statement notifying the prospective purchaser of the commercial property assessed financing assessment;
- [8] (9) The term of the commercial property assessed financing assessment contract shall not exceed the useful life of the qualifying improvement being installed or the weighted average useful life of all qualifying improvements being financed if multiple qualifying improvements are being financed, as determined by the authority; [and]
- [Before the execution by the authority of the first  $[\frac{9}{1}]$  (10) commercial property assessed financing assessment contract in a county, the authority shall enter into a contract with the county director of finance or county director of budget and fiscal services to cause the county director to levy and collect any commercial property assessed financing assessment approved and certified by the authority to the director for collection. The county director] Except as otherwise provided for commercial property assessed financing special assessments under chapter 514B, the authority shall [levy] bill and collect any approved commercial property assessed financing assessment [approved by the authority]. Each commercial property assessed financing assessment that is approved for collection shall be [a non-ad valorem special tax assessment and shall be] billed and collected in [the same manner as general real property taxes are collected and be subject to the same] accordance with the commercial property assessed financing lender's amortization schedule. The authority may charge interest or other fees on assessment amounts not paid on a timely basis. The authority shall develop guidelines and procedures providing for the method of undertaking and financing qualifying improvements as well as penalties [and same procedure], collection processes, sale, and lien priority, [subject to this section,] in the case of delinquency as is provided [by general law for the default of the payment of real property taxes, unless another procedure,

including stand-alone billing and collection, is agreed upon by the authority and the county director. The county director may add to any commercial property assessed financing assessment reasonable administrative costs as agreed upon by the] in this section. The authority [and the county director. The county director] shall remit any commercial property assessed financing assessments collected, less any reasonable administrative costs [added by the county director, to or on the direction of the authority, for further application by the authority] to pay each commercial property assessed financing lender [and to pay the reasonable administrative costs of the authority] in accordance with each commercial property assessed financing assessment contract. [The county director shall covenant in a contract or instrument, for ] For the benefit of any commercial property assessed financing lender [or bondholder, to], the authority shall commence and diligently pursue to completion the foreclosure of delinquent commercial property assessed financing assessments and any penalty, interest, and costs by advertisement and sale and with the same effect as provided by general law for sales of real property pursuant to [default in payment of property taxes. The covenant] chapter 667 and in accordance with the terms of the commercial property assessed financing contract. Any guidelines and procedures developed pursuant to this paragraph shall specify a deadline for commencement of the foreclosure sale and any other terms and conditions the [county director of finance or county director of budget and fiscal services] authority determines reasonable regarding the foreclosure sale. For commercial property assessed financing assessments levied but not paid when due pursuant to a commercial property assessed financing assessment contract, the foreclosure of the lien of the commercial property assessed financing assessment, lien of general real property taxes or any other assessments levied under section 46-80, or any other lien foreclosed, shall not accelerate or extinguish

- the remaining term of the commercial property assessed financing assessment as approved in the commercial property assessed financing assessment contract [-]; and
- property assessed financing program, including any interest accrued and fee revenues collected, shall be deposited in a separate subaccount in the clean energy and energy efficiency revolving loan fund established pursuant to section 196-65.5, and expended only for the administration of the commercial property assessed financing program; provided that any surplus moneys remaining at the end of each fiscal year after the payment of expenses of the commercial property assessed financing program shall be transferred and credited to the Hawaii green infrastructure special fund established pursuant to section 196-65, and may be expended for the administration of the commercial property assessed financing program."

#### Amend Section 196-65.5 (e), as follows:

"(e) The authority may establish subaccounts within the fund as necessary[-]; provided that, in accordance with section 196-4.5(c)(11), the authority shall establish a subaccount within the fund into which shall be deposited all moneys collected, including any interest accrued and fee revenues collected, for assessments for the commercial property assessed financing program established pursuant to section 196-64.5."

#### Amend Section 514B-4 (b), as follows:

"(b) If there is any unit owner other than a developer, each unit shall be separately taxed and assessed, and no separate tax or assessment [may] shall be rendered against any common elements. The laws relating to home exemptions from state property taxes are applicable to individual units, which shall have the benefit of home exemption in those cases where the owner of a single-family dwelling would qualify. Property taxes assessed by the State or any county shall be assessed and collected on the individual units and not on the property as a whole. Commercial property assessed financing program special assessments, pursuant to

section 196-64.5, may be levied upon the project, as described by the project's master deed, declaration, and map pursuant to part III. Without limitation of the foregoing, each unit and its appurtenant common interest shall be deemed to be a "parcel" and shall be subject to separate assessment and taxation for all types of taxes authorized by law, including  $[\tau]$  but not limited to  $[\tau]$  other non-commercial property assessed financing program special assessments."

#### Amend Section 514B-41(a) as follows:

"(a) The common profits of the property shall be distributed among, and the common expenses shall be charged to, the unit owners, including the developer, in proportion to the common interest appurtenant to their respective units, except as otherwise provided in the declaration or bylaws. In a mixed-use project containing units for both residential and nonresidential use, the charges and distributions may be apportioned in a fair and equitable manner as set forth in the declaration. Except as otherwise provided in subsection (c) or the declaration or bylaws, all limited common element costs and expenses, including but not limited to maintenance, repair, replacement, additions, and improvements, including capital improvements financed by commercial property assessed financing pursuant to section 196-64.5, shall be charged to the owner or owners of the unit or units to which the limited common element is appurtenant in an equitable manner as set forth in the declaration."

#### Amend Section 514B-105(c) and (f), as follows:

(c) Any payments made by or on behalf of a unit owner shall first be applied to outstanding common expenses that are assessed to all unit owners in proportion to the common interest appurtenant to their respective units [-], including commercial property assessed financing special assessment expenses incurred for improvements financed pursuant to section 196-64.5. Only after [said] the outstanding common expenses have been paid in full may the payments be applied to other charges owed to the association, including assessed charges to the unit such as ground lease rent, utility sub-metering, storage lockers, parking stalls, boat

slips, insurance deductibles, and cable. After these charges are paid, other charges, including unpaid late fees, legal fees, fines, and interest, may be assessed in accordance with an application of payment policy adopted by the board; provided that if a unit owner has designated that any payment is for a specific charge that is not a common expense as described in this subsection, the payment may be applied in accordance with the unit owner's designation even if common expenses remain outstanding.

(f) For special assessments levied upon the project under a commercial property assessed financing program pursuant to section 196-64.5 and due from the association, the cost of the commercial property assessed financing, including but not limited to all principal, interest, commitment fees, servicing fees, and other expenses payable with respect to this borrowing or the enforcement of the obligations under the borrowings, shall be a common expense of the project and unit owners' proportionate share of the special assessment shall be collected in the same manner as common expenses. The written consent of at least fifty per cent of all unit owners and owners to finance qualifying improvements with commercial property assessed financing shall include an acknowledgment that the annual special assessment required to fund debt service on the commercial property assessed financing shall be included as part of the association's adopted revised budget."

#### Amend Section 514B-146 (a)(1) and (2), as follows:

- (1) Liens for real property taxes and assessments lawfully imposed by governmental authority, including commercial property

  assessed financing special assessments established pursuant to section 196-64.5, against the unit; and
- (2) Except as provided in subsection (j), all sums unpaid on any mortgage of record that was recorded prior to the recordation of a notice of a lien by the association, and costs and expenses including attorneys' fees provided in [such] the mortgages;

provided that a lien recorded by an association for unpaid assessments shall expire six years from the date of recordation unless proceedings to

enforce the lien are instituted prior to the expiration of the lien; provided further that the expiration of a recorded lien shall in no way affect the association's automatic lien that arises pursuant to this subsection or the declaration or bylaws. Any proceedings to enforce an association's lien for any assessment shall be instituted within six years after the assessment became due; provided that if the owner of a unit subject to a lien of the association files a petition for relief under the United States Bankruptcy Code (11 U.S.C. §101 et seq.), the period of time for instituting proceedings to enforce the association's lien shall be tolled until thirty days after the automatic stay of proceedings under section 362 of the United States Bankruptcy Code (11 U.S.C. §362) is lifted.

The lien of the association may be foreclosed by action or by nonjudicial or power of sale foreclosure, regardless of the presence or absence of power of sale language in an association's governing documents, by the managing agent or board, acting on behalf of the association and in the name of the association; provided that no association may exercise the nonjudicial or power of sale remedies provided in chapter 667 to foreclose a lien against any unit that arises solely from fines, penalties, legal fees, or late fees, and the foreclosure of [any such] the lien shall be filed in court pursuant to part IA of chapter 667.

In any [such] foreclosure[7] described in this section, the unit owner shall be required to pay a reasonable rental for the unit, if so provided in the bylaws or the law, and the plaintiff in the foreclosure shall be entitled to the appointment of a receiver to collect the rental owed by the unit owner or any tenant of the unit. If the association is the plaintiff, it may request that its managing agent be appointed as receiver to collect the rent from the tenant. The managing agent or board, acting on behalf of the association and in the name of the association, unless prohibited by the declaration, may bid on the unit at foreclosure sale, and acquire and hold, lease, mortgage, and convey the unit. Action to recover a money judgment for unpaid common expenses shall be maintainable without foreclosing or waiving the lien securing the unpaid common expenses owed."

- 2. By amended subsection (1) to read:
- "(1) For purposes of subsections (j) and (k), the following definitions shall apply, unless the context requires otherwise: "Completion" means:
- (1) In a nonjudicial power of sale foreclosure, when the affidavit after public sale is recorded pursuant to section 667-33; and
- (2) In a judicial foreclosure, when a purchaser is deemed to acquire title pursuant to subsection (b).

"Regular monthly common assessments" does not include:

- (1) Any other special assessment, except for a special assessment imposed on all units as part of a budget adopted pursuant to section 514B-148[+], including commercial property assessed financing special assessments imposed pursuant to section 196-64.5;
- (2) Late charges, fines, or penalties;
- (3) Interest assessed by the association;
- (4) Any lien arising out of the assessment; or
- (5) Any fees or costs related to the collection or enforcement of the assessment, including attorneys' fees and court costs."

#### Amend Section 514B-157(a) as follows:

- "(a) All costs and expenses, including reasonable attorneys' fees, incurred by or on behalf of the association for:
  - (1) Collecting any delinquent assessments, including commercial property assessed financing special assessments imposed pursuant to section 196-64.5, against any owner's unit;
  - (2) Foreclosing any lien thereon; or
  - (3) Enforcing any provision of the declaration, bylaws, house rules, and this chapter, or the rules of the real estate commission;

against an owner, occupant, tenant, employee of an owner, or any other person who may in any manner use the property, shall be promptly paid on demand to the association by [such] the person or persons; provided that if the claims upon which the association takes any action are not substantiated, all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorneys' fees, incurred by any [such] applicable person or persons as a result of

the action of the association, shall be promptly paid on demand to [such] the person or persons by the association."

Amend Section 667-40, as follows:

"[+]\$667-40[+] Use of power of sale foreclosure in certain non-mortgage situations. A power of sale foreclosure under this part may be used in certain non-mortgage situations where a law or a written document contains, authorizes, permits, or provides for a power of sale, a power of sale foreclosure, a power of sale remedy, or a nonjudicial foreclosure. These laws or written documents are limited to those involving time share plans, condominium property regimes, [and] agreements of sale[-], and commercial property assessed financing assessments imposed pursuant to section 196-64.5."

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments and testify in support of HB 2801, HD1.

## DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FISCAL SERVICES KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA MO'OHELU A KĀLĀ

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 208 • HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813 PHONE: (808) 768-3900 • FAX: (808) 768-3179 • WEBSITE: <u>honolulu.gov/budget</u>

RICK BLANGIARDI MAYOR MEIA



ANDREW T. KAWANO DIRECTOR PO'O

CARRIE CASTLE DEPUTY DIRECTOR HOPE PO'O

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice-Chair Fukunaga and Committee Members:

SUBJECT:

Testimony with Concerns on House Bill 2801 HD1 (2024)

Hearing: March 14, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.

The Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, City and County of Honolulu ("BFS") appreciates the opportunity to testify and provide comments on House Bill 2801 HD1 (2024) ("HB 2801"), Relating to Commercial Property Assessed Financing. HB 2801 would allow real property submitted to a condominium property regime ("condominium project") to qualify for commercial property assessed clean energy and resiliency ("C-PACER") financing by amending the definition of "commercial property" in Section 196-61, Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS").

BFS does not oppose the concept of including condominium projects in the list of commercial properties eligible for C-PACER financing, so long as the levying, collecting and foreclosing of C-PACER assessments are conducted by the condominium associations in accordance with HRS Chapter 514B. However, HB 2801's proposed amendment to the definition of "commercial property" does not so comply.

The intent of HB 2801 is to allow condominium projects to be eligible for C-PACER financing, but that intent is contradicted by HB 2801's amendment. HB 2801 amends the "commercial property" definition to mean "any existing or new non-residential real property," then describes "non-residential real property" as "including' both residential and non-residential types of properties:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
March 13, 2024
Page 2

""Commercial property" means any existing or new <u>non-residential</u> real property [not defined as a residential property, and shall include], <u>including:</u>

- <u>(1)</u> Any property where there is a leasehold or possessory interest in the property [and any];
- (2) Any multi-family dwelling or townhouse consisting of five or more units [as well as agricultural];
- (3) Any condominium regime consisting of six or more units; or
- (4) Agricultural property."

BFS is concerned that the proposed amended definition of "commercial property" is confusing, includes terms that contradict one another, and may cause future disputes among financial institutions, mortgage companies, borrowers, litigants and the public in general. Therefore, BFS suggests repositioning the numbering of "(1)" to follow "means" so as to clearly and concisely identify the eligible types of properties under the definition of "commercial property":

""Commercial property" means:

- <u>Any</u> existing or new <u>non-residential</u> real property [not defined as a residential property, and shall include], including any property where there is a leasehold or possessory interest in the property; [and any]
- (2) Any multi-family dwelling or townhouse consisting of five or more units [as well as agricultural];
- (3) Any condominium regime consisting of six or more units; or
- (4) [as well as] Agricultural property."

BFS believes that the above-suggested delineation of the types of properties falling within the definition of "commercial property" in HRS § 196-61 is consistent with the intent expressed in HB 2801.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and your attention to BFS's concerns with the definition of "commercial property" in HB 2801.

Sincerely,

Andrew T. Kawano

Director

APPROVED:

Michael D. Formby Managing Director

#### OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIE

### KE KE'ENA LOLI ANIAU MĀLAMA 'ĀINA A ME KE OLA LOA

#### CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU





RICK BLANGIARDI MAYOR *MEIA* 



MATTHEW GONSER, AICP, CFM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER PO'O HO'OKŌ & KAHU OLA LOA

BENJAMIN SULLIVAN DEPUTY DIRECTOR & DEPUTY CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER HOPE PO'O & HOPE KAHU OLA LOA

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 2024, 9:30 A.M.

## STATE OF HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

## TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2801, HD1 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED FINANCING

BY,

MATTHEW GONSER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF RESILIENCE OFFICER
OFFICE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

Dear Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee:

The City and County of Honolulu ("City") Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) **supports HB2801 HD1**, which allows condominiums to be eligible for commercial property assessed financing, also known as C-PACER. We offer the following supportive comments, however, we defer to the City's Department of Budget and Fiscal Services as to specific language in the bill.

Through the development of the Oʻahu Resilience Strategy, Oʻahu community leaders identified early on the potential that a property assessed financing program could have in providing financial support to property owners in making critical health and safety and/or energy efficiency and other resiliency improvements. C-PACER loans provide access to low-cost capital with longer repayment terms than many commercial loans today. Additionally, access to C-PACER increases access to federal funding available today to support energy efficiency retrofits. Such improvements will offer significant long-term energy bill savings to building occupants.

Following the adoption of Act 183, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, authorizing commercial property assessed financing across the state, the City swiftly adopted Ordinance 23-24 to establish its own C-PACER program. The City's C-PACER program uses the definition of commercial property as currently defined in Hawai'i Revised Statutes §196-61, which does not include condominiums as qualifying

Chair Keohokalole and Vice Chair Fukunaga HB2801, HD1 March 14, 2024 Page 2

properties. HB2801 HD1 will allow the City to expand its C-PACER program to additionally include and benefit condominiums.

Many condo associations on Oʻahu already recognize the pivotal opportunity C-PACER presents in providing assistance to condos to meet the mounting challenges and regulatory demands as a result of climate change impacts, as well as health, fire, and safety requirements. The large majority of occupants in older residential condominiums on Oʻahu have incomes at or below 80 percent of the area median income. Adoption of HB2801 HD1 and expanded access to low-cost financing for condominium projects through C-PACER programs will allow condominium projects to meet their needs for health and safety upgrades while supporting lower costs of living for occupants.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of HB2801 HD1.



#### Hawaii Solar Energy Association Serving Hawaii Since 1977

# Testimony of the Hawaii Solar Energy Association (HSEA) Regarding HB2801 HD1, Relating to Commercial Property Assessed Financing, Before the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

#### Thursday, March 14, 2024

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and committee members,

The Hawaii Solar Energy Association (HSEA) **supports HB2801 HD1**, which allows high-rise condominium properties to be eligible for commercial property assessed financing.

HSEA members include the majority of locally owned and operated renewable energy companies doing business in the state of Hawaii along with leading global cleantech manufacturers and service providers that invest and sell in our market. We employ thousands of residents in diverse green economy jobs that are innovating, designing, and building Hawaii's pathway to a renewable energy future. We advocate for policies that help Hawaii achieve critical climate and resilience goals by enabling residents and businesses to invest in and benefit from the transition to clean energy.

Investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and other resiliency measures have the potential to decrease overall energy costs, reduce expenses on utility bills, establish dependable and clean energy sources, and safeguard our communities and the environment. Despite progress, certain market segments in Hawaii, such as commercial, multi-family, and low-to-moderate income (LMI) communities, still face accessibility challenges. C-PACER presents an innovative and cost-effective financing solution for these initiatives. Given our island context, it's imperative to accelerate investment in these critical public policy objectives. Extending C-PACER-like financing options to high-rise condominiums is a logical step forward.

Thank you for hearing this bill and providing the opportunity to testify in **support of HB2801 HD1.** 

Respectfully,

/s/ Rocky Mould

**Executive Director** 



1001 Bishop Street | Suite 625 | Honolulu, HI 96813-2830 1-866-295-7282 | Fax: 808-536-2882 aarp.org/hi | aarphi@aarp.org | twitter.com/AARPHawaii facebook.com/AARPHawaii

# The State Legislature Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection Thursday, March 14, 2024 Conference Room 229, 9:30 a.m.

TO: The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair FROM: Keali'i Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawaii

RE: Support for H.B. 2801 HD1 -Relating to Commercial Property Financing

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 140,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

## AARP supports H.B. 2801, HD1 which enables condominiums to participate in C-PACER (authorized commercial property assessed financing).

The C-PACER, an alternative financing option can help condominiums finance the installation of fire safety and other resiliency measures at more attractive rates and terms than may be currently available with conventional financing. This would make it more affordable for all residents, especially retirees who purchased their condominium units decades ago. Often times, these condos are the types of properties likely in need of significant retrofitting and installation of critical life saving features. Many of these older condominium properties are considered NORCs, naturally occurring retirement communities because the significant number of residents who have aged in their condo units over the years. It is critical that these properties have access to the C-PACER in order to ensure access to alternative financing and ideally keep assessments to unit owners at a much lower rate.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support H.B 2801, HD1.



1003 Bishop Street Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Telephone (808) 525-5877

Alison H. Ueoka President

#### **TESTIMONY OF ALISON UEOKA**

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 14, 2024 9:30 a.m.

#### HB 2801, HD1

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection, my name is Alison Ueoka, President of Hawaii Insurers Council. The Hawaii Insurers Council is a non-profit trade association of property and casualty insurance companies licensed to do business in Hawaii. Member companies underwrite approximately forty percent of all property and casualty insurance premiums in the state.

Hawaii Insurers Council <u>supports</u> the intent of the bill which is to allow condominium buildings to access C-PACER loans for the purpose of making their building more resilient. This can include installing fire sprinklers in individual units or re-piping their buildings. We believe that hundreds of condominium buildings are in need of such updates and repairs. Providing AOAOs financing options to improve their buildings will enhance insurability and can reduce insurance costs in the long run.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



March 14, 2024

#### The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

RE: House Bill 2801, HD1, Relating to Commercial Property Assessed Financing HEARING: Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lyndsey Garcia, Director of Advocacy, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawaii and its over 11,000 members. HAR **supports** House Bill 2801, HD1, which allows condominiums to be eligible for commercial property assessed financing. Effective 7/1/3000.

In 2022, Act 183 was passed by the Legislature and signed into law which created a commercial property assessed financing program. This program lets commercial property owners seek financing from a lender to cover the expenses of approved upgrades. They then sign a financing contract with both the lender and the Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority. The costs for these upgrades are repaid through a special tax assessment collected by each county, separate from property value-based taxes. This financing program helps make qualifying improvements more affordable and assists property owners who wish to undertake such improvements. Some of the improvements that this financing tool can help are updated water and wastewater infrastructure, fortifying buildings and structures to withstand wind threats from hurricanes and windstorms, installing clean energy technologies, and many other improvements.

In 2018, Honolulu enacted an ordinance mandating fire safety evaluations for all existing high-rise residential buildings within three years, with a requirement to pass within seven years. Buildings must pass a rigorous Life Safety Evaluation (LSE) or install fire sprinklers. Older condominiums, not originally equipped with sprinklers, face significant costs for retrofitting or compliance with the LSE. Extending property assessed financing to condominiums offers a solution to this challenge. Additionally, this measure can assist older condominiums with aging infrastructure, such as pipes.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





#### **OUR MISSION**

To support and advance public policies that make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

#### **OUR VISION**

Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai'i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai'i can thrive.

#### **BOARD MEMBERS**

Jason Fujimoto Meli James, *Board Chair* Micah Kāne Brandon Kurisu Mike Mohr Brad Nicolai Mike Pietsch

#### **ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Josh Feldman Brittany Heyd Alicia Moy Ed Schultz

Josh Wisch President & Executive Director

827 Fort Street Mall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

+1 (808) 909-3843 info@holomuacollaborative.org

HolomuaCollaborative.org

Page 1 of 1

Committee: Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection
Bill Number: HB 2801, HD1, Relating to Commercial Property Assessed

**Financing** 

Hearing Date and Time: March 14, 2024 at 9:30am (Room 229)

Re: Testimony of Holomua Collaborative in support

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Committee Members:

We write in support of HB 2801, HD1, Relating to Commercial Property Assessed Financing. The purpose of the bill is to allow condominiums to be eligible for Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency (C-PACER) financing. One of the meaningful impacts of this bill is it has the potential to slash the cost of installing fire sprinklers in older condos by making sprinkler systems eligible for C-PACER financing. Not only will this make these buildings safer, but it will make it more likely residents of these condominiums will be able to *afford* to stay in their homes.

C-PACER is an alternative financing option that finances 100% of qualified capital improvement costs, with terms matching the useful life of the equipment installed. This makes payments more affordable than a typical equipment loan. And while C-PACER financing was passed by the legislature in 2022, this bill would extend C-PACER eligibility to condominiums.

While this will help condominium residents with the financing of a variety of improvements, the most acute issue this will address is the high cost of retrofitting many older condominiums in Hawai'i with fire sprinklers. More than 281 high-rise residential buildings, primarily condominiums developed before 1975, have failed to pass safety evaluations due to the lack of fire sprinklers or other safety requirements.

In some cases, condominiums have seen their annual insurance premiums jump because they have not yet installed fire sprinklers. This in turn hikes condominium assessments, which are passed on to residents to pay. Since the fire sprinkler retrofitting is primarily affecting older condominiums, a disproportionate number of lower-income residents are being affected by it. By using C-PACER financing, the cost of these retrofits can be extended across the useful life of the installed fire sprinkler system, dropping the assessment amounts. This, in turn, lowers the price paid by lower-income residents.

Finally, we note that this is a *commercial* financing program and special assessments under this program will *not* be placed on the real property tax bill of individual condominium owners. Therefore, C-PACER will not interfere with mortgages over those units being sold in the secondary market. This measure will simultaneously improve safety and affordability for local residents, and we are proud to support it.

Sincerely.

Josh Wisch

President & Executive Director

<u>HB-2801-HD-1</u> Submitted on: 3/10/2024 12:12:46 PM Testimony for CPN on 3/14/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Testify
Richard Emery	Testifying for Hawaii First Realty LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT.



45 North King Street, Suite 500 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817 • HawaiiEnergy.com • P: (808) 839-8880 • F: (808) 441-6068

Before the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.

Testimony in Support of HB2801 HD1: Relating to Commercial Property Assessed Financing

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support and provide comments on House Bill 2801 HD1.

Hawai'i Energy works to empower island families and businesses on behalf of the Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to make smart energy choices to reduce energy consumption, save money, and pursue a 100% clean energy future. Energy efficiency – the energy we do not use – is the cheapest option to help us achieve our 100% clean energy goal by eliminating waste and being more efficient.

This bill would allow condominiums to benefit from Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy & Resiliency (C-PACER) financing, a voluntary program authorized by Act 183, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, that helps commercial property owners finance qualified capital improvement projects. C-PACER financing can be utilized to install critical fire safety, renewable energy, water conservation, energy efficiency, and resiliency measures at more attractive rates and terms than might be available through conventional financing. What became clear, however, during the necessary City & County of Honolulu process last year to approve the use of C-PACER financing, is that the current statute does not clearly specify whether residential condominium properties can utilize C-PACER financing. House Bill 2801 HD1 makes that specification clear.

House Bill 2801 HD1 has the potential to simultaneously improve both safety and affordability for our residents, and we are thankful for the opportunity to support it.

Sincerely, Caroline Carl Executive Director Hawai'i Energy



#### Testimony in Support of HB 2801, HD1, Relating to the Commercial Property Assessed Financing

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Committee Members:

We write in support HB 2801, HD1, which allows condominiums to qualify for Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency (C-PACER) financing. This will reduce the cost of installing fire sprinklers in older condominiums.

aio is a locally owned company with holdings across a broad range of industries. Our companies are purposedriven and firmly rooted in local values. At aio, Hawai'i is at our core, and through our products and services, we work hard to make Hawai'i a better place for future generations. To do that, we need to make sure that future generations can afford to live in Hawaii. Hawaii has the highest housing costs in the country and alternative financing options make payments more affordable.

C-PACER financing covers 100% of improvement costs, with terms matching the equipment's life, making payments more affordable than typical loans. Extending C-PACER financing to condominiums helps finance a variety of improvements, including addressing the high cost of retrofitting older condominiums with fire sprinklers. This benefits lower-income residents, as these retrofits can now be paid over the sprinkler system's life, reducing assessment amounts.

It's important to note that C-PACER is a commercial financing program that can permit non-profit associations, such as homeowner associations, to use C-PACER. When used this way, as envisioned in this bill, individual unit owners will not be assessed special assessments on their real property bills; rather, it will be assessed upon the association to administer with unit owners.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support,

Brandon Kurisu

aio Family of Companies

Brand H. h.-





# Testimony to Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection March 14, 2024 9:30am Conference Room 229 & VIA videoconference Hawaii State Capitol HB 2801, HD1

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the Committee,

We write in support of HB 2801, HD1, which extends Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency ("C-PACER") financing to condominiums. This allows them to cover 100% of improvement costs, with repayment terms aligned to the equipment's lifespan. One of the most immediate benefits of this would be a significant reduction in the expense of installing fire sprinklers in older condominiums. This cost reduction directly benefits lower-income residents by spreading the retrofit expenses over the sprinkler system's operational life, ultimately lowering assessment amounts.

Established in 1904, Hawaii Gas serves over 70,000 customers on all islands through its utility pipeline infrastructure and propane business, all of whom depend on the company for sustainable, reliable, and affordable gas for water heating, cooking, drying, and other commercial and industrial applications. The company employs some 350 professionals, over 75% of whom are under collective bargaining. As an organization well-versed in the infrastructure required to keep older buildings throughout our state operating, we understand the importance of fire sprinkler systems. And we understand the expense of retrofitting older condominiums with them.

Notably, some older condominiums have faced rising annual insurance premiums due to the absence of fire sprinklers. Consequently, these increased costs are passed on to residents through condominium assessments. Since retrofitting predominantly impacts older condominiums, a disproportionate number of lower-income residents bear the burden. By leveraging C-PACER financing, the cost of fire sprinkler retrofits can be minimized, thus alleviating the assessment burden for these residents.

An essential point to note is that C-PACER, a commercial financing program, allows non-profit associations (such as homeowner associations) to utilize it. When employed in this manner, as outlined in HB 2801, HD1, individual unit owners will not face special assessments on their real property bills. Instead, the assessment will be placed upon the association, ensuring it does not impact any existing mortgages on those individual properties. The associations will assume responsibility for assessing and collecting the C-PACER assessment from the unit owners.

In summary, HB 2801, HD1 represents an intelligent and innovative solution, aimed at retaining local residents in Hawai'i by ensuring their continued affordability.



#### Testimony in Support of HB 2801, HD1, Relating to Commercial Property Assessed Financing

From: Micah Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President - Hawai'i Community Foundation

Re: Support for Commercial Property Assessed Financing

The Hawai'i Community Foundation supports HB 2801, HD1, which extends Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency ("C-PACER") financing to high-rise condominiums, aiming to reduce the cost of installing fire sprinklers in older condos. This measure not only enhances building safety but also increases the likelihood that residents can afford to stay in their homes.

Providing housing for local families is a key area within HCF's CHANGE Framework under the "C" sector of Community and Economy. Among households that accumulate wealth in Hawai'i, 60.3% own their own homes, underscoring how critical home ownership is to local families being able to afford to stay in their home state. Of course, homeownership is just part of the challenge we face. 54.7% of local *renters* are burdened by housing costs as well. And for our local resident living in older condominiums, a particular challenge they face is the high cost of retrofitting those condominiums with fire sprinkler systems.

C-PACER provides an alternative financing option covering 100% of capital improvement costs, with repayment terms aligned to the equipment's lifespan, making payments more manageable than typical loans. It addresses the immediate challenge of the high expense of retrofitting older Hawai'i condominiums with fire sprinklers. Over 281 high-rise residential buildings, primarily developed before 1975, lack fire sprinklers or other safety features and have failed safety evaluations. Some condominiums face rising annual insurance premiums due to this, leading to increased assessments passed on to residents. C-PACER financing can spread retrofit costs over the sprinkler system's useful life, reducing assessment amounts and benefiting lower-income residents.

Importantly, C-PACER is a commercial financing program that can also be utilized by non-profit associations, such as homeowner associations. This bill ensures that individual unit owners are not directly assessed on their property bills; instead, the assessment is placed on the association, avoiding interference with any mortgages on the individual properties.

HB 2801, HD1 is a smart solution that contributes to a more affordable housing market for our community, and HCF is happy to support it.



March 14, 2024

Committee: Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer

**Protection** 

Bill Number: HB 2801, HD1, Relating to Commercial Property

**Assessed Financing** 

Hearing Date and Time: March 14, 2024, 9:30am

Re: Testimony of HPM Building Supply in Support

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the Committee,

We support HB 2801, HD1, which expands Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency (C-PACER) financing to condominiums. This bill aims to reduce the cost of installing fire sprinklers in older condos by making sprinkler systems eligible for C-PACER financing. Not only will this enhance building safety, but it will also increase the likelihood that residents can afford to remain in their homes.

HPM Building Supply is a 100% employee-owned company serving Hawaii's home improvement market and building industry for over 100 years since 1921. With 18 locations across Hawaii and Washington State, HPM offers various services and products, including retail stores, building supply and lumber yards, home design centers, drafting and design services, and manufacturing facilities. HPM is dedicated to enhancing homes, improving lives, and transforming communities one home at a time. As an organization dedicated to connecting local families with housing, we know how dire the housing cost situation in Hawai'i has become for local families.

This bill could reduce home costs, especially for residents in older condominiums. C-PACER offers an alternative financing option covering 100% of capital improvement costs, with repayment terms aligned to the equipment's lifespan, making payments more manageable than typical loans. It will provide immediate help with the high expense of retrofitting older Hawai'i condominiums with fire sprinklers. Over 281 high-rise residential buildings, primarily developed before 1975, lack fire sprinklers or other safety features and have failed safety evaluations. Some condominiums face rising annual insurance premiums due to this, leading to increased assessments passed on to residents. C-PACER financing can spread retrofit costs over the sprinkler system's useful life, reducing assessment amounts and benefiting lower-income residents.

This bill also aligns with HPM's values of Heart, Character, and Growth. By supporting our communities' families, we invest in our future. We show that we care about the future generations and our current workforce shaping it. Our company's value of Heart is caring for one another as a community.

Sincerely,

Dennis Lin

Community Relations Administrator



HPMHAWAII.COM



# Statement of Meli James President HVCA

HB 2801, HD1, Relating to Commercial Property Assessed Financing

Aloha,

We support HB 2801, HD1, which extends Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency ("C-PACER") financing to high-rise condominiums, covering 100% of improvement costs with repayment terms aligned to the equipment's lifespan. This significantly reduces the cost of installing fire sprinklers in older condominiums, benefiting lower-income residents by spreading the retrofit expenses over the sprinkler system's operational life and lowering assessment amounts.

The Hawaii Venture Capital Association (HVCA) is a local nonprofit that stands as a nexus for entrepreneurs, capital foundation, and networking opportunities in Hawaii. Our organization helps to foster entrepreneurship through education and exposure to key members in our business community in order to support our islands' emerging entrepreneurs, all while sustaining a vibrant and successful business community. To keep these types of entrepreneurs in Hawai'i and even expand our entrepreneurial ecosystem, though, these entrepreneurs need a place to live that they can afford. Sometimes that means older condominiums, where they are faced with the costs of retrofitting them.

Specifically, some older condominiums face rising annual insurance premiums due to the absence of fire sprinklers, passing these costs on to residents through condominium assessments. Since retrofitting primarily impacts older condominiums, a disproportionate number of lower-income residents bear the burden. By using C-PACER financing, the cost of fire sprinkler retrofits can be minimized, alleviating the assessment burden for these residents.

Importantly, C-PACER allows non-profit associations, like homeowner associations, to utilize it. When used this way, individual unit owners will not face special assessments on their real property bills. Instead, the assessment will be placed upon the association, ensuring it does not affect existing mortgages on those properties. The associations will be responsible for assessing and collecting the C-PACER assessment from the unit owners.

HB 2801, HD1 is a good solution to keep local residents in Hawai'i by making sure they can afford to stay.

President HVCA M^NA UP



Statement of Meli James Cofounder Mana Up

HB 2801, HD1, Relating to Commercial Property Assessed Financing

Aloha,

We support HB 2801, HD1, which extends Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency ("C-PACER") financing to condominiums, covering 100% of improvement costs with repayment terms aligned to the equipment's lifespan. This significantly reduces the cost of installing fire sprinklers in older condominiums, benefiting lower-income residents by spreading the retrofit expenses over the sprinkler system's operational life and lowering assessment amounts.

Mana Up is a statewide initiative that helps provide entrepreneurs in Hawai'i with the resources and tools to grow their business and scale globally. As these entrepreneurs continue to grow, they also help contribute to our expanding our local economy. As part of our mission, we aim to sustain the local economy through economic diversification, local job creation, community giveback, investment, and a regenerative culture of entrepreneurship – providing a better future for generations to come here in Hawai'i. To keep these types of entrepreneurs in Hawai'i and even expand our entrepreneurial ecosystem, though, these entrepreneurs need a place to live that they can afford. Sometimes that means older condominiums, where they are faced with the costs of retrofitting them.

Specifically, some older condominiums face rising annual insurance premiums due to the absence of fire sprinklers, passing these costs on to residents through condominium assessments. Since retrofitting primarily impacts older condominiums, a disproportionate number of lower-income residents bear the burden. By using C-PACER financing, the cost of fire sprinkler retrofits can be minimized, alleviating the assessment burden for these residents.

Importantly, C-PACER allows non-profit associations, like homeowner associations, to utilize it. When used this way, individual unit owners will not face special assessments on their real property bills. Instead, the assessment will be placed upon the association, ensuring it does not affect existing mortgages on those properties. The associations will be responsible for assessing and collecting the C-PACER assessment from the unit owners.

Being that at Mana Up, we help local entrepreneurs grow their product companies and scale globally with the mission to expand the economy and create jobs for locals so they can support the high cost of living here, we are happy to support this bill. HB 2801, HD1 is a good solution to keep local residents in Hawai'i by making sure they can afford to stay.

Sincerely,

Meli James | Cofounder, Mana Up

## TORI RICHARD

March 14, 2024

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 2801, HD1, which extends Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency (C-PACER) financing to condominiums. This bill is crucial for reducing the cost of installing fire sprinklers in older condominiums, which is vital for ensuring future generations in Hawaii have affordable housing options.

Tori Richard has manufactured in Honolulu for over 60 years, and we continue to proudly do so today. As a long-time medium-sized Hawaii employer, we recognize the challenge high housing costs pose to everyone working to make ends meet in Hawaii, including our employees. This bill is a good way to address those housing costs and keep local working families in Hawaii.

Hawaii's high housing costs are a significant challenge, and the expense of retrofitting older condominiums with fire sprinklers has exacerbated this issue. C-PACER financing, covering 100% of improvement costs with terms aligned to the equipment's lifespan, offers a more affordable payment structure than typical loans. This financing option will not only help address the high cost of fire sprinkler retrofitting but also benefit lower-income residents by spreading the costs over the sprinkler system's life, reducing assessment amounts.

It's worth noting that C-PACER is a commercial financing program that can also be used by nonprofit associations, such as homeowner associations. Under this bill, individual unit owners will not be directly assessed special assessments on their real property bills. Instead, the assessment will be placed upon the association, ensuring it does not impact any existing mortgages on those individual properties. The associations will be responsible for assessing and collecting the C-PACER assessment from the unit owners.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Sincerely,

President & CEO

Tori Richard, Ltd.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION Thursday, March 14, 2024 — 9:30 a.m.

## **Ulupono Initiative <u>supports</u> HB 2801 HD1, Relating to Commercial Property Assessed Financing**

Dear Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono supports HB 2801 HD1**, which allows condominiums to be eligible for commercial property assessed financing (CPACE).

Ulupono believes that the Hawai'i Green Infrastructure Authority is well positioned to support the state with an expanded CPACE program, which will provide an additional tool for condominiums and commercial entities to finance infrastructure such as renewable energy projects, cesspool conversions, and agricultural water systems. Property owners can use this financing to cover costs of projects using no public dollars or taxpayer funds for said financing. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, more than 37 states plus the District of Columbia have CPACE-enabling legislation and more than \$2 billion in projects have been financed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata Director of Government Affairs

#### HB-2801-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 12:52:03 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/14/2024 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Testify
Eric B Johnson	Testifying for Contessa Condominium	Support	Written Testimony Only

#### Comments:

Committee Relating to Commerical Property Assessment Financing.

Chari Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Committee members.

Re: HB 2801, HD1

The Contessa Condominium (144 units) is in support of HB 2801, HD1. The C-PACER option for financing is desperately needed to help comply with Ordinance 22-2. Many of our owners are elderly and are on fixed incomes and cannot afford the massive assessment to comply with the mandated Ordinance 22-2. Some of our owner are also ALICE, (asset limited, income constrained and employed) and are in the same situation as our elderly. HB2801 will give a lifeline to them as well as our other owners.

We are in favor of HB 2801, HD1.

Eric B Johnson, President Contessa AOAO

#### March 11, 2024

TO: Honorable Jared Keohokalole, Chairperson and Members of the

Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

FROM: Carl Takamura, President, Parkland Gardens AOAO Board of Directors

RE: HB 2801

As one of the approximately 350 residential units impacted by the tragic Marco Polo fire and the subsequent City's fire safety ordinance, our board has been diligently researching and gathering information regarding the cost and impact on both owners and residents of installing a fire sprinkler system in our building. We understand that it will cost over \$2 million to install such a system and this unanticipated expense will impose a very heavy burden upon our owners, especially those on fixed incomes.

This bill will enable residential high-rise buildings like Parkland Gardens to participate in C-PACER financing, which will help condominium properties finance the installation of fire safety projects at more attractive rates and terms that may be currently available. It will be of enormous assistance to the many owners, and their tenants, faced with both the cost and urgency of addressing the issue of fire safety in high-rise buildings.

We respectfully urge you to approve this vital proposal.

Mahalo,

Carl Takamura

Carl Takamura
President, Parkland Gardens AOAO Board of Directors



# LiUNA!

#### THE SENATE KA 'AHA KENEKOA

## THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

#### COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 14, 2024, 9:30 am Conference Room 329 State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Re: Testimony in Support of HB2801

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the committee,

The Laborer's International Union Local 368 represents 5000+ members working in construction, environmental remediation, maintenance, food service, health care, clerical, and other occupations, as well as in state, local, and municipal government jobs and as mail handlers in the U.S. Postal Service across the State.

The Laborers' International Union Local 368 **supports HB2801** which allows condominiums to be eligible for commercial property assessed financing.

This measure will help protect our citizens by making it easier to finance fire mitigation safety technology in high rises. These resiliency projects can assist not just in the safety issue, but it can also help to harden other infrastructure and energy efficiency improvements in those buildings, saving on electric, water, and insurance rates.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2801.

Respectfully,

Peter A. Ganaban

Business Manager/Secretary Treasurer Laborers International Union of North America - Local 368 1617 Palama Street Honolulu, HI 96817

PETER A. GANABAN
Business Manager/
Secretary-Treasurer

ALFONSO OLIVER

JOBY NORTH II

Vice President

President

TONI FIGUEROA
Recording Secretary

MARTIN ARANAYDO
Executive Board

ORLANDO PAESTE
Executive Board

JOSEPH YAW
Executive Board

ESTHER AILA Auditor

RUSSELL NAPIHAA

Auditor

MARK TRAVALINO
Auditor

YUGAN HOTTENDORF Sergeant-At-Arms

LiUNA Local 368 1617 Palama Street Honolulu, HI 96817 Phone: (808) 841-5877 Fax: (808) 847-7829 www.local368.org



Feel the Power





## Testimony of **Nicholas Zuba, Deputy Director, C-PACE Alliance,** before the

#### SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Thursday, March 14, 2024; Time: 9:30 AM HT Conference Room 229 & Videoconference Hawaii State Capitol

#### In **SUPPORT** of **House Bill No. 2801**, RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED FINANCING

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of House Bill No. 2801**, which allows condominiums to be eligible for Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy & Resiliency (C-PACER) financing.

My name is Nicholas Zuba, and I am the Deputy Director of C-PACE Alliance, Inc., a nonprofit business association that advocates for best practices in C-PACE programs. More than 30 U.S. states and the District of Columbia have adopted a C-PACE statute, facilitating over \$5 billion in financing from private entities for more than 3,000 properties.

Act 183, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, which authorized C-PACER, was signed into law on June 27, 2022. C-PACER is a <u>voluntary</u> program that helps commercial property owners finance clean energy and resiliency improvements for their commercial properties in Hawaii. The financing provides several benefits to commercial property owners in making these improvements, including long term repayment, lower interest rates, and non-accelerating financing. The financing is secured by a non-ad valorem special tax assessment that is placed on the commercial property owner's tax bill or stand-alone tax bill. Before an assessment can be placed on the commercial property, lender consent by the mortgage holder(s) is required, which is already stipulated in the current statute.

In order for C-PACER financing to be provided to commercial property owners throughout Hawaii, each County must pass an ordinance and sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the program's administrator, the Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority (HGIA). While working with Honolulu County's Council and its Committees, it became clear that condominiums could also benefit from this program to install allowable improvements, while availing themselves to the benefits of C-PACER financing.

C-PACER is a commercial financing program that can permit non-profit associations, such as homeowner associations, to use C-PACER. In this scenario, the individual unit owners <u>will not</u> be assessed special assessments on their real property bills; rather, it will be assessed upon the association, therefore not interfering with any mortgagees on those individual properties. The associations will be responsible to assess and collect the C-PACER assessment with the unit owners.

Condominiums appear to have a great need and can benefit tremendously from C-PACER. This amendment would allow C-PACER to be utilized to help solve the state's most important safety issue – fire protection – while also providing the association and unit owners with an affordable financing option to enhance the sustainability and resiliency of their properties throughout Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2801. We urge this committee to expedite its passage.





#### In Alliance with Apollo

300 Colorado St., Suite 2000, Austin, Texas 78701 **O:** 512.599.9037 ◆ **FAX:** 512.532.0792

## Testimony of **Michael Yaki**

Senior Vice President & Sr. Counsel
Petros PACE Finance LLC
before the

#### COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Thursday, March 14, 2024, 9:30 am State Capitol, Conference Room 229 in consideration of

#### HB 2801, HD1

#### RELATING TO COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED FINANCING

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2801, HD1, relating to condominiums. I am writing on behalf of Petros PACE Finance, the nation's largest originator of commercial PACE financing in the country, and a leader in developing and innovating commercial PACE policy and programs.

We are writing in strong support of the principles underlying HB 2801, HD1.

The City & County of Honolulu passed Bill 56 on December 6, 2023, authorizing C-PACER to finance qualifying improvements on eligible properties. As the bill was being heard by the Committees and City Council, it became evident that this financing program could also benefit Condominiums in need of installing fire safety measures or upgrading resiliency, energy and/or water efficiency measures, by providing longer terms over the useful life of the equipment being installed, thereby making this financing option more affordable to condo owners.

First, thank you for your support of HB 2088, which established C-PACER financing in Hawaii. I am pleased to report that interest is strong and we hope to report the first uses of C-PACER in the Hawaiian Islands before the end of the year.

Second, we participated in meetings organized by the Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority to meet with condominium association owners to hear their concerns about the need for affordable financing to meet new fire and safety measures for their existing buildings. There is an existing challenge to helping condominiums because while there are common areas that utilize, for example, fire sprinkler systems, we are limited to only looking at multifamily structures as commercial providers. We believe the language proposed will allow C-PACER capital providers like us to work with condominium associations by creating an assessment "anchor" for the C-

PACER financing to the condominium association, which owns the structure/common area. Since the association is a corporate entity, not residential unit, HB 2801, HD1 bypasses this concern.

It is important to distinguish that because the CPACER assessment will attach to a parcel owned by a condo or homeowner association, it is attaching to a parcel owned by a corporate entity. This is not residential PACE. No unit will have a CPACER assessment on its property, since that is prohibited by current law and not changed in this legislation. CPACER will be the same as any debt incurred by a condo or homeowner association for repair or upgrades to common areas -- a debt of the association, not an individual unit owner.

Finally, I wish to address the mistaken and wholly misplaced concerns raised by some who are invoking Los Angeles County's ("LAC") repeal of their PACE program as evidence of "issues" with commercial PACE.

First, the LAC program was *residential* only. There was *no commercial program*. Secondly, the LAC program was its own program where LAC used their own bonding authority under California law.

To the contrary, Commercial PACE has continuously operated throughout LAC to the current day. Over 78 individual cities inside of LAC have authorized CPACE programs to operate. Our company has financed multiple projects, including just last year, within the boundaries of Los Angeles County. So have many of our colleagues.

Simply put, any reference to Los Angeles County's revocation of their residential PACE program is irrelevant to this discussion. As stated many times before, this legislation will only allow a CPACER lien to be attached to the condominium association, not individual condominium units or their owners.

Thank you for your attention, and we are available to assist in any way.

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Sincerely

Senior Vice President & Sr. Counsel

Policy and Programs

Petros PACE Finance, LLC



Honolulu, Hawaii 96826-2097
Telephone: (808) 941.0556
Fax: (808) 945.0019

Nite for Web site: www.hcul.org
Email: info@hcul.org

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection
Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 9:30 AM
Conference Room 229

#### Comments on HB 2801, Relating to Condominiums

To: The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice-Chair Members of the Committee

My name is Stefanie Sakamoto, and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaii Credit Union League, the local trade association for 47 Hawaii credit unions, representing over 864,000 credit union members across the state.

HCUL offers the following comments on HB 2801, Relating to Condominiums. This bill allows condominiums to be eligible for commercial property assessed financing (C-PACE).

While we understand that the intent of this measure is to provide a method of financing for certain improvements, we have been concerned about this particular type of loan being secured by the property itself, which means it is a senior lien. C-PACE, unlike residential PACE, requires written consent by each holder and servicer of existing mortgage loans.

We understand that HB 2801 proposes to use the C-PACE model to apply the loan program to condominium properties. We would like to ensure that the prior written consent provision remains intact, as this would protect the mortgagor and the mortgagee. Additionally, we have concerns with regards to the definition of "commercial property". We concur with the language put forth by the Hawaii Bankers Association on this matter.

Further, we would note that many Hawaii financial institutions, including credit unions, currently offer specialized, low-cost loans for certain home improvements.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue.



PLUMBERS AND FITTERS LOCAL 675 UNITED ASSOCIATION

#### THE SENATE KA 'AHA KENEKOA

#### THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE **REGULAR SESSION OF 2024**

#### COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 14, 2024, 9:30 am Conference Room 329 State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Re: Testimony in Support of HB2801

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the committee:

HB 2801 allows condominiums to be eligible for commercial property assessed financing. The Plumbers & Fitters UA Local 675 strongly supports HB2801 as a program that can benefit our community in protection against fire hazards and helping our City and State mitigate greenhouse gas.

My name is Valentino Caria. I am the Business Manager, Financial Secretary for the UNITED ASSOCIATION OF PLUMBERS AND FITTERS OF HAWAII, Local 675. Our organization represents over 2,000 members working in the Plumbing, Pipefitting, Air Conditioning, and Fire Sprinkler construction and building trades industry in Hawaii. We are in support of Bill 2801 urging the City Administration to enter negotiations with the Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority to establish a commercial property assessed financing program (also known as "C-PACE") for the City and County of Honolulu.

Act 183, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, authorized commercial 2 property assessed financing, also known as C-PACER, in Hawaii. Recently, Honolulu County passed CPACE (Bill 56 of 2023).

These resiliency projects can assist in the safety issue that Honolulu County needs to mitigate for fire issues in more than 281 high rise buildings.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2801.

Respectfully. Valentino Ceria Business Manager / Financial Secretary - Treasurer Plumbers and Fitters Local 675

1109 Bethel St., Lower Level • Honolulu, HI 96813 • Ph.: (808) 536-5454 • Fax: (808) 528-2629 • www.plumbershawaii.com



<u>HB-2801-HD-1</u> Submitted on: 3/8/2024 5:11:02 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/14/2024 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	Organization	<b>Testifier Position</b>	Testify
Scott Kidd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure