

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 21 2025

RE: H.B. No. 606
H.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Hawaiian Affairs and Housing, to which was referred H.B. No. 606, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOMELANDS,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Extend the Act 279 Special Fund to June 30, 2028;
- (2) Deposit funds into and appropriate funds out of the Act 279 Special Fund to eliminate the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands waitlist;
- (3) Require the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to submit a strategic plan detailing the anticipated uses of the funds appropriated; and
- (4) Require an annual report.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Ka Lāhui Hawai'i, Kūpa'a Lāhui Alliance, Queen's Court, Faith Action for Community Equity, and twenty-eight individuals.



Your Committees received testimony in opposition to this measure from Ohana Unity Party and two individuals.

Your Committees find that as a result of cost-driven migration, more Native Hawaiians now live outside of the State than in the State. The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands plays a vital role in addressing the housing needs of Native Hawaiians and reversing the disturbing trend of indigenous people being priced out of their ancestral homelands. However, historic underfunding has led to the contemporary crisis of the number of qualified beneficiaries vastly outnumbering the agency's ability to provide habitable land and housing to Native Hawaiians in the State. Accordingly, in 2022, the Legislature appropriated \$600,000,000 through Act 279 to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to eliminate the extensive waitlist of applicants for residential, agricultural, or pastoral leases for trust land managed by the Department. However, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands requires additional funding and time to accomplish this goal. This measure will appropriately address this issue by depositing additional funds into the Act 279 Special Fund and appropriating funds out of the Act 279 Special Fund to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands for the purpose of eliminating the applicant waitlist.

Your Committees note that this measure contains an unspecified appropriation amount. Should your Committee on Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committees respectfully request that it consider inserting an appropriation amount of \$50 million for the purposes of the Act 279 Special Fund.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Hawaiian Affairs and Housing that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 606, H.D. 1, and recommend that it pass Second Reading and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Hawaiian Affairs
and Housing,


STANLEY CHANG, Chair


HERBERT M. RICHARDS, III, Chair



