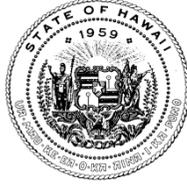


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
CURT T. OTAGURO
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

February 11, 2025
2:00 p.m.
State Capitol
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

HB 739, HD1
RELATING TO HOUSING

The House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

The Department of Transportation (DOT) strongly supports HB739, HD1, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program as a proactive measure to address Hawaii's critical housing crisis.

Hawaii's housing affordability challenges are among the most pressing issues of our time. With the median home price now exceeding \$800,000, homeownership has become unattainable for many local families. This untenable situation has forced an increasing number of residents, including essential workers, to leave Hawaii in search of affordable living options elsewhere. The resulting outmigration not only diminishes our workforce but also erodes the cultural fabric and sense of community that make Hawaii unique.

DOT recognizes the intrinsic link between housing stability, economic resilience, and cultural preservation. By enabling local families to remain in Hawaii, HB739, HD1 not only meets an urgent housing need but also lays the foundation for a more secure and vibrant future for our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



DEAN MINAKAMI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of
DEAN MINAKAMI
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

February 11, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 325

In consideration of
H.B. 739 HD1
RELATING TO HOUSING

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** HB 739 HD1, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program under the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

We are in full support of the program's goal of creating an inventory of homes for local residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



GARY S. SUGANUMA
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION
Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau
P.O. BOX 259
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540
FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

**TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. No. 739, H.D. 1, Relating to Housing

BEFORE THE:

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

DATE: Tuesday, February 11, 2025

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 325

Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding H.B. 739, H.D. 1, for your consideration.

H.B. 739, H.D. 1, establishes a new "Kamaaina Homes Program" to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or buyers who limit occupancy to owner-occupants or resident tenants that live and work in the State. The purpose is to secure a dedicated housing supply for locals.

Section 2 of the bill, on page 10, line 3, adds new section 201H-E(b), HRS, establishing a chapter 247 conveyance tax exemption for property sold for which a county purchases a deed restriction pursuant to the Kamaaina Homes Program.

Section 5 of the bill, on page 24, line 13, amends section 247-3, HRS, by adding a conveyance tax exemption for any document or instrument conveying real property that contains a county owned deed restriction pursuant to the Kamaaina Homes Program.

The measure has a defective effective date of July 1, 3000.

DOTAX requests that if this bill is passed, section 5 take effect on January 1, 2026, to allow for form and instruction changes necessary to implement the proposed conveyance tax exemption.

DOTAX also recommends clarification on whether the exemption is intended to apply to actual conveyances of county owned deed restrictions. If so, then DOTAX recommends that page 24, lines 13-15 be revised as follows:

(18) Any document or instrument conveying real property with a county owned deed restriction pursuant to subpart __, part III of chapter 201H, including any document or instrument conveying the county owned deed restriction.

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



HB739 HD1
RELATING TO HOUSING
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

February 11th, 2025

2:10 p.m.

Room 325

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, members of the committee:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) provides **SUPPORT** on HB739 HD1, which would establish Kamaaina homes program and provide counties funding through the dwelling unit revolving fund established pursuant to section 201H-191 to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

This bill proposes a State-funded initiative that partners HHFDC with counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. These restrictions will run with the land in perpetuity. The program looks to work with the individual needs of each county to leverage existing county deed restriction programs and other county housing initiatives. These initiatives will assist in preserving affordability for Kama'aina and protect property value to ensure it remains attainable and accessible to Hawai'i residents as primary residences, with the requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being sold to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals. It will prioritize kama'aina housing needs and is in an investment in local community, sustainable economy, and future generations of kama'aina.

This initiative is in line with OHA's mission to improve the conditions of Native Hawaiians and ensure their equitable access to housing, education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. It reflects our commitment to advancing the well-being of our beneficiaries and the broader community.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to share our mana'o and urges the Legislature to PASS SB490. Mahalo nui loa.

KAUA'I COUNTY HOUSING AGENCY

ADAM ROVERSI, DIRECTOR



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Testimony of Adam Roversi

Director, Kaua'i County Housing Agency

Before the

House Committee on Housing

Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

In consideration of

House Bill 739 Relating to Housing

Honorable Chair Luke A. Evslin, Vice Chair Tyson K. Miyake, and Members of the Committee:

The Kaua'i County Housing Agency **strongly supports** HB739, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

The Kaua'i County Housing Agency has been studying similar long-standing programs in several rocky mountain communities on the mainland. Like Kaua'i, these mainland jurisdictions have seen high demand for resorts and second homes that squeeze out local residents, including essential workers necessary for a functioning community. Deed restricted homes available only to local employed renters or owners is a demonstrated potential solution to ensuring much needed housing for local residents.

Kaua'i County has already begun developing administrative rules to implement such a program. We would very much welcome a partnership with the state to help make it a reality, and encourage the legislature to permit Counties to utilize a reasonable portion of program funds allocated to the Counties for administrative costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** and for your consideration.





1001 Bishop Street #625 | Honolulu, HI 96813
866-295-7282 | aarp.org/hi | hiaarp@aarp.org |
[Twitter.com/aarphawaii](https://twitter.com/aarphawaii) | facebook.com/aarphawaii

**The State Legislature
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Tuesday, February 11, 2025
Conference Room 325
Room 325, 2:00 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable David Tarnas
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Support for H.B. 739, HD1 Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee:

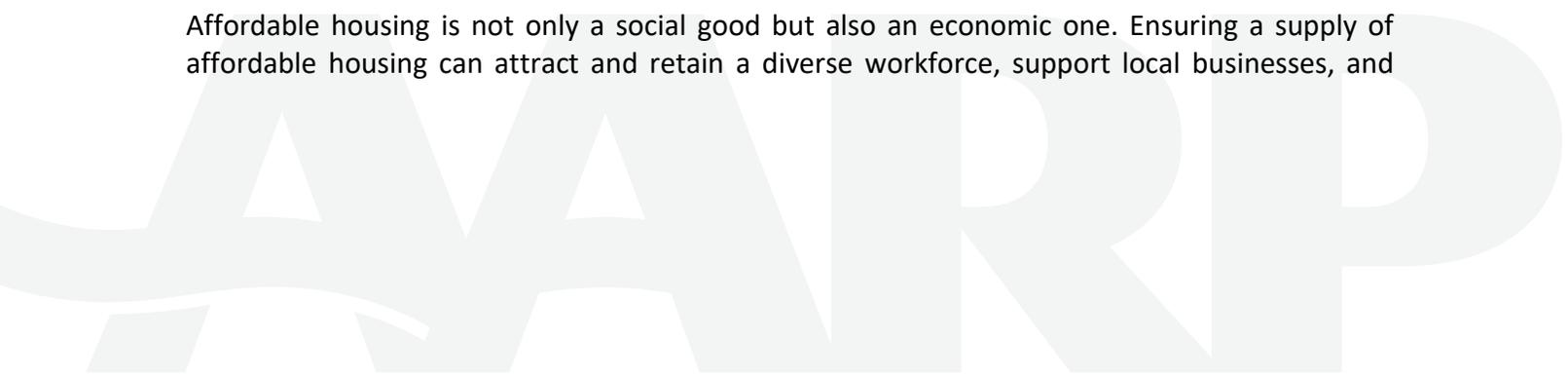
I am Keali'i Lopez, State Director of AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social impact organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families. On behalf of our nearly 135,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony.

AARP is in support of H.B. 739, HD1 which seeks to establish the Kamaaina Homes Program that provides funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or home buyers. AARP believes this bill is an important step towards addressing the housing affordability crisis in Hawaii.

H.B. 739 HD1 aligns with AARP's housing policy, which emphasizes the importance of increasing the availability of affordable housing options for all residents, particularly older adults. By allowing voluntary deed restrictions, this bill encourages property owners to contribute to the creation of affordable housing units, thereby helping to meet the growing demand for such housing.

Stable and affordable housing is a cornerstone of vibrant and resilient communities. By supporting this measure, we can foster long-term community stability and prevent displacement caused by rising housing costs. This bill provides a mechanism for preserving affordable housing stock, which benefits all residents.

Affordable housing is not only a social good but also an economic one. Ensuring a supply of affordable housing can attract and retain a diverse workforce, support local businesses, and



contribute to the overall economic health of our state. Senate Bill 490 can play a pivotal role in achieving these economic benefits. Having affordable housing enables working families stay together and help support older adults to age in place. This stability is essential for the well-being of our aging population

H.B. 739, HD1 represents a thoughtful and balanced approach to addressing our state's housing challenges. By establishing the Kamaaina Homes program, Hawaii can make significant strides towards ensuring that all residents have access to safe, affordable, and stable housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.

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TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

735 Bishop Street, Suite 417

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: CONVEYANCE; Kamaaina Homes Program; Voluntary Deed Restrictions

BILL NUMBER: HB 739 HD 1

INTRODUCED BY: House Committee on Housing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

SYNOPSIS: Adds a new subpart to chapter 201H, Part III, HRS establishing the Kamaaina Homes Program (“Program”) within the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (“HHFDC”).

The Program allows the purchase of voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or buyers, to be funded through the dwelling unit revolving fund established pursuant to section 201H-191, HRS. Upon application of the county, HHFDC may allocate an annual lump sum necessary for a county to purchase a voluntary deed restriction from an eligible homeowner or homebuyer.

Definitions provided for “eligible homeowner or homebuyer” and “qualified business”.

New section 201H-C, HRS, the deed restriction shall run with the land in perpetuity, binding all future owners, successors and assigns.

New section 201H-E, HRS, provides property with a deed restriction shall be exempt from the following with conforming amendments made to: (a) Chapter 343 Environmental impact statements; (b) Chapter 247 Conveyance tax; and (c) Chapter 103D Hawaii procurement code.

Makes conforming amendments to section 201H-191(a), HRS, relating to the dwelling unit revolving fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 3000.

STAFF COMMENTS: If it is decided to implement this program and allow a conveyance tax exemption for properties on which a deed restriction is recorded, perhaps consideration should be given to the document that places the deed restriction on the property in the first place, because the conveyance creating the restriction will be for consideration and it is not clear that any of the existing exemptions in section 247-3, HRS, would apply to that conveyance. For example:

- (18) Any document or instrument conveying real property with, **or to attach,** a county owned deed restriction pursuant to subpart , part III of chapter 201H.

Digested: 2/7/2025



 808-733-7060
 808-737-4977

 1259 A'ala Street, Suite 300
Honolulu, HI 96817

February 11, 2025

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

RE: House Bill 739, HD1, Relating to Housing

HEARING: Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, 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 10,000 members. HAR provides **comments** on House Bill 739, HD1, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers. Effective 7/1/3000.

Hawai'i REALTORS® supports the creation of more workforce housing for Hawaii residents. We do however have concerns that the deed restrictions contained in this measure are in perpetuity. Having deed restrictions on a property in perpetuity can be problematic especially in land use planning, as communities can change and uses for a property may need to change as well over time. We respectfully suggest that the deed restrictions be amortized over 10 years but are open to other proposals for alternative timeframes. We look forward to further discussions on this matter.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.





Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

February 11, 2025

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SUPPORT for HB 739 HD1 - RELATING TO HOUSING

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of HB 739 HD1** which would establish the Kama'āina Homes Program, funding and allowing counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners and homebuyers.

We believe in fixing incentives, and this includes creating innovative and targeted incentives. Hawai'i homebuyers continue to struggle to compete with non-Hawai'i buyers both because of lack of funds and a non-dedicated housing stock. This innovative incentive will let counties purchase **voluntary** deed restrictions that require the owner-occupant and/or renters be recently retired from or be a full time employee of a Hawai'i business, with appropriate protections for those experiencing involuntary unemployment or disability. In the long-term, more homes volunteer for the deed restriction creating a stock of homes dedicated to those who work and live in Hawai'i.

This alone will neither solve the housing crisis, nor increase housing supply, however, it is a long range approach to incentivize homebuyers and homeowners to dedicate their home to local working families of tomorrow.

Hawai'i YIMBY (*Yes In My Backyard*) is a volunteer-led grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting bold and effective solutions for Hawai'i's devastating housing crisis. Our members are deeply concerned about Hawai'i's chronic and worsening housing



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

shortage, which has caused home prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushes thousands of kama'āina out to the mainland or into homelessness every single year.

We ask your support for this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Damien Waikoloa
Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega
Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY





HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB739 HD1 – Relating to Housing
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Thursday, February 11, 2025 at 2:00PM | Conf. Rm. 325 and via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB739 HD1**, which would establish the “Kama‘aina Homes Program” which would provide funding to counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions to preserve our existing housing stock for residents.

This legislation is thoughtful and based on successful models like the “Vail InDEED” program in Colorado which is a nationally recognized model being duplicated in many jurisdictions across the country¹. The program has been successful in housing Vail’s workforce and has been an efficient use of tax payer money—in 2020 it was reported that the InDEED program acquired 153 units costing \$10.5M through the voluntary deed restriction program in comparison to when the town purchased a 288 unit apartment for \$200M².

Under current market conditions, Hawaii’s soaring housing costs—now with median home prices exceeding \$900,000³—have made homeownership unattainable for many local families. According to UHERO’s “Hawaii Housing Factbook 2024,” only 20% of residents can afford to purchase a home in the current market⁴. This program tackles this pressing issue by creating a dedicated stock of housing units exclusively reserved for local residents, effectively establishing a “locals-only” housing market.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,

Arjuna Heim
Director of Housing Policy

¹ <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/casestudies/study-081121.html>

² <https://www.vaildaily.com/news/vail-indeed-program-earns-national-recognition-for-innovation/>

³ <https://www.locationshawaii.com/learn/market-reports/hawaii-statewide-real-estate-report/>

⁴ <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/HawaiiHousingFactbook2024.pdf>

February 11, 2025

TO: Chair Tarnas and members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
RE: HB 739, HD1 RELATING TO HOUSING.

Dear Chair Tarnas and Committee Members,

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a nonprofit dedicated to creating opportunities for Hawai'i's next generation by ending the workforce housing shortage.

We support the establishment of the Kamaaina Homes Program through HB 739, HD1.

The Kamaaina Homes Program is modeled on a similar program in Vail, Colorado. Like many of Hawai'i's communities, Vail is heavily reliant on tourism. Furthermore, tourism has adversely impacted their locality's supply of affordable housing. The housing shortage leads to a workforce shortage. As HHF concluded in our sixth policy brief, the Vail InDeed model is uniquely tailored to Hawai'i's housing constraints.¹

Deed restrictions can preserve local housing supply. By purchasing deed restrictions from homeowners, county governments can ensure deed-restricted homes remain permanently affordable for residents.

Under this program, residents who work at least thirty hours per week in the community, or who meet another set condition, are eligible to live in these deed-restricted homes. This program will foster a new, permanent affordable housing market for working residents.

We are grateful for your careful consideration of HB 739, HD1.

Thank you,



Lee Wang
Executive Director
Housing Hawai'i's Future
lee@hawaiisfuture.org



Perry Arrasmith
Director of Policy
Housing Hawai'i's Future
perry@hawaiisfuture.org

¹ Housing Hawai'i's Future. "Policy Brief #6: Deed Restrictions in Maui County." 2024.
<https://www.hawaiisfuture.org/resources/policy-brief-mau-deed-restrictions>.

To: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

From: Chevelle Davis, Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 739 H.D. 1 – Relating to Housing

Hearing: Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 2:00 PM, Conference Room 325

POSITION: Support with amendments

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony **supporting, with amendments, H.B. No. 739 H.D. 1**, which establishes the Kama'āina Homes Program to provide funding to counties for purchasing voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners and homebuyers.

Stable, affordable housing is critical to the well-being of Hawai'i's families and keiki. However, the rising cost of homeownership continues to push local families out of the state, threatening our communities' cultural and economic fabric. By creating the Kama'āina Homes Program, this bill offers a long-term solution to keep homes affordable for future generations while supporting local families who wish to stay and raise their keiki in Hawai'i.

Voluntary deed restrictions have proven effective in preventing speculative real estate practices that drive up housing costs. By ensuring that homes remain accessible to local residents rather than outside investors, this bill strengthens the stability of our communities and prevents the continued displacement of Native Hawaiian and generational local families.

We believe that investing in programs that protect local homeownership aligns with our mission to ensure that all keiki in Hawai'i have the opportunity to grow up in a safe, supportive, and stable environment. We urge the committee to pass **H.B. No. 739 H.D.1** to take a meaningful step toward securing affordable housing for our communities and future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this critical measure.

Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement
91-1270 Kinoiki St., Bldg. 1
Kapolei, HI 96707

Hawai'i State House of Representatives
Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
HB739 – Relating to Housing

RE: Strong support of HB739 HD1

February 11, 2025

The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) writes in **strong support of HB739**. This bill is critical to mitigating the ongoing and worsening impacts of the rising cost of living that make it difficult for working local and Native Hawaiian residents to secure attainable housing.

The average price of a home in Hawai'i has now surpassed \$800,000. As a result, Native Hawaiians are forced to seek affordable housing out of state, leading to more Native Hawaiians residing outside of Hawai'i than within. Since 1984, existing home prices have increased by 155%, while Hawai'i's median household income has risen only 24%. High housing prices disproportionately impact our working families and young people, prospective homeowners who find it nearly impossible to build a future here in Hawai'i. According to DBEDT's 2024 report on Demographic, Social, and Economic Characteristics of Hawai'i's Race Groups, around 62 percent of Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i are employed, yet they earn significantly less than other major race groups in the state, with medium annual earnings falling below \$40,000 for full-time, year-round work.

HB739 seeks to address this housing crisis by establishing and funding the Kamaaina Homes Program. This program would assist counties through the dwelling unit revolving fund to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners. These deed restrictions would ensure that homes remain attainable for local and Native Hawaiian families that contribute to the local workforce while preserving community stability. This bill is an innovative solution that prioritizes residents first and foremost.

This measure establishes housing solutions to keep local and Native Hawaiian workers, particularly essential workers, in Hawai'i. This initiative provides critical support to ensure that workers who contribute to our community have access to housing in Hawai'i. Prioritizing initiatives to address inequalities in housing accessibility creates economic stability for Hawai'i's workforce and fosters community development for future generations residing in Hawai'i. For these reasons, we humbly ask that you **PASS HB739**.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Madelyn McKeague
Director of Advocacy, CNHA



holomua

COLLABORATIVE

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
Brad Nicolai
Mike Pietsch
Sunshine Topping

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Josh Feldman
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Ed Schultz

Josh Wisch
President & Executive Director

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HolomuaCollaborative.org

Page 1 of 6

Committee: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Bill Number: HB 739 HD1, Relating to Housing
Hearing Date and Time: February 11, 2025, 2:00pm (Room 325)
Re: Testimony of Holomua Collaborative – Support

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support** of HB 739 HB1, Relating to Housing. This bill would establish and fund the Kama'āina Homes Program.

Hawai'i remains in a housing crisis. Skyrocketing home prices leave many local families struggling to secure safe, attainable places to live. The median home price in Hawai'i now exceeds \$800,000—an impossible amount for most residents. As a result, many local families are being forced to leave in search of affordable living options elsewhere. Between July 2022 and July 2023 alone, an average of twelve people left Hawai'i *every day*.¹ More Native Hawaiians now live outside Hawai'i than within it. This is a loss of our culture, traditions, and the essence of what makes Hawai'i home.

In October 2024, a survey² gathering information about the day-to-day financial experience of local workers was released and it suggests this growing crisis has the potential to reach staggering levels. When nearly 1,500 local workers were asked if they may need to move to a less expensive state, only thirty-one percent answered a definitive “no,” while sixty-nine percent said “yes” or “unsure.” And nearly two-thirds of the respondents said the cost of housing was the primary impact on their cost of living in Hawai'i. Each local worker and family we lose to the continent contributes to a loss of our economy, our culture, and our family.

The high cost of living and limited attainable housing options have led many people in our local workforce – teachers, firefighters, health care workers, and more - to consider relocating to the continent, further deepening our state's labor shortages and eroding the quality of life for all residents.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an income-blind, voluntary initiative, based on programs successfully deployed in other jurisdictions. It would create a dedicated housing supply for local residents by empowering the Counties to purchase perpetual deed restrictions on properties that require occupants to live and work in Hawai'i.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Estimates, released on March 14, 2024; and calculations by the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, Hawai'i State Data Center.

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/census/popestimate/2023/county-pop/2023_daily_est_counties.pdf

² <https://holomuacollective.org/survey/>

In the face of our state's ongoing housing crisis, this program represents a critical investment in the future of Hawai'i—both in terms of our economy and our cultural heritage. This program would ensure housing is reserved for local families for generations. And it would help reverse the trend of families and workers leaving Hawai'i by providing them with the opportunity to live in their communities long term.

A program with similar principles, Vail InDEED³, offers an inspiring example. Launched in 2018, Vail, Colorado, created a voluntary program that allowed the town to purchase deed restrictions on homes, ensuring they were only available to local residents. This program has reduced the pressure on the housing market and improved the overall stability of the community. Not only has it fostered a supportive environment for local families, but it has also strengthened the community by ensuring that the people who work in Vail can *afford* to live there, too.

A key feature of the Kama'āina Homes Program is the lack of restriction the program places on how the moneys received by an eligible homeowner or homebuyer can be used. A significant portion of money exchanged in return for deed restrictions in Vail was used by first time homebuyers, as it provided a sum of money for down payments to families that would otherwise never be able to save for a down payment. Flexibility in how the money can be used—whether for a down payment, tuition, healthcare, or some other important need—is a key draw for many prospective participants.

Finally, we note that the Kama'āina Homes Program is one of the most *efficient* ways for the government to invest funding into housing for a local workforce. In terms of dollars per unit per year, the return on investment realized through this program compounds over time. For example, if a county under this program paid \$50,000 for a deed restriction, then in 10 years the cost per unit per year is only \$5,000. In 50 years, it would only be \$1,000 per year. The longer the home stays in the program, the more efficient the program becomes.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It's an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and a place where local working families can afford to stay.

We respectfully request the Committee consider amending the bill to:

- (1) More clearly identify that the intent of this program is to promote, secure, and reap the benefits of local workforce housing;
- (2) Require that, for the purposes of maintaining occupancy under this program, those who (1) are retired, (2) are involuntarily unemployed, or (3) have a

³ See <https://www.vail.gov/government/departments/housing/vailindeed>

disability, were previously an occupant of a deed restricted property pursuant to this bill;

- (3) Move the subsection that penalizes a home seller 50% of the appreciation of the home for allowing occupancy not in accordance with a deed restriction to the remedies section of the bill;
- (4) Clarify the language that penalizes a home seller 50% of the appreciation of the home for allowing occupancy not in accordance with a deed restriction to eliminate loopholes;
- (5) Include language providing that if the moneys received from the program are used for the purposes of constructing an accessory dwelling unit, then the accessory dwelling unit shall also be subject to the deed restriction occupancy requirements, provided that relatives of an occupant of the primary dwelling unit that live in the accessory dwelling unit shall not be in violation of the occupancy requirements.

We have attached suggested language for the proposed amendments on the following pages.

I urge you to support the Kama'āina Homes Program for the sake of Hawai'i's future, and for the generations of local families who will benefit from the stability, security, and opportunity this program offers.

Sincerely,



Joshua Wisch
President & Executive Director

Page 2, lines 6-13:

“The legislature also finds that another crucial aspect of Hawaii’s housing crisis is the shortage of attainable workforce housing for essential workers like teachers, police officers, health care providers, and others who serve the community. With limited attainable workforce housing options and high building costs, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable places for these workers to live, driving crucial workers to relocate to the continent. Allowing people to live closer to where they work will help preserve infrastructure, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve workers' mental health, and help businesses by reducing commute times.”

Page 3, line 14:

“...community. Prioritizing workforce housing that ensures occupants live or work in the vicinity of their home will help alleviate the shortage of workforce housing, reduce traffic and emissions of greenhouse gases, mitigate adverse impacts from new development, and build stronger communities. Additionally, this program would not only aid people...”

Page 7, lines 7-13:

“~~[(h) If a property with a deed restriction in place pursuant to this subpart is sold to a nonresident, or at sale it is determined that the property has been rented to a nonresident, the corporation may bring action against the homeowner in the appropriate circuit court and shall be entitled to fifty per cent of appreciation at the time of sale, to be collected by the corporation and placed in the dwelling unit revolving fund established under section 201H-191.]~~”

Page 8, line 16 - page 9, line 12:

“(1) Works an average of thirty hours or more per week at a qualified business;
or

~~[(2) Is involuntarily unemployed:~~

~~(A) From a job in which the owner occupant or tenant worked an average of thirty hours or more per week at a qualified business at the time of initial occupancy; and~~

~~(B) For a period of less than three hundred sixty five days;~~

~~(3) Is retired; provided that the retiree:~~

~~(A) Was sixty five years of age or older at the time of retirement; and~~

~~(B) Worked an average of thirty hours or more per week at a qualified business within the county; or~~

~~(4) Has a disability, as defined in section 515-2; provided that the owner or tenant with a disability worked an average of thirty hours or more per week at a qualified business.]~~

(2) Previously worked an average of thirty hours or more per week at a qualified business, was an occupant of a deed restricted property pursuant to this subpart, and:

(A) Is retired;

(B) Is involuntarily unemployed; or

(C) Has a disability, as defined in section 515-2.”

Page 9, lines 13-18:

“(a) A county that reasonably believes a property with a deed restriction in place pursuant to this subpart is not in compliance with this subpart may bring action against the owner of the property for civil remedies based in contract or real property law, including but not limited to claiming a lien or obtaining specific performance.

(b) In addition to the remedies available pursuant to subsection (a), if a property with a deed restriction in place pursuant to this subpart is sold and it is determined that the property has been occupied in a manner not in compliance with this subpart, the corporation may bring action against the homeowner in the appropriate circuit court and shall be entitled to fifty per cent of the appreciation in the value of the property from the time of the deed restriction to the time of sale, to be collected by the corporation.

(c) Any financial remedy owed to a county or the corporation pursuant to this section shall be placed in the dwelling unit revolving fund established under section 201H-191.”

Add a new section §201H- :

“§201H- Construction of an accessory dwelling unit; exemption. (a) If the money granted pursuant to this subpart is used to finance the construction costs, development costs, or non-reoccurring closing costs associated with the construction of an accessory dwelling unit on the deed restricted property, the deed restriction shall apply to the primary dwelling unit and the constructed accessory dwelling unit .

(b) An accessory dwelling unit constructed with moneys pursuant to this subpart that is occupied by a relative, by blood, marriage, or adoption, of an occupant of the primary dwelling unit shall not be in violation of the occupancy requirements established pursuant to this subpart.

(c) As used in this section:

"Accessory dwelling unit" means an accessory or a second dwelling unit that includes its own kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom facilities, and is attached or detached from the primary dwelling unit on the zoning lot on which the primary dwelling unit of the owner is located.

"Development costs" includes costs associated with site preparation, architectural or engineering design, permits, soil tests, impact fees, and property survey."



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Testimony in Support of HB 739 HD1, Relating to Housing

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

Re: Support for the Kama'āina Homes Program

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) supports HB 739 HD1, which establishes the Kama'āina Homes Program. Housing is a priority area within HCF's CHANGE Framework under the "C" sector of Community-Centered Economy. Per UHERO, "median housing costs in Hawaii are more than 2.7 times the national level"¹ and median rents are the highest in the country.² ALICE families are more vulnerable because of our current housing market.

The demand for attainable local housing currently enveloping Hawai'i is at crisis levels. Too many people who do not live or work in Hawai'i are owning and driving up the costs of our housing market, which contributes to a record outmigration of local residents. The agony of this dynamic is punctuated by the fact that more Hawaiians now live out of Hawai'i than in Hawai'i.

While efforts to address the housing crisis have shown progress, it is evident that the current perspectives and efforts need to be expanded, and new creative solutions must be adopted. Hyper prioritization of major off-site infrastructure improvements that can effectuate housing, broad-based collaboration and regulatory reform are more critical now than ever.

We support the creation of the Kama'āina Homes Program because it represents a new and creative solution. Selling a deed restriction can create a variety of meaningful impacts on our community. A deed restriction sold is a promise to the community that another home is available for a working family in perpetuity. A deed restriction sold is an opportunity for a new homebuyer to have the down payment for their first home. It can also help an existing homeowner to fund necessary repairs to their aging home or replace the cesspool on their property. A deed restriction sold is an opportunity for the government to make an investment in our future and preserve our local culture.

Kama'āina want to stay in Hawai'i and HB 739 HD1 can open that door and provide that hope. There is universal agreement that locals need more places to call home. Homes must be affordable so residents will be free from the pressure of leaving the island. HB 739 HD1 is an innovative solution that contributes to more housing for our community, and HCF is happy to support it.

¹ [UHERO 2023 Hawaii Housing Factbook](#) at page 1.

² [UHERO 2024 Hawaii Housing Factbook](#) at page 6.



TITLE GUARANTY
HAWAII

February 11, 2025

Testimony in support of HB 739 HD1, Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members,

We write in support of HB 739 HD1, Relating to Housing, which would establish the Kama'āina Homes Program to place voluntary deed restrictions on homes that will be dedicated for local working residents.

Title Guaranty of Hawai'i is the oldest and largest title company in the state. We have been owned and operated by a kama'āina family since 1896 and we are proud to employ over 250 residents who work in our branches across the state. As an organization that has worked for over a century to help connect local families with housing, we see firsthand the economic shift that is preventing local families from achieving the dream of homeownership.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an innovative proposal to create a new pool of residential real estate that is restricted to local residents. This will enable locals to get into Hawaii's tight housing market by restricting housing stock for local families and promoting a local workforce. This program is offering property sellers and buyers incentives in exchange for voluntarily placing a deed restriction on their property that restricts the types of future buyers and/or tenants to Hawai'i residents. The proposal accomplishes this by tying the voluntary deed restriction to residency and work requirements. It enables locals to compete with mainland buyers when buying a home and it also encourage property owners to rent to locals long term instead of leaving homes vacant.

HB 739 HD1 is an original solution that invests in our community and in culture, and I hope that you support this effort to keep local residents in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Mike B. Pietsch
President and Chief Operating Officer
Title Guaranty of Hawai'i





February 11, 2025

Committee: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Bill Number: HB739 HD1, Relating to Housing
Hearing Date and Time: February 11, 2025, 2:00pm
Re: Testimony of HPM Building Supply in Support

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members:

I would like to submit this testimony in support of HB739 HD1, Relating to Housing. The purpose of HB739 HD1 is to create a dedicated local housing market through the establishment of the Kama'āina Homes Program.

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 Hawai'i 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.

A significant portion of our workforce consists of skilled tradespeople like carpenters, electricians, and plumbers, all of whom are integral to the construction process. However, as housing prices rise and rental prices soar, these workers are forced to leave the state in search of more affordable living situations. The result is a shortage of skilled labor in the construction sector, leading to delays and higher costs for homeowners and developers alike. The Kama'āina Homes Program offers a solution to this by ensuring that local workers have a place to live in the same communities where they work.

HB 739 HD1's approach—creating deed-restricted housing dedicated to local working residents—will help stabilize the housing market by giving local workers a fighting chance in a competitive market in which wealthier non-residents often have an advantage. With more local residents able to afford homes and stay in the state we will have a stronger, more sustainable construction industry that benefits everyone, from homeowners to contractors and beyond.

I ask for your support of HB739 HD1, as it provides the foundation for a more robust, locally employed, and efficient building industry that will meet the needs of Hawaii's growing population.

Sincerely,

Jason Fujimoto
Chairman & CEO





**Testimony to
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
February 11, 2025
2:00 PM
Conference Room 325 & VIA videoconference
Hawai'i State Capitol
HB 739 HD1**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

We write in support of HB 739 HD1. This bill will increase our housing supply for local working families in Hawai'i.

Established in 1904, Hawai'i 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.

The stability of our local workforce is directly tied to the ability of local families to live and work in Hawai'i. Housing instability has a direct impact on the workforce's ability to remain in the state and to continue supporting the essential infrastructure that allows businesses like ours to thrive and serve the public.

Our company relies on a dedicated workforce of technicians, engineers, and support staff who ensure that the gas services we provide are safe, reliable, and accessible to all residents. However, the rising cost of housing makes it increasingly difficult for these essential workers to remain in the state. The Kama'āina Homes Program offers a meaningful solution by ensuring that local families can secure housing in their communities, thereby providing a stable and skilled workforce that is essential to industries like ours.

HB 739 HD1 addresses long-term workforce sustainability, ensuring that employees who work in critical infrastructure sectors like energy can stay in Hawai'i and continue their work without the constant threat of displacement. It is a smart, forward-thinking solution that will benefit all sectors of our economy.

We urge you to support HB 739 HD1, as it represents an investment in Hawai'i's workforce, infrastructure, and long-term prosperity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Statement of
Meli James and Brittany Heyd
Cofounders
Mana Up

HB739 HD1, Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and committee members,

We support HB739 HD1, which establishes the Kama'āina Homes Program to provide voluntary deed restrictions to willing eligible homeowners and homebuyers who agree to limit the use of their property for local working occupants.

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.

We repeatedly hear from our entrepreneurs about the difficulty they have in finding attainable housing that provides them the safety and security necessary to focus on their business and family. Local entrepreneurs want to create and expand their business in Hawai'i, but far too often feel that opportunities for housing and business are better on the continent.

Creating a dedicated housing stock for our local workforce will help our families have security as they navigate the difficult economic conditions that face the State. The Kama'āina Homes Program incentivizes local homeowners and buyers to voluntarily be a part of the solution to create a permanent dedicated housing stock for local families. Housing is a challenge for everyone, and by coming together, we can find shared solutions that help all the people of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Meli James | Cofounder, Mana Up
Brittany Heyd | Cofounder, Mana Up

TORI RICHARD

February 11, 2025

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

We write in support HB 739 HD1 and the creation of the Kama'āina Homes Program.

Tori Richard has manufactured in Honolulu for nearly 70 years, and we continue to proudly do so today. As a long-time medium-sized Hawai'i employer, we recognize the challenge high housing costs pose to everyone working to make ends meet in Hawai'i.

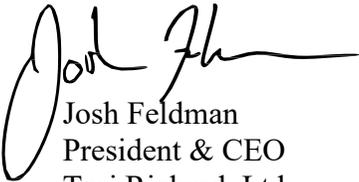
Our business is deeply committed to supporting Hawaii's local workforce, but the growing housing crisis makes it increasingly difficult for our employees to remain in the islands. Attainable housing is key to keeping talented, creative people in Hawai'i, and this bill offers a much-needed solution to that challenge.

Many of our employees are struggling to find attainable places to live. As their employer, I see firsthand the impact this has on their lives. When workers are forced to move away or leave the state altogether, it hurts our ability to operate and expand. The Kama'āina Homes Program ensures that local workers, like those in the fashion, manufacturing, and retail industries, have a place to call home. This stability will allow them to continue contributing to Hawai'i's vibrant economy and support local businesses.

Moreover, as a company that takes pride in being part of the local community, we understand the importance of preserving Hawaii's unique cultural identity. The housing crisis threatens that identity, as local residents are pushed out by non-resident investors and wealthy buyers. HB 739 HD1 will help reverse this trend by providing a steady supply of attainable homes dedicated to local residents, ensuring that our workforce and community remain strong and diverse.

I urge you to support HB 739 HD1, as it is essential to the future of our business and the local economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Josh Feldman
President & CEO
Tori Richard, Ltd.

1891 NORTH KING STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819



Testimony in Support of HB 739 HD1, Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

We write in strong support of HB 739 HD1 which will establish the Kama'āina Homes Program allowing interested homeowners and homebuyers to voluntarily sell a deed restriction on their property that limit the occupancy of the property to our local workforce.

aio is a locally owned company with holdings across a broad range of industries. Our companies are purpose-driven 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.

Hawai'i is in the midst of a housing crisis. Our employees are our greatest asset, and we want to ensure that they have access to quality and attainable housing. This program is a good first step at establishing a housing market that is dedicated to local working families rather than out-of-state purchasers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 739 HD1.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brandon Kurisu".

Brandon Kurisu
aio Family of Companies



Committee: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Bill Number: HB 739 HD1, Relating to Housing
Hearing Date and Time: February 11, 2025, 02:00pm (Room 325)

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

I write today in **strong support of HB 739 HD1**, Relating to Housing.

It is rare to be at a local gathering nowadays and not hear someone comment that they, or their family member or friend, are considering moving to the continent because they were unable to find housing in Hawai'i. This outmigration has become the norm, and it is affecting all aspects of our community. We are watching 'ohana separated from one another. Key community roles and jobs are left vacant as teachers, first responders, care workers, service staff are seeking financial security away from Hawai'i. And our next generations are opting for new places to call home because they know that they will never be able to afford a place to call their own in Hawai'i when wealthy interests from outside the state are able to outbid them in the open market.

The Kama'āina Homes Program lays a framework to mitigate this housing and cultural crisis. This a voluntary initiative inspired by successful models from other regions. It offers a much-needed solution by ensuring that housing is dedicated specifically to local residents, without considering income levels. This means the program focuses on keeping housing within reach for Hawai'i families who are working and living here, supporting our residents in staying rooted in the communities they call home.

Given the housing crisis we continue to face, this program is an investment in our future—both economically and culturally. It creates long-term restrictions on properties, requiring that they be occupied by those who live and work in Hawai'i, which helps to prevent housing from being priced out of reach for local families. With rising costs and the constant threat of our own residents being displaced, this program ensures that our communities will remain intact, and that local workers and families will not be forced to leave for lack of affordable options.

Hawai'i is a special place, with a unique culture and way of life that depend on the strength and stability of our local communities. By supporting the Kama'āina Homes Program, you would be taking a decisive step toward securing that future—ensuring that future generations of Hawai'i residents can live and thrive in the islands they call home.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Sunshine Topping



The House Committee on Housing

Hearing: Tuesday, February 11th, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB739: RELATING TO HOUSING

The Hawaii State Youth Commission (HiYC) was established to “advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the state.” We are writing in support of HB739.

Kama‘āina today face a significant housing crisis. On O‘ahu, the median home selling price is \$750,000, with Maui experiencing prices exceeding this amount. Between 2019 and 2023, the median income for local households was \$104,000. Housing prices have been rising exponentially, and without a steady income to keep pace, local workers are forced to purchase homes by taking out high-interest loans or, in many cases, moving out of state. As such, out-migration has been on the rise on a disproportionate scale, further weakening the local workforce.

Establishing the Kama‘āina Homes Program would provide necessary relief to local residents and expand homeownership opportunities for Kama‘āina under deed restrictions. The deed restrictions within the program would limit out-of-state investors’ and prospective buyers’ ability to purchase property in the future. Instead of heading toward a lucrative real estate market supported by out-of-state buyers, the government should seek to remedy the Kama‘āina who have worked on these islands for generations and are in desperate need of housing. Moreover, HB739 enables municipalities to offer secured loans and financial aid to lower-income residents.

Most importantly, this program would have long-term benefits for local workers and families. The pressing housing crisis undeniably affects the youth today, and thus, the issues it entails involve our current youth. We urge the government to implement programs to make the housing market more stable and less speculative. By focusing on local residents, HB739 provides a practical and sustainable path for Hawaii’s housing market in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony in support of this vital bill.

The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission

hawaiistateyc@gmail.com



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 325
Tuesday, February 11, 2025 AT 2:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

SUPPORT HB739 HD1 RELATING TO HOUSING

The Maui Chamber of Commerce SUPPORTS HB739 HD1 which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

Housing is one of the Maui Chamber's top priorities as we are in a housing crisis. Ensuring the availability of attainable homes and rentals is essential to the well-being of our residents. It is also a vital pillar in our efforts toward workforce stability and economic recovery.

This is another excellent tool in the toolbox for housing.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT HB739 HD1**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

BILL HB739

POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: Tuesday, 02-11-25 2:00PM in House Conference Room 325

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way and the ALICE Initiative strongly support HB739, establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

Aloha United Way and agencies in the ALICE initiative strongly support this bill because the needs for housing units that house the residents of Hawaii is critical so they can continue to live and work here. This crisis requires urgent and strong action to secure homes for those who live here, and we urge you act to this end.

ALICE stands for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed. ALICE are our households who are employed but whose incomes are not sufficient to meet basic costs.

The new **2024 State of ALICE in Hawaii report found that 40% of our State's residents are ALICE**. and that 37% of households have at least 1 person considering leaving the State in the next 12 months. For these families, cost of living and housing were by far the main reasons, and 73% of those considering leaving say the cost of housing is the main reason for leaving Hawaii.

Aloha United Way supports all actions to help direct housing stock to use by Hawaii's residents. If no strong action is taken, Hawaii will continue to see its working families leave the islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your action to support ALICE families and pass HB739.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michelle Bartell in blue ink.

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way

Handwritten signature of Suzanne Skjold in blue ink.

Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way



**Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair**

**Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 2:00PM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

RE: HB739 HD1 Relating to Housing

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 739 House Draft 1 (HB327 HD1), which permits the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to enter into contracts with eligible employers or registered apprenticeship programs in the private sector to provide on-the-job training to eligible interns.

HB739 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Business Services. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Hawaii's housing crisis has made homeownership unattainable for many residents, forcing local families and essential workers to leave for more affordable areas. According to a study by Holomua Collective, 70% of local working residents are considering leaving Hawaii, with nearly half planning to move within five years. This outmigration threatens the workforce and erodes cultural heritage. Other tourism-driven areas, like Vail, Colorado, have addressed similar issues through programs such as Vail InDEED, which reserves housing for local workers.

This bill establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to secure housing for local residents by purchasing voluntary deed restrictions. By limiting ownership and tenancy to local workers, the program aims to retain essential employees, support community stability, and preserve Hawaii's culture. Funding will help counties acquire deed restrictions, ensuring long-term affordability. The Chamber supports this initiative as a solution to curb outmigration, sustain the workforce, and strengthen Hawaii's economy.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 739 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:08:03 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey Hong	Techmana LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Vice-Chair,

As a technology business owner, many of my staff left Hawaii post-COVID and would like to return, but they are now used to a higher standard of living on the mainland.

Addressing affordable housing is essential to establish long term roots in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 4:07:45 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sam Dorios	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Sam Dorios**, and I am testifying in **strong support** of **HB739 HD1** and the establishment of the **Kama‘āina Homes Program**.

Hawai‘i is in the midst of a **housing crisis** that is forcing more and more local families to leave. But it doesn’t have to be this way. The **Kama‘āina Homes Program** is a **bold, innovative solution** that prioritizes housing for local residents—ensuring that **home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, we make it possible for kama‘āina to stay**.

For too long, **skyrocketing home and rental prices** have pushed working families out of Hawai‘i. Local residents, who contribute to our economy and communities, are being priced out while homes are snapped up by non-resident buyers and converted into short-term vacation rentals. This program would help **turn the tide** by empowering counties to **purchase voluntary, perpetual deed restrictions**—ensuring that homes remain occupied by local workers, not outside investors.

This is **an investment in our future**. **Keeping local families in Hawai‘i** means stronger communities, a more stable economy, and a future where our islands remain diverse, vibrant, and truly home to those who love and sustain them.

I urge the committee to **pass HB739 HD1** to help protect Hawai‘i’s housing future for the people who call these islands home.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

-Sam Dorios

February 7, 2025

Support for HB739 HD1 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is John Chen, and I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD1** and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here including our children and grant children, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD1 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



John Chen

John.chen@geolabs.net

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 5:48:07 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Odo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **support** of HB 739 (HD 1).

I have been a Hawai‘i resident my whole life, and for the past few years, I’ve been anxious about our state’s future. While I have decided to stay in Hawai‘i to raise my family (at least for now), I have many close family members, friends, and neighbors who decided to move away due to the high cost of living.

Our state, unfortunately, takes the nation’s top spot for a number of unaffordability metrics:

- Most expensive single-family houses
- Highest residential rental rates
- Highest living wage
- Lowest millennial homeownership rate

This high cost of living has resulted in a few alarming population trends:

- Net outmigration for every year since 2017
- Hawai‘i residents are having fewer children and later in life
- Hawai‘i’s population is aging rapidly

Such population issues are already having an adverse affect on our economy as there are not enough workers to keep businesses open and our tax base is shrinking. What will happen in the future? Will we be able to have enough workers to support a thriving and diversified economy? Would we have enough tax revenue to maintain our public infrastructure and social programs?

Additionally, we have a responsibility to our own people and communities. It’s sad to know that, today, more native Hawaiians live outside Hawai‘i than in it. Retaining our local residents is important to ensuring that we have vibrant communities where people come together to help each other out and address issues.

I believe the Kamaaina Homes Program has the potential to mitigate or reverse these trends. The program is a creative way to ensure that existing housing inventory in Hawai‘i remains available

for local residents. Through voluntary deed restrictions, local residents can be a part of the housing solution through incentives. While the bill's drafters and proponents should be applauded for their out-of-the-box thinking, it is noteworthy that this deed restriction concept has a successful precursor in Vail, Colorado.

Let's do this for our future generations of Hawai'i residents.

Jordan Odo

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 5:50:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Godbey Carson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill HB739. Thank you for pursuing this Kama'aina Homes program to help prioritize our housing for those who need it most for living and working in Hawaii.

I practiced law in Hawaii for 30 years, serving as President of the Hawaii State Bar Association and Hawaii Women Lawyers. While I'm now retired (inactive bar license), one of my highest priorities is finding effective ways to create more affordable housing for our residents. So I appreciate what the Kama'aina Homes program is trying to do.

I do have two concerns about this bill that I hope can be addressed.

First, the remedies stated in Section 201H-D are problematic because if that's all there is that applies to this law, there is no easy to administer fine for violation. Instead, the county is required to bring a legal action against the property owner for what are apparently equitable remedies (lien, specific performance) based in contract or real property law. Without a fine (or liquidated damages provision), it will be very difficult for a county to prove how much it has been monetarily damaged. Courts may find no damage or only small damages that will not be adequate to properly incentivize owners to comply with their deed restrictions. And a lien may not do anything helpful for the same reason. Specific performance is stated to be available as a remedy but it would generally only require the owner to do what the owner was already required to do by this law - so where does that get us, after years of court action?. It will likely take years for these lawsuits to be prioritized by County counsel and filed. Just see what has happened to blighted homes flagrantly in violation of our safety laws, with piles of fines, and those cases have taken a decade or more to get attention to the problem, even when there are immediate public safety concerns. So, I would encourage you to provide appropriate levels of fines that could be imposed administratively (with appeal rights to the courts), or some similar method to assure there will be an efficient means to enforce this law.

Second, Section 201H-C and 201H-F state that a property needs to be "occupied," and that may seem straightforward but it is not. That term is undefined in this bill (and not elsewhere in our statutes, as best I can tell). I think you may mean occupied as a "principal home" or "principal residence," ie, by an Oahu resident for whom this is their official residence for purposes of voting, taxes, DMV, etc. For example, a tenant who leases one of these properties but uses it as a beach home or 2nd residence, or who maintains multiple residences, should not be deemed to comply with this bill, unless the property in question is used as their principal residence. The statement in 201H-F that the property must be "occupied ... during all of the prior calendar

year" tries to address this but "occupied" is an undefined and challenging concept. It's problematic for the reason that even people who live in their principal residence typically do not physically "occupy" i.e, reside in, their home for ALL of the prior calendar year, because they may leave to visit family, take vacations, be hospitalized, etc. Using "principal home" or "principal residence" helps address both of these concerns better than "occupy," as a person can only have one principal home/residence, and is not required to reside every night of the year in their principal residence. Alternatively, develop a definition of "occupied" that helps address both of these concerns.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony.

Ellen Godbey Carson

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:47:48 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am testifying in support of this bill.

I really appreciate the intent and elements of this bill. There is a strong need to help the working class resident to ensure they are able to survive in Hawaii, and as we know, that is extremely hard to make it ends meet, which is why so many are leaving Hawaii due to the cost of living. This bill ensures that those who live and work in Hawaii reside in these homes, which should help with addressing the cost of housing, as this will keep the housing market for the working class and out of investment homes. I appreciate that if a person retires but was working for 10 years prior to retirement, they are still qualified to live there. This makes sense.

The only concern that I hope is addressed is that I believe a person shall be required to work for a certain period of time at 30 hours per week, to qualify to fulfill this deed restriction. I'd suggest for a period of not less than 26 weeks, collectively per year (a person could change jobs and have a break in between but does work the majority of the year for more than 30 hours a week).

The need for the state to protect our local working-class families is dire, and this does just that. I appreciate this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Keoni Shizuma, Kaneohe, Oahu

Committee: House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Bill Number: HB 739, RELATING TO HOUSING
Hearing Date & Time: February 11, 2025 at 2:00pm
Re: Testimony of Malia Wisch **in Support of HB739**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

My name is Malia Wisch and I am a partner and creative director of the local branding and design agency Wall to Wall Studios. I am a third-generation Kailua resident and graduate of Hawaii's public schools.

I am testifying in support of HB739, which establishes the Kama'āina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

I went to college and got my first job on the mainland. **I moved home in 2002 knowing I would take a big hit in my paycheck.** I knew if I stayed on the mainland I would adjust to a different standard of living which would make it even harder, if not impossible, to move home.

Now, more than twenty years later, **I am a local employer who struggles to hire locally and who has lost 3 employees – 2 of whom are native Hawaiian – to the mainland in the past few years.** These are talented workers, and none of them wanted to leave. They made up a significant percentage of our staff. They simply couldn't justify the sacrifice to be able to afford housing in Hawai'i anymore.

I had given up hope that there would be a constitutional way to give local working people a leg up in the insane local housing market, where we cannot compete with remote worker salaries or military housing allowances.

The idea proposed in this bill is exciting and gives me new hope. It is a model that's been successfully tested in communities with similar challenges and it makes use of *existing* housing. Maybe Hawai'i *can* find and adopt creative solutions to keep our local talent working here at home, where they want to be.

Our design business benefits from a nuanced understanding of local customs, language, humor and symbolism. More importantly, *all of us* enjoy the richness of this shared culture. We will lose it if the current mass exodus is not curtailed.

Mahalo nui loa for considering my testimony in support of this important legislation.

Sara Malia Wisch
Partner and Creative Director
Wall to Wall Studios, 1128 Nuuanu Ave #203, Honolulu, HI 96817
malia@walltowall.com

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:17:16 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Barua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the JHA committee:

I fully support HB739 HD1 to establish and fund the Kama'āina Homes Program. I also support the amendments as proposed by Holomua Collaborative in its testimony.

Hawaii's housing crisis continues to spiral, impacting our island families and communities. I hold in high regard, the efforts of our policymakers and legislators to address the issue in collaboration with multi-sector stakeholders.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an innovative effort that is grounded on tried-and-true practice - an income-blind, voluntary initiative, based on programs successfully deployed in other jurisdictions. It would create a dedicated housing supply for local residents by empowering the Counties to purchase perpetual deed restrictions on properties that require occupants to live and work in Hawaii.

The Program is an investment in our future focused on keeping local families at home and creating stronger communities, reducing out-migration, and building a more sustainable economy. It is an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge you to support the Kama'āina Homes Program.

Mahalo nui loa,

Joy Barua

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:59:04 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Dvonch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a fantastic measure to help working families stay in Hawaii. I support.

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:07:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jared Tsuchiyama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the intent of this bill to allow for property to be sold to residents and avoid becoming vacation housing. While the city and county of Honolulu has attempted to address issues like this through methods such as the empty homes tax I remain skeptical of its enforcement and cost as well as the city's capacity to take on such reviews when it is already backlogged especially considering the amount of exceptions that were needed in the latest draft of the city's bill to try to make it more appealing illustrating that a resolution from the EHT side of things is unlikely. I see this approach as a more feasible way to achieve what the EHT was attempting which is to discourage the housing stock from becoming vacation homes.

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 7:12:53 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josh Levinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 11, 2025

Support for HB739 HD1 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Josh Levinson, and I am testifying in support of HB739 HD1 and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis has made it nearly impossible for local families to secure attainable housing, forcing many to leave the islands. Unlike on the continent, where people can move to more affordable regions within the same state, the high cost of housing in Hawai‘i leaves residents with no option but to leave the state entirely. This displacement separates families, erodes our culture, and turns Hawai‘i into a place that only the wealthiest residents and non-residents can call home.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a creative and promising solution by using voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions to ensure that homes remain accessible to local working families. By empowering the counties to implement this program, we can preserve housing stock for residents who live and work in Hawai‘i while discouraging speculative investment and the proliferation of short-term vacation rentals.

This program is an investment in Hawai‘i’s future. By helping local families stay here, we can build stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and create a more sustainable economy. I urge the legislature to pass HB739 HD1 and to continue exploring innovative solutions to Hawai‘i’s housing crisis.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Me ka mahalo nui,

Josh Levinson

jplevinson@gmail.com

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:46:53 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Adriann Gin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Adriann Gin**, and I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD1** and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD1 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Adriann Gin

agin808@gmail.com

February 10, 2025

Representative David Tarnas
Representative Mahina Poepoe
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**RE: HEARING OF FEBRUARY 11, 2025; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 739
HD1 RELATING TO HOUSING**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support** of HB739 HD1, Relating to Housing. This bill would establish and fund the Kama'āina Homes Program. In the face of our state's ongoing housing needs, this program represents a critical investment in the future of Hawai'i—both in terms of our economy and our cultural heritage.

Kobayashi Group is a company deeply rooted in Hawai'i, understanding the unique values and priorities of our island communities. We take great care to honor those values in everything we do, applying our skills and expertise to meet the needs of a diverse population.

We support the opportunity to secure a long-term inventory of homes not restricted from the important ability to grow equity, but creates a voluntary program to keep these homes for kama'āina families, which is an innovative approach that has worked in other cities.

Sincerely,



Alana Kobayashi Pakkala
CEO + Partner

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:00:19 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maggie Anne Engebretson	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Maggie Engebretson and I am testifying in very strong support of HB739 HD1 and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program. On a personal note, I returned home to Hawai‘i in 2018 to raise a family. We have found it incredibly, shockingly difficult to secure housing that allows my family to thrive – and this is with a two-income household. I cannot imagine the difficulty faced by members of our community who must meet their day-to-day needs with less resources, and it is all of our jobs to help ensure that they too have the opportunity to stay in the islands, raise families, and thrive.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD1 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Maggie Engebretson

maggiianne@gmail.com

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:14:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tracey Erker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 11, 2025

Support for HB739 HD1 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tracey Erker, and I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD1**.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring housing is available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. Keeping local families here creates stronger communities, reduces out-migration, and builds a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD1 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Tracey Erker

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:19:21 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Sutton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 11, 2025

Support for HB739 HD1 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Andrew Sutton, and I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD1** and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD1 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Andrew Sutton

andrewcsutton@gmail.com

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:26:43 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Hill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 10, 2025

Support for HB739 HD1 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lisa (Elisabeth) Hill, and I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD1** and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD1 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Elisabeth Hill

elisabethhill@yahoo.com

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:32:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danika Voorhees	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for HB739 HD1 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,
My name is Danika Voorhees, and I am testifying in strong support of HB739 HD1 and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD1 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Danika Voorhees
voorhees.danika@gmail.com

Committee: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Bill Number: HB 739 HD1, Relating to Housing

Hearing Date and Time: February 11, 2025

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support** of HB739, Relating to Housing. This bill would establish and fund the Kama'āina Homes Program.

Hawai'i is in the midst of an unprecedented housing crisis, with skyrocketing home prices leaving many local families struggling to secure safe, attainable places to live. Residents need to earn nearly twice the median income to afford a home at the median price. As a result, many local families are being forced to leave the islands in search of affordable living options elsewhere. Between July 2022 and July 2023 alone, an average of twelve people left Hawai'i *every day*.¹ And alarmingly, more Native Hawaiians now live outside the state than within it. This loss isn't just in numbers—it's a loss of our culture, traditions, and the very essence of what makes Hawai'i home.

In October 2024, a survey² seeking to gather information about the day-to-day financial experience of local workers suggests this growing crisis has the potential to reach staggering levels. When nearly 1,500 local workers were asked if they may need to move to a less expensive state, only thirty-one percent answered a definitive “no,” while sixty-nine percent said “yes” or “unsure.” And nearly two-thirds of the respondents said the cost of housing was the primary impact on their cost of living in Hawai'i. Each local worker and family we lose to the continent contributes to a loss of our economy, our culture, and our family.

The high cost of living and limited attainable housing options have led many people in our local workforce – teachers, firefighters, health care workers, and more - to consider relocating to the continent, further deepening our state's labor shortages and eroding the quality of life for all residents.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an income-blind, voluntary initiative that has been successfully deployed in other jurisdictions, which would create a dedicated housing supply for local residents by empowering the Counties to purchase perpetual deed restrictions on properties that require occupants to live and work in Hawai'i.

In the face of our state's ongoing housing crisis, this program represents a critical investment in the future of Hawai'i—both in terms of our economy and our cultural heritage. This program would ensure that housing is reserved for locals for generations to come. Just as importantly, it would help reverse the trend of families and workers leaving Hawai'i by providing them with the opportunity to live in their communities long term.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Estimates, released on March 14, 2024; and calculations by the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, Hawai'i State Data Center. https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/census/popestimate/2023/county-pop/2023_daily_est_counties.pdf

² <https://holomuacollective.org/survey/>

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It's an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge you to support the Kama'āina Homes Program for the sake of Hawai'i's future, and for the generations of local families who will benefit from the stability, security, and opportunity this program offers.

Aloha nui,

Billy Pieper

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:56:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nick Erker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 11, 2025

Support for HB739 HD1 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nick Erker, and I am testifying in strong support of HB739 HD1 and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD1 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Nick Erker

nerker@gmail.com

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:33:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Yamagata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB 739, HD1 which seeks to establish the Kama‘āina Homes Program to create a dedicated housing supply for local residents. As a lifelong resident of Hawai‘i, I have witnessed firsthand how our housing market has become increasingly out of reach for local families, forcing many of my friends to leave the islands in search of affordability elsewhere.

In 2021, my husband and I were in the market to purchase our first home together. We were financially prepared, pre-approved and ready to make offers. However, time and time again, we lost out to buyers offering \$50,000 to \$100,000 over asking price—often with all-cash offers. The experience was devastating. We were not looking for luxury, just a modest home with two bathrooms and a reasonable commute so we could continue raising our children in the place we call home. It became clear that many of the buyers we were competing against were not in the same boat as us—a local family simply trying to put down roots.

The reality is, if our circumstances had allowed us to move to the mainland for a more affordable community, we likely would have. And while we have done everything possible to make it work here, I worry about what the future holds for our children. If the housing market continues on this trajectory, I do not see how they—or their generation—will be able to afford to stay in Hawai‘i.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is a necessary step toward addressing this crisis. Similar programs have been successfully implemented in other tourism-dependent communities on the mainland, ensuring that local residents are prioritized and have a real chance at homeownership. There is no reason we cannot do the same here in Hawai‘i.

I urge you to pass this bill and take action to protect the future of local families. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Yamagata and Nolan Hong

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:45:29 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Condry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB739

Let's invest in our future and see a dedicated housing supply for local working families!

This legislation is crucial for our community because it will help address the issue of providing affordable housing to local working families. I believe that implementing this bill will lead to more locals being able to stay in the islands helping to preserve the culture that makes Hawai'i such an incredible place to live. It will also incentivize people to take local jobs helping to grow Hawai'i's economy.

HB739 aligns with our shared values of keeping local families in the islands vs forcing them to the continent. With the challenges we currently face, it is essential that we take proactive steps to provide affordable housing for locals, especially for those who may not qualify for other government programs.

I encourage all legislators to support this important measure and ensure that our community can thrive. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Michelle Condry

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:05:35 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cody Turk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an important bill to keep communities local.

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:21:48 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bridgette Dodge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bridgette Dodge, and I am testifying in strong support of HB739 HD1 and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people. I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD1 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Bridgette Dodge

bridgette.67@gmail.com

Testimony in Support of HB739 HD1 – Kama‘āina Homes Program

Aloha Chair [Chair's Last Name], Vice Chair [Vice Chair's Last Name], and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kerry Lum, and I am a 34-year Hawai‘i resident. My husband and I both live on the windward side of O‘ahu, work full-time, and we have raised our two daughters here in Hawai‘i. While we are proud of the opportunities ahead of them, we are deeply concerned about whether, after college, they will ever be able to return home to build their lives here.

The reality is that Hawai‘i’s housing market has become so expensive that even families like ours, who have worked hard and done everything “right,” struggle to see a future where our children can afford to live and work in the place they call home. With median home prices exceeding \$1.1 million on O‘ahu, homeownership is simply out of reach for most young adults starting their careers. Without real solutions, our children and so many others will be forced to remain on the continent, further contributing to the heartbreaking outmigration of local families.

This is why I support HB739 HD1, which would establish the Kama‘āina Homes Program. This program would help ensure that local working families have access to attainable housing by creating a stock of homes specifically dedicated to Hawai‘i residents. Modeled after the successful “Vail InDEED” program in Colorado, it would allow counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions to keep homes for local owner-occupants and resident tenants, preserving housing for the people who live and work in our communities.

As a parent, I want my children to have the opportunity to return to Hawai‘i, to contribute to our economy, and to raise their own families here. But for that to happen, we need to take action now to address our housing crisis. Essential workers like teachers, healthcare providers, and first responders are already being priced out, making it harder to maintain the workforce that keeps our communities running. This bill provides a meaningful, voluntary solution that does not require new development but instead makes use of existing housing to ensure it remains attainable for local families.

The time to act is now. If we truly want to keep Hawai‘i’s future generations here, we must invest in housing policies that prioritize local residents. I urge you to pass HB739 HD1 to give families like mine hope that our children will be able to return home and afford a future in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Kerry Lum

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:01:38 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ben Trevino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB739 HD1, Relating to Housing. This bill would establish and fund the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

I am in full support of this bill and its intent to secure housing for our Kama‘aina residents. Every single member of the legislative body is close to their constituents, not to mention residents themselves, and consequently very familiar with the nature of housing challenges facing our working families.

One of the messages that our residents receive when the cost of housing is so high is: **There is no place for you here.** The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an opportunity for us to send different messages: **You are part of this community. Your presence in Hawai‘i matters. You belong.**

I urge you to support the Kama‘āina Homes Program and let our people know how important they are.

Sincerely,

Ben Trevino

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:27:57 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle Burchard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB739 HD1 because it directly addresses the housing crisis in Hawaii. Many local families and workers are being pushed out of the market by investment properties, leaving them struggling to find homes. With limited housing options and financing, local residents can't compete, which is causing a shortage of homes for those who actually live and work here.

This bill offers a solution by creating a program that allows locals to access grants in exchange for a voluntary deed restriction, ensuring homes stay available for Hawaii residents. By keeping housing dedicated to local families, we're helping preserve Hawaii's unique culture and strengthening our communities.

I urge you to support this bill and take action to help local families stay in the state.

Mahalo for your consideration and actions to address the ongoing housing issues facing locals.

HB-739-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:53:50 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/11/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas and Members of the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee: My name is Dan Gardner, and I and my wife Deborah are in strong support of HB739 HD1 that establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers. This bill will significantly help members of our community to remain in Hawaii and not have to choose leaving due to the scarcity of affordable housing. It will enable more families to stay together here and also help maintain a reliable level of workers to keep our businesses and economy strong. We are counting on your support to make this needed effort succeed.