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*Ka Hope Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina
'o Hawai'i*



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CHAIRPERSON, HHC
Ka Luna Ho'okele

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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS
Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawai'i

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TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
HEARING ON MARCH 14, 2025 AT 2:00PM IN CR 325

SB 1408, SD 1, RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION ACT

March 13, 2025

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

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **strongly supports** this bill which clarifies that Act 130, Session Laws of Hawaii 2024, shall take effect on either the date of the Secretary of the Interior's notification letter to the Congressional Committee Chairpersons that this Act meets none of the criteria in title 43 Code of Federal Regulations section 48.20, or on the date that the United States Congress approval becomes law.

DHHL appreciates that Act 130 was signed into law in 2024. However, DHHL recognizes that Section 4 of Act 130, SLH 2024, did not accurately note the necessary approval process for proper amendment of the HHCA. SB1408, SD1, will correct this error noted in Section 4 of Act 130, SLH 2024. This legislative proposal was approved by the Hawaiian Homes Commission and included in the Governor's Administrative Package.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

Department of The Interior's Procedures to Amend the HHCA

In 1921, Congress enacted the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920 (HHCA), 42 Stat. 108, to provide a homesteading program for native Hawaiians. In 1959, Congress enacted the Hawaii Admission Act, 73 Stat. 4. As a compact with the United States relating to the management and disposition of Hawaiian home lands, the HHCA became part of the Hawaii State Constitution as a condition of statehood. Section 4 of the Admissions Act stipulates that certain provisions of the HHCA relating to administration or any amendment increasing the benefits to lessees of Hawaiian home lands may be amended by the State, but other amendments that would reduce or impair certain funds or change the qualification of lessees require the consent of the United States. Section 204 of the Hawaiian Home Lands Recovery Act, 109 Stat. 537, and 43 CFR Part 48 outlines the procedure to be followed by the State of Hawaii and the United States Department of Interior for review and if necessary approval of amendments to the HHCA.

