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DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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Statement of

DEAN MINAKAMI

Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation

Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

AND

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

February 03, 2026 at 9:31 a.m.

State Capitol, Room 229

In consideration of

SENATE BILL 2071

RELATING TO HOUSING.

Chairs Chang and Keohokalole, Vice Chairs Hashimoto and Fukunaga, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports with comments** Senate Bill 2071, which proposes to increase the fixed sales price period for rent-to-own units from five years to ten years.

This bill aligns with the State's strategy to expand affordable housing opportunities by creating a more flexible and accessible path to homeownership.

We respectfully recommend that the proposed ten-year period be made flexible as the option of HHFDC for the following reasons:

1. **Financial Feasibility.** HHFDC will endeavor to keep the rental term as short as possible to provide the quickest path to home ownership and enable state funds to revolve to fund additional projects. A 10-year period delays the path to homeownership, slows the rate at which funds revolve, and reduces the amount of units that can be delivered.
2. **Project flexibility.** The timeframe in which units can transition from rental-tenure to ownership is influenced by many factors, such as construction costs, interest rates, household income, rental rates, and holding costs. Providing HHFDC the ability to establish project-specific option periods allows the program to adjust to changing circumstances.

3. **Stability and Predictability.** The sales price remains fixed during the option period, giving participants confidence and security as they plan for homeownership.
4. **Alignment with Housing Goals.** This flexibility supports HHFDC's mission to increase affordable housing opportunities while adapting to evolving economic conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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February 3, 2026

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair

Senate Committee on Housing

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

RE: Senate Bill 2071, Relating to Housing

HEARING: Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 9:31 a.m.

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Chair Chang, and Members of the Joint Committees:

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 **supports** Senate Bill 2071, which clarifies that the dwelling units eligible for the Rent-to-Own Program shall be units that are for sale in fee simple or leasehold on state or county land under a lease with an initial term of not less than 99 years. Increases the time period that the sales price of the dwelling units under the Rent-to Own Program shall remain fixed from 5 years to 10 years after the rental agreement is executed. Effective 7/1/2050

By allowing a portion of rent to be credited toward the purchase of a home, this program helps Hawaii residents transition from renting to owning. Extending the fixed sales price period provides participants with greater stability and more time to prepare financially for homeownership. Programs like this are an important step toward making the dream of homeownership attainable, especially with Hawaii's high housing costs.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.





SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAII

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

February 3, 2026

9:31 AM

Conference Room 229

In **OPPOSITION** to **SB2071**: RELATING TO HOUSING

Aloha Chair Chang, Chair Keohokālole, Vice Chair Hashimoto, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and Members of the Housing and Commerce and Consumer Protection Committees,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **OPPOSES SB2071**, which all but invites violations of the state's moral obligations and legal commitments to reconciliation with Native Hawaiians.

The explicit language of this measure would authorize the issuance of 99-year leasehold interests on state and county lands, including “ceded” lands that were stolen from the Hawaiian Kingdom, without the consent of or compensation to the Hawaiian people. Such century-long interests would effectively result in the alienation of these “ceded” lands to private interests. **Unrelinquished Native Hawaiian claims to lands subject to 99-year leases would be foreclosed for generations, if not longer: as we have seen, even shorter long-term leases of public and “ceded” lands can result and have resulted in tremendous pressure from lessees to extend their leases, and ultimately acquire their leased lands’ fee interest.**

By inviting the effective alienation of “ceded” lands, this bill would thereby fly in the face of both the state and federal governments’ recognition of the importance of the “ceded” lands to the Hawaiian people, and their many policy and other stated commitments to reconciliation for the unjust and illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom.¹

Such a reversal on decades’ worth of policy would severely inhibit efforts to negotiate and address the unresolved Native Hawaiian claims to “ceded” lands, which are distinct from Native Hawaiian claims and rights under the public land trust. This in turn may exacerbate injustices that have rendered our islands ever more vulnerable to climate destabilization, and prevent us from realizing the restorative justice for Kānaka ‘Ōiwi that is the key to our future resiliency.

¹ See, e.g., Pub. L. 103-150; House Concurrent Resolution 6 HD1 SD1 (2013); Act 95 (Reg. Sess. 2011); Act 176 (2009); *Office of Hawaiian Affairs v. HCDCH*, 117 Hawai'i 174 (2008) (rev'd only on the use of the federal Apology Resolution); DEP'T OF INTERIOR AND DEP'T OF JUSTICE, FROM MAUKA TO MAKAI: THE RIVER OF JUSTICE MUST FLOW FREELY: REPORT ON THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND NATIVE HAWAIIANS (2000); Act 329 (Reg. Sess. 1997); Act 359 (Reg. Sess. 1993).

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i respectfully asks that this measure be held, or that the language of this measure be amended to clarify that such long-term leases be limited to those involving non-"ceded" lands, by:

Amending page 1, lines 8-9, to read as follows:

"(2) Leasehold on non-ceded state or county land under a lease having an initial term of not less than ninety-nine years;"

The Sierra Club of Hawai'i urges the Committees to **HOLD** SB2071, or to adopt the amendment offered above. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2071

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:44:58 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/3/2026 9:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose SB2071

Dana Keawe

SB-2071

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:28:33 AM

Testimony for HOU on 2/3/2026 9:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara Rojas	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Chang and Keohokālole, Vice Chairs Hashimoto and Fukunaga, and members of the committee,

Please do **NOT** pass SB2071. This is a **hewa** bill that disregards Hawaiians' unrelinquished claims to crown and government lands taken from the Hawaiian Kingdom and the Hawaiian people.

Stolen Hawaiian lands must **not** be sold - or effectively alienated again - through 99-year leases. Long-term dispositions of these lands perpetuate the original injustice and entrench dispossession under the guise of administrative convenience.

Any legislation that treats these lands as freely disposable ignores unresolved legal, historical, and moral issues that remain very much alive today. The State has no authority to permanently encumber what was never lawfully relinquished.

I respectfully urge you to **hold SB2071** and refrain from advancing legislation that deepens the ongoing harm to the Hawaiian people.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

LATE

SB-2071

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:57:48 AM

Testimony for HOU on 2/3/2026 9:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chairs Chang and Keohokālole, Vice Chairs Hashimoto and Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you **not** to pass SB2071.

This hewa bill ignores Hawaiians' unrelinquished claims to Crown and Government Lands taken from the Hawaiian Kingdom and the Hawaiian people. These lands were never lawfully relinquished, and they must not be effectively sold—taken yet again—through 99-year lease arrangements.

I submit this testimony as a lineal descendant of these lands, and as a former O‘ahu Island Burial Council member representing the Kona moku, as well as a former O‘ahu Historic Preservation Commissioner. Through this work, I have seen firsthand the consequences when development and land disposition proceed without proper regard for history, law, and the deep genealogical relationships between po‘e kānaka and ‘āina.

The ‘āina is not simply real estate. It holds the bones of our kūpuna, the record of our history, and the foundation of our lāhui. Any legislation that facilitates long-term alienation of Hawaiian lands without addressing unresolved claims and legal obligations perpetuates injustice rather than remedying it.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to **hold SB2071**.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo
96826