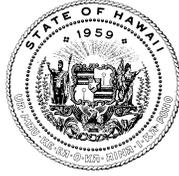


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o
Hawai'i*

SYLVIA J. LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ka Hope Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina
'o Hawai'i*



KALI WATSON
CHAIRPERSON, HHC
Ka Luna Ho'okele

KATIE L. LAMBERT
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIR
Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele

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

P. O. BOX 1879
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
ON FEBRUARY 17, 2026 AT 1:00PM IN CR 224

SB2635, SD1, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

February 17, 2026

Aloha Chair Richards, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports** this bill which appropriates funds to DHHL for the development or purchase of land or units, for mortgage or rental subsidies, and other services necessary to address the waiting list.

DHHL appreciates the noted purposes for the appropriation of funds outlined in the bill. As of June 2025, the DHHL Waiting List host 47,396 applications held by 29,589 native Hawaiians. Historically, when DHHL receives an influx of funding to address the DHHL Waiting List, there is an increase in the number of applications received by DHHL. This is partly because beneficiaries become hopeful for the opportunity to be awarded a lease when an influx of funds is received by DHHL for the purpose of addressing the DHHL Waiting List.

Since the passage of Act 279, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, DHHL has utilized a multi-pronged approach toward addressing the DHHL Waiting List by administering leases and loans, strategically acquiring certain lands and properties that are suitable for the purposes of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended, engaging in strategic partnerships, and diversifying DHHL's development portfolio. DHHL's Strategic Approach to Implement Act 279 of 2022 Booklet can be accessed here (<https://dttl.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Act-279-Working-Group-Meeting-Booklet-Draft-1.pdf>).

An appropriation of funds through this bill would allow DHHL to have continued momentum toward completing phase two for projects pursuant to Act 279, SLH 2022, and allow the State to fulfill its trust obligations.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



Ko`olau Foundation

P. O. Box 4749 / 46-005 Kawa St., #205
Kane`ohe, HI 96744

February 16, 2026

To: Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Chair
Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair

From: Mahealani Cypher, President

Re: S.B. 2635, S.D. 1 – Relating to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands – SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Richards, Vice Chair Lamosao and Committee Members:

The Ko`olau Foundation strongly supports Senate Bill 2635, Senate Draft 1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands for the development or purchase of land or units, for mortgage or rental subsidies, and other services necessary to address the waiting list of Hawaiian homestead applicants.

We especially urge you to include funds to assist the department in developing farm lots on the Kahuku side of Haiku valley in Ko`olaupoko, O`ahu, an initiative that will directly answer the demand for farm homesteads on O`ahu.

The Ko`olau Foundation, which advocates for the perpetuation of Hawaiian cultural practices, traditions, historic preservation and heritage, is engaged in working toward a cultural preserve in that valley, and development of small farm lots adjacent to the preserve would be very compatible with the establishment of a cultural preserve in Haiku valley.

We urge your committee to support this bill and subsequent funding that will hopefully be inserted before it moves for a final floor vote.

Mahalo for your consideration of our mana`o.

SB-2635-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 6:46:09 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support all bills pertaining to getting Native Hawaiians off the waitlist and into homes. The old way has not been working so whatever new ideas will help achieve leaders must be creative, think alternatively and courageous to make this happend

SB-2635-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 11:31:01 PM

Testimony for HWN on 2/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, STRONGLY SUPPORT

ISSURANCE OF 900M TO DHHL TO REDUCE THE PAPER LEASE AND WAITLIST BENEFICIARIES.

MORE OFFERINGS OF SELF-HELP, SELF-BUILD, TURNKEY AT A COST OF \$300K

2635 SB RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS.

To: Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair
Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair
Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 16, 2026

RE: Senate Bill 2635 SD1
Measure Title: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME
LANDS.
Report Title: DHHL; Waiting List; Beneficiaries; Beneficiary List; Appropriation (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support Senate Bill 2635 SD1. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

SB-2635-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:34:05 AM

Testimony for HWN on 2/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for the reasons stated in Section 1 of the bill.