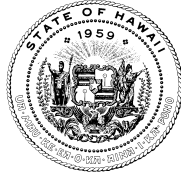


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAII
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o
Hawaii*

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



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 Hawaii'i

P. O. BOX 1879
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HAWAIIAN
AFFAIRS AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ON APRIL 6, 2026 AT 2:00PM IN CR 225

**SCR 93 / SR 88, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS
AND STATEWIDE OFFICE ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SOLUTIONS TO
DEVELOP A COORDINATED SUPPORT AND STABILIZATION PATHWAY FOR
NATIVE HAWAIIAN BENEFICIARIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OR
EXTREMELY LOW INCOME**

April 6, 2026

Aloha Chairs Richards and San Buenaventura, Vice Chairs Lamosao and McKelvey,
and members of the Committees:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports** this resolution requesting the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions to develop a coordinated support and stabilization pathway for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries experiencing homelessness or extremely low income.

DHHL supports the intent of this resolution which notes much of the work that DHHL is currently doing. In January 2026, DHHL commemorated the completion of DHHL's first transitional housing facility for native Hawaiians experiencing houselessness, named Hale o Kumumamo. DHHL began the renovation process for this federally funded project, amounting to more than \$6.4 million, in September 2024.

DHHL appreciates that this resolution prioritizes its beneficiaries and recognizes how crucial partnerships are in serving native Hawaiian houseless populations and extremely low-income beneficiaries. DHHL supports developing coordinated support and stabilization pathways for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries in coordination with the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

SR-88

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 7:12:59 PM

Testimony for HWN on 4/6/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairs and Committee Members,

I urge you to pass this bill. It is unconscionable to deny homeless native Hawaiian beneficiaries anything. This is partly or entirely due to the State government and DHHL's failure to comply with its stated mission to provide for Hawaiians.

Sincerely, Diane Ware Volcano 96785

SR-88

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:43:51 PM

Testimony for HWN on 4/6/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, STENOUS OPPOSE W/COMMENT

VIOLATE HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION ACT OF 1920

88 SR REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS AND STATEWIDE OFFICE ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SOLUTIONS TO DEVELOP A COORDINATED SUPPORT AND STABILIZATION PATHWAY FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN BENEFICIARIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OR EXTREMELY LOW INCOME.

SR-88

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 10:12:50 PM

Testimony for HWN on 4/6/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

At the outset, I wish to commend the author of this resolution for recognizing the unique responsibility to Native Hawaiian beneficiaries and the urgent need to address homelessness and extreme economic hardship within our lāhui. The intent of this measure—to bring together the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions—is both timely and necessary.

For too long, our beneficiaries have had to navigate fragmented systems of care. This resolution appropriately acknowledges that without coordination, individuals and ‘ohana may fall through the cracks. A more unified pathway that aligns housing, supportive services, and long-term stabilization resources reflects a mālama-centered approach that is consistent with our values as a community.

We especially support the resolution’s focus on:

- Identifying the scope of need among beneficiaries experiencing homelessness or extremely low income;
- Evaluating gaps in housing stabilization and supportive services;
- Exploring partnerships with nonprofit providers; and
- Identifying funding sources to better align existing resources.

These are practical and necessary first steps toward building a more responsive and effective system of care.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While I support the intent of this resolution, I respectfully offer the following comments to strengthen its implementation:

First, the scope of work requested is broad and spans multiple complex systems, including data integration, interagency coordination, land use considerations, and housing development models. Each of these areas presents unique challenges. As such, I emphasize that this effort should be approached as a **phased planning process**, with clear prioritization of achievable near-term actions and longer-term strategies.

Second, the evaluation of transitional housing models, including kauhale or tiny home villages on Department of Hawaiian Home Lands lands, must be undertaken with careful attention to the **Hawaiian Homes Commission Act and the State's trust obligations**. Land use decisions within the trust require thoughtful analysis to ensure that proposed uses are consistent with the intent to benefit beneficiaries and do not create unintended legal or operational complications.

Third, while identifying funding sources is important, we note that alignment and access to those funds—particularly across federal, state, and trust-based programs—may require additional policy changes, administrative coordination, and sustained resources beyond the scope of this resolution.

Finally, encourage that any coordinated pathway developed through this process include **clear beneficiary-centered design**, cultural grounding, and meaningful engagement with organizations that serve Native Hawaiian communities to ensure that solutions are both effective and appropriate.

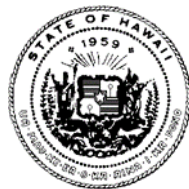
CONCLUSION

S.C.R. No. 93 represents an important step toward addressing one of the most pressing challenges facing our community. By fostering coordination and thoughtful planning, this measure has the potential to improve outcomes for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries in need of housing stability and support.

With the above comments offered in the spirit of strengthening this effort, I respectfully urge your support for this resolution.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

April 6, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Jun D. Yang, Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SCR 93/SR 88 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS AND STATEWIDE OFFICE ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SOLUTIONS TO DEVELOP A COORDINATED SUPPORT AND STABILIZATION PATHWAY FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN BENEFICIARIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OR EXTREMELY LOW INCOME.**

Hearing: April 6, 2026, Time 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

AGENCY'S POSITION: The Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) supports this resolution and offers comments. This resolution urges the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) and SOHHS to develop a coordinated support and stabilization pathway for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries experiencing homelessness or extremely low income. The coordinating agencies are requested to submit a report regarding the development of a coordinated support and stabilization pathway to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2027.

SOHHS welcomes the opportunity to continue to partner with DHHL to identify opportunities to support Native Hawaiian beneficiaries experiencing homelessness. Compared to the general population, Native Hawaiians are over-represented in the state's homeless

population. Furthermore, Native Hawaiians often experience higher rates of food insecurity and health disparities compared to other ethnic groups, which can exacerbate housing and economic challenges that lead to homelessness.

The recent opening of the Hale o Kumumamo transitional living facility for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries experiencing homelessness is one example of leveraging State and federal resources to create transitional housing specifically for beneficiaries experiencing homelessness. Hale o Kumumamo provides safe, supportive living spaces to 18 beneficiaries identified through DHHL and the Continuum of Care. The creation of intermediate housing resources, including transitional housing and rental housing, is a key component of the housing ladder, as these resources give households the opportunity to continue to transform their lives and work toward upward mobility with increasing levels of independence. SOHHS will continue to partner with DHHL and other public and private sector partners to create housing opportunities for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

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