

wearewestmaui - ATTN: WEST MAUI CPAC

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Subject: ATTN: WEST MAUI CPAC

Aloha,

My name is Kanani Higbee. I am giving testimony for February 6, 2020 meeting in regards to item D, specifically Hawaiian Homelands Honokowai Project and Villages of Leiali'i.

First of all, I am not only on the list of Hawaiian Homes, but very involved with attending every meeting that has to do with Hawaiian Homes on Maui, watching videos of testimony across the state, visiting with DHHL on Oahu, being in close contact with DHHL communications liaison, Cedric Duarte. I've met, emailed, spoken to West and Central Maui legislators to keep them involved with DHHL and advocate for funding.

I am an applicant for both of these projects since I'm on the Maui list for agriculture and residential. Also, my mom, Delta Lapota, sister Moli Lapota, and brother Kainalu Higbee, and another brother Kaunalu Higbee(inherit our mom's lease), are all on the list for lots from these projects. We plan to pass them down to our children and nieces and nephews. We also have countless cousins, neighbors, etc. who weren't able to get into the Lahaina Leiali'i housing nearly 15 years ago and have been patient and advocating for this next round of housing.

These projects of Leiali'i 1B and Honokowai are long overdue. My family and I have witnessed numerous applicants lose out on getting their Hawaiian home forever. They have died on the list before getting an award. It is not just them who have missed out, but their whole family line. Right now, an applicant must be 50% Native Hawaiian to get a home. And for Maui, it's possible to pass it down to a family member who is at least 25%. For Moloka'i, they can pass it down to family who have at least 1/32 Native Hawaiian blood quantum. It's an unfathomable tragedy for an applicant to die before they are awarded a home. And yet this happens time and time again. 28,000 still are on the list for Hawaiian Homes. Since 1921, only 9,000 have been awarded a lot. Many have died on the list, including my grandpa.

For those of you who don't know, the U.S. took 1.2 million acres of prime Hawaii land from the kingdom of Hawaii. Prince Kuhio, our last male heir, next in line for the monarch, passed the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921 through U.S. Congress that allowed Native Hawaiians to get awarded a lot to build their own home. He hoped all Native Hawaiians could be beneficiaries for this act, however congress tacked on that there had to be a blood quantum. Of the 1.2 million acres taken from Native Hawaiians by the U.S., 200,000 acres was set aside for Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL). This was to offset the trauma Native Hawaiians experiences every day from the displacement of them from their ancestral land, resources, community, language, culture, livelihood, religion, family. To this day, due to the displacement from their lands, Native Hawaiians have the highest rate of incarceration, substance abuse and addiction, obesity, mental health, infant mortality, etc.— all signs of an indigenous people suffering from displacement.

For DHHL to have so many people die on the list, is such a travesty. Many people refer to Hawaiian Homes Commission Act as a broken promise. What's worse is most regions of Hawaii, such as Lahaina, are not meeting their island plan set forth every twenty years. According to the Maui Island Plan for DHHL that was made in 2004 and last until 2024, the projected goal will not be met. Only 104 lots will have been actually completed and homes built, ie. Leiali'i 1A in 2008 (104 lots). DHHL is planning on building in 2023- Honokowai (25 lots), 2024 -Honokowai (25 lots) and 2023 Leiali'i 1B-1 (75 lots), 2024 Leiali'i 1B-2 (125 lots). DHHL is only planning some of these projects and that is one of four phases, and the beginning of the development process. Cedric Duarte, communication liaison of DHHL predicts the lots for West Maui won't be completed until 2027. So the goal of having 411 won't be met, instead only 104, will be completed within this 20 year Maui island Plan, 250 possibly planned, and 57 lots aren't even making it into the agenda. So DHHL, Maui County, Maui Planning Dept, and the State legislature are not meeting their obligation to make sure the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921 is being honored. The state is obligated to give sufficient funding for DHHL and that is not being met. What's more is that the County Council of Maui feels they will help Maui County if they make federal funding available to the Hawaiian Homeland associations by passing a bill this legislative session to allow them to apply for grant block federal funding so the county doesn't need to help upkeep the

infrastructure of roads, sewers etc of DHHL communities, when it actually is the county's kuleana. The county allows the state and federal funding to pay for the initial infrastructure of DHHL and the county then pays any upkeep of infrastructure like roads since everyone uses the roads DHHL builds. But they are trying to have these associations use federal funding meant to develop new lots and have them use the funding to upkeep existing infrastructure. Which will hinder any new lots being built. And keep more Native Hawaiian to die on the list. The County of Maui is trying to get bill passed in legislation to make sure more Native Hawaiians die on the list of Hawaiian Homes.

There is a lot of "passing the buck" among many of the county council members, the mayor, some of the State Legislators, etc. When really, they should try to help. There are some people who are supportive like West Maui Representative Angus McKelvey. He's trying to get \$24.7 million from the state legislature to support developing the infrastructure for Leiali'i and Honokowai.

I hope this information is informative for all of you and raise awareness for what is happening among Native Hawaiians and DHHL, especially in West Maui. This past year, Maui had a keynote speaker, Peter Savio, at the Maui Nui Attainable Housing Forum who spoke of how Maui is losing its localness because housing is so expensive. According to the Maui News, the average home in Maui sold for \$1.8 million in 2018. Savio also noted that if Hawaiian Homes is built, only Hawaiians can buy them. And when they are built, it creates more housing because Hawaiian tend to vacate rentals to get into home ownership. This is true because I was able to live in an affordable apartment at Lahaina Surf in 2009 when many apartments were vacated there as Hawaiians moved in Leiali'i 1A in 2008.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

I hope this information is useful. It may seem like building Hawaiian Homes only benefits Hawaiians, but in reality it benefits the island of Maui as a whole. Because rather than spending money on the aftermath of a people who went through trauma and displacement resulting in generations of incarceration and rehab, society can experience Native Hawaiians thriving and helping contribute to the community as many do. These communities of Hawaiian Homes help to uplift eachother. They work together to keep drugs out of their neighborhoods. And many of these communities raise tens of thousands of dollars in college scholarships to award to their graduating Highschool seniors. So it benefits Maui as a whole to get these Hawaiian Homes built.

With Aloha,
Kanani Higbee

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Kanani Higbee