

August 27, 1999

Aloha Trustee Trask, fellow trustees and committee members:

My name is Charlotte K. Batalona. I am the President of the Maunalaha Valley Community Association. Our community is not new to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). In 1994, the association president then, Minewa Kaawa came to OHA. She presented each trustee with a History folder she compiled during her 21 years as president. The new trustees now serving on the board were also presented a folder. She came to OHA with the belief this office would be the answer to the struggles for Maunalaha. Here I am sitting before you today in 1999, 5 years since first coming to OHA still requesting your assistance.

I would first like to thank Trustee Trask for introducing this bill. Attached to this testimony is our problems statement, needs assessment and legislative history which is taken from our report on needs and concerns. The problem statement reflects the need for infrastructure that meets the minimum health and safety standards. The needs assessment was based on information collected by a survey of the residents. Please note the columns marked Infrastructure and Family Needs/Community Priority. 74% of the residents have substandard infrastructure. The remaining 26% has no infrastructure on the property. It does not mean they do not live on the property in those conditions. In urban Honolulu, and in one of the highest priced real estate market, you would think it not possible. The Family Needs/Community Priority column shows 60% of the residents felt infrastructure is the highest priority. The Legislative history shows our community has tried various means to secure funding and improve the living conditions for all the residents of our valley.

Data provided by the Housing Problems and Needs of Native Hawaiians, HUD-7016, main findings of the report states "Nearly half of Native Hawaiian households experience a problem of affordability, overcrowding and structural inadequacy."

I appeal to you as trustees of native hawaiian beneficiaries to fulfill your responsibilities and fund communities like Maunalaha, Kikala-Keokea and Milolii. By providing funding you would build these communities and empower native hawaiians to gain control over their communities. Community Building is the best tool you can provide to help improve our current conditions. Please do not let hawaiians to continue to live in substandard conditions in their homelands. It is within your powers to put things "to right" or "pono".

Mahalo Trustees, Mahalo Ke Akua

Aloha,



Charlotte K. Batalona "Coco"
President