

Aloha Assistant Secretary John Berry,

I am writing to submit testimony for the Native Hawaiian Reconciliation process. I am a Kalapana community member who in fact does currently work for the NATIONAL PARK SERVICE. I am born and raised in the Kupahu'a Ahupua'a (land division) which currently adjoins the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. I did attend the meeting that was held at the Drive-in in Kalapana and attended the meeting in the company of my kupunawahine (grandmother) Minnie Kaawaloa. I would like to address 5 issues as part of this testimony; 1) Kalapana area as an adjacent community of the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, 2) Land Tax, 3) Land sale, 4) Land salvage, and 5) Health care.

In 1935, Puna land was acquired by the NATIONAL PARK SERVICE and later known as the Kalapana extension. There were a few Hawaiian families that owned the land that was condemned by the territory and sold to the Park Service. If you are interested in knowing who they were I can tell you at a later time. Note that in written documentation, these families didn't request compensation. This land, during that same time period, was also under consideration to be purchased for the building of hotels, and etc. I speak for myself as well as for many members of the Kaawaloa Ohana (family) when I say that for the most part we are very happy that the Park Service has adopted this land parcel. We all know, and accept this as history, that 90% of Hawai'i land was stolen and or taken improperly so lets move on and turn a bad situation into a more positive one. How we can potentially turn this into a more positive situation will be to not charge Native Hawaiians Land Tax. This doesn't correct what was done or make what it right but it's a start. I feel very strongly that charging us land tax is WRONG. This is how most Hawaiian lost their lands was because someone imposed a land tax and Hawaiians innocently not understanding that process lost their land due to it. Don't charge us tax on what was originally ours.

This leads me directly into my third item, which is the sale of our lands. Another start would be to set aside more lands for Native Hawaiians as homesites, Natural preserve areas, National historic sites, National monuments, and etc. In the last 5-years more that 50% of Hawaiian lands have been sold to non-Hawaiian people. This is a hard issue to address because the government doesn't manage the sale of lands but you do buy lands! This is what I am addressing; buying lands to be set-aside for use by Native Hawaiians as National historic sites, and etc. Making positive out of negative. Stop the sale of our lands to non-Hawaiians. Another idea that could be implemented the easiest would be a requirement that all landowners must preserve at least 25% of their land in its natural state. What we are seeing is all landowners bulldozing all of their lands and not respecting the natural and cultural resources. Help fix that so that their will be something for our keiki (kids).

The last issue that the American Government can kokua (help) with is our Health care. In the early 1900 the Hawaiian population went from ~ 145,000 to less than 25,000. This was from all the diseases that were brought in through the importation of immigrants to the islands to work as plantation workers. Prior to this is it was due to all the sailors that were coming into port here. We need kokua with our health care. We need financial support

Mahalo nui loa for taking the time to read my mere testimony. This is my Mana'o (thoughts) on what could be done. I currently work as an Interpretive Ranger at the Hawaiian Volcanoes National Park and can be reached at (808) 9856013 or at andrea_kaawaloa@nps.gov. More importantly, I am an educated Native Hawaiian. Again Mahalo nui loa (thank you very much) for you time and energy.

Mahalo nui loa
Andrea M Kaawaloa
Hawaiian, Caucasian, German, Chinese

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