

January 5, 2000

Assistant Secretary John Berry
c/o Document Management Unit
United States Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W., Mailstop - 7229
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Berry:

I wish to have my testimony included along with the other testimonies you have received on behalf of Native Hawaiians.

I am a native Hawaiian and I was born and raised in Hawaii. The history of the Hawaiian Islands and Native Hawaiians is an amazing, unique and tragic one, however, a main theme of Native Hawaiian culture is IMUA - to move forward. I believe that the most important issue regarding us is "living on the land." I think that Native Hawaiians should be given an ahupua'a, (specific area of land) and the means to assist us in building our home and infrastructure. An ahupua'a is a large section of land, that may extend from mountain to ocean, and in the past, our kupuna - ancestors, lived on their ahupua'a and planted their food which they shared with others and took care of their ahupua'a. I do not think an ahupua'a of that size is necessary in this day, however, the concept may provide an option to our dire land and housing situation. I believe we are conservationists at heart and we have been taught from birth to take care of the 'aina - land, the oceans and the skies and most of all to help one another.

It will of course take detailed planning and compromising on all sides working together, government, communities and Native Hawaiians. Yet, I think this step will greatly raise the self esteem of Native Hawaiians and rekindle our hope for a better future. I also think this step will assist in improving our grave statistics regarding health, economics and education and begin the process of healing the emotional pain felt by Native Hawaiians.

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Regarding the 50% blood quantum required in order to qualify to receive Hawaiian homestead/land, I do not think this quantum is necessary. History shows us that Native Hawaiians were able to recite their genealogy going all the way back to their belief system regarding the creation of life and the beginning of mankind. Today, to recite your genealogy is not possible for all, however, most Native Hawaiians know some part of their ancestry or a relative does. Mr. Berry, I believe we want to be able to pass down the land we live on and care for – to future generations - to our children and their children's children -- for the pure purpose of taking care of the land in order that it will continue to provide for generations to come.

Thank you for going to Hawaii and listening to our concerns.

Aloha no,

Dagmar-Claire Kupua Nava

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