

SCR 39

THE SENATE
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2009

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday April 8, 2009
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 211
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Testimony in support of SCR 39:

My name is Winona Sardinha. I am a long time resident of Kukui Gardens, and a leader in FACE, Faith Action for Community Equity.

I have lived in Kukui Gardens since 1970, when the development first opened, and have raised 5 lovely boys. It has not been easy, but it has been a fruitful time. One of my sons is developmentally challenged, and the community at Kukui Gardens has been a safe and loving place for him to grow up in. It is because of him that I joined in this fight to save our homes. He has been one of the strongest leaders in Kukui Gardens and has been at almost every event that we have had. If you saw him, you would see how much he loves this place.

Kukui Gardens has been ready and waiting for the redevelopment that it was promised. All plans were in place to begin, but the financial problems in New York and across the globe stopped everything. Now we are in a place where we do not know what our future will bring. We were ready to break ground, and had plans to begin the redevelopment process early this year. But now we need your help to be placed on the governor's list.

I ask you today to help us in saving our home. We have fought so hard up until now. It would be a disgrace to us all if Kukui Gardens did not survive because of these economic hard times.

Representatives, please urge the governor to place Kukui Gardens on the list of shovel ready projects. Kukui Gardens is ready to be redeveloped. We need your support.

Thank you.

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My name is Carol Anzai. I am a long time resident of Kukui Gardens. I am the president of Kukui Gardens Resident Association, who is a member of FACE, Faith Action for Community Equity.

I am here today to support Senate Concurrent Resolution 39.

We at KGRA and FACE, together with EAH and Devine & Gong, have been fighting to keep our homes affordable. As you know all too well, we have been fighting for almost 3 years. We even completed the deal. But in December, because of circumstances beyond our control everything halted, and Kukui Gardens was in trouble. FACE leaders, including myself, jumped to find ways to fix the problem. We held resident meetings, made visits to the corporate centers of all the local banks, met with local senate and legislative representatives. We even had one of our leaders in Washington DC to meet with the DC office of Senator Inouye, as well as to let other Congressional representatives know of our struggle, and to find other developments and organizations that were in the same situation.

The situation is a complex and difficult one. One that we do not like, but rise to the occasion to fight. We ask that you will fight with us. There are hundreds of families that depend on the low-income housing that is provided for at Kukui Gardens. This development has been a safer place to live and raise a family since 1970. We at Kukui Gardens Resident Association and FACE ask that you will push for Kukui Gardens to be placed on the top of the list of shovel ready projects. Help us save the 389 units that will remain affordable for 389 families that really do need it, especially in this economic time.

Thank you for your time.

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Many have worked hard to keep Kukui Gardens an affordable housing place. Money found two years ago was expected to be in place for the renovation of Kukui Gardens and for building additional units to the makai side, now owned by the state. EUH, the nonprofit housing management company, is already in place maintaining and improving the apartments. Because the tax credit money became unavailable due to bank failures in the economic downturn, money is needed to continue this work to complete the housing by 2013, when Carmel Partners will begin turning the mauka side into for profit housing to be rented at higher prices. I urge that this resolution be passed since this is a "shovel ready project" of very high value.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy S. Young, chair of the Affordable Housing Committee of Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE)