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February 14, 2019

TO: The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Kelly T. King  
Council Chair

Handwritten signature of Kelly T. King in black ink.

SUBJECT: **REQUEST FOR HEARING; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 543, HD1,  
RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

May I respectfully request this measure be heard in your committee at the earliest opportunity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important measure. The primary purpose of this measure is to direct the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation to initiate negotiations or exercise its power of eminent domain to acquire the Front Street Apartments affordable housing project on Maui.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. When the Front Street Apartments were built in 2001, the intent was for the apartments to remain affordable for 50 years. This year, the owners of Front Street Apartments will be able to remove the affordability requirements imposed on the property, aggravating the affordable housing shortage these apartments were supposed to help solve.
2. Without the affordability requirement, the owners will be able to raise the rents at Front Street Apartments, potentially displacing many of the current residents.
2. The State set a precedent of supporting affordable housing in this way by enacting Act 288, Session Laws of Hawaii 2006, to preserve the affordability of the Kukui Gardens affordable housing project on Oahu.

For the foregoing reasons, I **support** this measure.