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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0906

Hawaii to Receive \$12.7 Million to Help Provide Affordable Housing for Native Hawaiian Families

Washington, Jul 17 -

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced today that it will award a \$12.7 million Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant to build affordable homes and provide other housing support for Native Hawaiian families. These funds will be administered by the State of Hawaii Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.

“It is our kuleana as a country to honor our commitments to the Native Hawaiian community. This means ensuring Native Hawaiian families have the opportunity to pursue dreams of owning a home and recognizing the challenges low-income families face in their search for an affordable place to live,” said Congresswoman Mazie Hirono (HI-02).

“Historically, the wait for property on Hawaiian home lands for many Native Hawaiian families has been filled with frustration and disappointment. Testifying at a U.S. Senate Indian Affairs Committee field hearing this past April, we as members of Hawaii’s congressional delegation reaffirmed our commitment to the Native Hawaiian community. It is our duty to make sure Congress understands and fulfills its obligations. This includes working to pass a measure that extends this block grant program for an additional four years.

“Today’s announced investment by the Obama Administration will strengthen local communities, assist families with qualifying for home loans and down payments, and help build and repair homes. Mahalo to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands for its continued work in meeting the needs of Native Hawaiian families.”

On April 13, Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, held a legislative field hearing in Honolulu on the *Hawaiian Homeownership Opportunity Act* attended by the entire Hawaii Congressional delegation and federal and local officials, scholars, and advocates.

Senator Daniel K. Inouye introduced the measure that would extend housing assistance for Native

Americans and loan guarantees for Native Hawaiian housing through FY2016.

Congresswoman Hirono introduced the companion bill in the U.S. House, which is cosponsored by Representatives Colleen Hanabusa (D-Hawaii) and Don Young (R-Alaska).

"Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant funds provide the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands with much needed access to capital for infrastructure and housing development. These are critical federal funds that create housing opportunities to help fulfill the mission of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act by reconnecting Native Hawaiians to their ancestral lands.

"We are extremely grateful for the efforts of our congressional delegation who continue to ensure these vital sources of capital are made available for us here in Hawaii," said Michelle Kauhane, Deputy Director of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.

Passed by Congress in 1996, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) reauthorized a system of housing assistance provided to tribes by HUD through the Indian Housing Block Grant program.

In 2000, the Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant was established under NAHASDA to help another indigenous people, the Native Hawaiians. Funds for this grant are administered by the State of Hawaii Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, the entity charged with carrying out the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act.