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February 27, 2019

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

RE: SB 471, SD1 Relating to Homelessness

Hawai'i County participates in Community Alliance Partners (CAP), and heavily relies on that organization to identify pertinent bills related to homelessness that are worthy of support. CAP, understandably, has enthusiastically endorsed the comprehensive approach in SB 471, SD1, and has asked others to join in the effort to win passage.

Homelessness is one of my few priorities for this Session, and I know I would be preaching to the choir if I elaborated on why this issue is so important. Rather than do that, let me simply say that I support SB 471, SD1, and hope you will fund the programs at a level that will make a real difference for our community.

SB 471, SD1, proposes to appropriate funds to the outreach program, rapid re-housing program, housing first program, family assessment centers, law enforcement assisted diversion program, and the coordinated statewide homelessness initiative. It also would establish and appropriate funds for a pilot program to provide long-term rental assistance for individuals over the age of 60 who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Funding of these essential programs is vital if we are to truly deal with homelessness in our state.

Please act favorably on SB 471, SD1, and even more importantly, consider including funding for these core programs in the Senate version of the State budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harry Kim
MAYOR