



**Testimony to the House Committee on Water, Land & Ocean Resources  
Friday, February 3, 2012  
9:00 a.m.  
State Capitol - Conference Room 325**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2419 RELATING TO THE LAND USE**

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Har, and members of the committee:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii strongly supports H.B. No. 2419 which proposes to require the counties seek declaratory ruling from the land use commission for reclassification of lands in a county general plan. Changes to the general plan take effect immediately upon approval of the reclassification by the land use commission.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,000 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the “Voice of Business” in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals, to improve the state’s economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

As stated in the bill, in making amendments to county general plans, the counties are inclusive, holding many public hearings and allowing for public input on the proposed amendments. Amendments to a county general plan are voted on by appointed commissions as well as elected legislative bodies. Consequently, counties conduct more community outreach than the land use commission.

Moreover, the Counties are better equipped to plan for urban expansion as they are primarily responsible for the government services that need to be provided in urban areas. We find the existing process cumbersome and needlessly redundant. For example, the current process would have the Counties plan for urban expansion in their general plans or sustainable community plans/development plans, then wait until private developer is willing to take the matter before the State Land Use Commission to reclassify the lands for urban expansion.

The proposed bill would remove some of the unnecessary redundancy in the process, save costs, and also create more certainty for private investors.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our views.