

# HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

*Ke Kanihela o ke Kalana o Honolulu*

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July 19, 2023

**Via Email**

Ms. Alana Kobayashi Pakkala  
Executive Vice President & Managing Partner  
Kobayashi Group LLC  
1288 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 201  
Honolulu, HI 96814

Aloha e Ms. Pakkala,

As I am sure you are aware, the July 12th, 2023 Council Meeting included a lively discussion regarding Resolution 23-62, with much comment related to the Kuilei Place 201H affordable housing project. There were moments of deep frustration, fear, and even anger being communicated during the meeting, and I believe all of us here at the Honolulu City Council recognize the critical importance of the discussion. I am thankful for the commitment of these residents, which helped us to keep the challenges of the State's affordable housing crisis front of mind. That said, I am writing this letter to urge you to do more to find housing options for the current residents.

The discussion was a reminder that regardless of how good our intentions may be, it is the results that truly matter. We recognize that as it relates to this particular project you gave initial notice in October of 2022 to impacted residents, provided \$1,500 per household in moving assistance, ensured the return of 100% of the renters' security deposits, regardless of the current condition of the unit, and provided two months of free rent for individuals who chose to remain after August 1, 2023. We are aware of the fact that these efforts go above and beyond what is required by law, and while we are thankful for that we implore you to consider dedicating additional resources to ensure every current resident is empowered to secure a new place of residence as this project progresses. In addition, we recognize that with the changes in how the population now consumes information, there are significant challenges in ensuring adequate notification of residents as it pertains to new projects and calls for input.

We appreciate your efforts thus far but must insist that you strategize to see what other assistance you can provide. As I am aware of your other affordable housing developments, I encourage you to see if there is a way to relocate any of your current residents to other projects. I further would like to insist that for all future projects, you continue to look for new ways to ensure that proper notification is received by all impacted residents. The fact remains that regardless of what communication efforts were made, if residents remain unaware to this degree, then there is still work to be done.

7/23/23 1:51 CITY CLERK

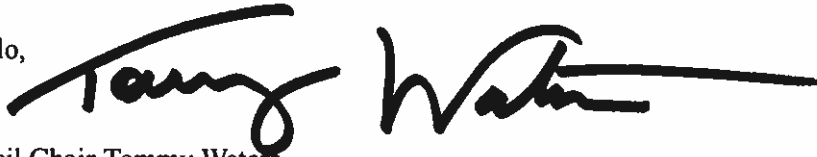
**COUNCIL COM. 210**

While I'm sure many of us struggled to bear the questioning of our intentions and character, having time to reflect on the discussion only reaffirms to me why we must continue on with this important work. At different moments in the meeting, I asked testifiers what actions they proposed we take, not in an effort to evade our responsibility to identify solutions, but in reality, because we too share many of the same fears and frustrations of our constituents. We recognize that the steps we have taken are not enough, yet many of us still wonder, what else can we do? I know for a fact that I, and many of the other Council Members, are pulling every lever we can think of within the confines of the law to work towards better outcomes, but the reality is that we need to work together if we are to see a better tomorrow.

In spite of what the discussion may lead some to believe, we have made positive strides in achieving improved results on behalf of the residents of Honolulu. Through our negotiations on this particular project alone, we were able to take the project from 13 units at or below 80% of the AMI to 41, a 215% increase. In addition, we increased the units between 100 and 120% AMI from 130 to 219, a 68% increase. While in the short term, we are taking 125 units offline, in total, we would be adding 603 affordable units and 402 market units back into the inventory in their place. While we remain cognizant of the public's continued reservations, we also recognize your efforts beyond this specific project. My understanding is that you are on track to deliver 1,200 affordable housing units through 2026, which is not an insignificant chunk of our City's overall need.

We remain committed here at the Council to navigating the City through this affordable housing crisis and appreciate your kōkua in our efforts to deliver homes to the residents of Honolulu.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tommy Waters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Council Chair Tommy Waters

District 4 (*Hawai'i Kai, Kuli'ou'ou, Niu Valley, 'Āina Haina, Wailupe, Wai'alaē-Iki, Kalani Valley, Kahala, Wilhelmina Rise, Kaimukī, portions of Kapahulu, Diamond Head, Black Point, Waikīkī, and Ala Moana Beach Park*)