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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OHA URGES GOVERNOR TO INCREASE RELIEF FOR HAWAI'I RENTERS

HONOLULU – OHA Chief Executive Officer Sylvia Hussey sent a letter yesterday to Gov. David Ige urging the adoption of additional policies to close critical gaps left by the new federal moratorium on evictions and the state's recent emergency orders, in an effort to ensure that all Hawai'i renters can stay in their homes through the entire COVID-19 crisis.

“While the steps already taken by our Governor and Congress go a long way towards safeguarding the people of Hawai'i, additional steps – in particular as it relates to ensuring that people can ‘shelter in place’ – are needed immediately,” said OHA CEO Hussey. “This is simply not the time for landowners to evict tenants. Evicting innocent victims of this unexpected crisis, many of whom could be Native Hawaiian, runs counter to the aloha spirit that binds our local community together. It also makes no sense from a public health perspective to kick people out of their homes, condemning them to live on the street during a time when we are being legally required to shelter in place to slow the spread of the disease in Hawai'i. Absolutely no good is served by evictions right now. So we are asking Gov. Ige to close these policy gaps to ensure that all renters can stay in their homes through the crisis.”

OHA's letter provides data demonstrating the Native Hawaiian community's particular vulnerability to these renter eviction policy gaps. More information about the potential needs of Native Hawaiians during the COVID-19 crisis can be found here: https://19of32x2yl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Issue-Brief.-Covid-19_corrected.pdf.

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About the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

Established by the state Constitutional Convention in 1978, OHA is a semi-autonomous state agency mandated to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians. Guided by a board of nine publicly elected trustees, OHA fulfills its mandate through advocacy, research, community engagement, land management and the funding of community programs. Learn more at www.oha.org.

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