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Cc:
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This will provide you with my written testimony in opposition to bill 3 (2011) Relating to real property tax exemptions for historic residential real property.

I oppose this bill because it introduces subjective and potentially capricious elements into the determination of the amount of tax exemption for historic homes.

I strongly believe that, without predictable and well defined incentives to maintain historic properties, Honolulu would lose many of the historic homes that define our cultural landscapes. There are tremendous incentives for owners of aging historic properties to bulldoze them to erect a larger, contemporary property. The costs of maintaining a historic home are significant as wiring, plumbing, structural maintenance and other costs far exceed those costs for a more modern structure. Historic homes are also smaller than the "McMansions" that have been built in gentrified neighborhoods ... and loss of a tax exemption may spur owners to raze historic structures to make way for a much larger structure. The end result is a loss of our characteristic architecture and landscapes.

All that being said, I support strong enforcement of the current laws relative to maintaining visibility and access to these historic properties.

For the record, I do not own or have an interest in any historic properties. I am just a concerned citizen who wants to preserve those things that make Hawai'i a special place to live.

Aloha,

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