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Testimony Before the Zoning & Housing Committee

Wednesday, May 24, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

Statement in Opposition to Bill 17 and Proposed CD1, Relating to Building Inspections

Chair Kymberly Marcos Pine, Vice Chair Ikaika Anderson and Members:

I am Sharon Moriwaki, an owner occupant of One Waterfront Towers, a Kaka'ako condominium over three stories high. Our owners care about the proper and long-term maintenance of our aging building –and we especially care for the safety of our residents. We therefore conduct regular inspections of our buildings via our reserve study for the purpose of planning ahead to enable us to fund these projects. Our buildings are over ten years old and we thus have to increase our maintenance fees to cover the needed costs, which is particularly difficult for owners on fixed incomes.

I wholeheartedly agree and support the intention of Bill 17 (2017) to ensure the safety of people who use the building and to prevent fatal disasters which could be avoided with regular building inspections. However, Bill 17, as currently drafted –even with the longer period proposed in Proposed CD1-- is overly broad; it should cover publicly used facilities and exclude condominiums if they conduct regular inspections.

State law (Section 514B-148, HRS) regulates condominiums and requires a reserve study to provide information on repairs and maintenance of major components, e.g., roof, exterior painting, spall repairs, etc. The reserve study is a detailed report on the needed repairs and the proposed costs that must be set aside to do those repairs. Additionally, condo insurance carriers will examine the condo – and even can provide a more detailed inspection in a loss control report that the condo must address to obtain coverage at reasonable premiums. These safeguards are already in place and require no further taxing of condo owners. Perhaps instead of requiring the inspection, the bill should be amended for condominiums to provide access to the inspection report when the reserve study inspection is conducted. The responsible department can create a website or other less expensive way for the agency and homeowner association to collect the needed data. The department can follow-up as needed if the building owner's report does provide sufficient assurances that the exterior walls and appurtenances have been properly inspected.

Based on the foregoing, and on behalf of the condo owners of Honolulu, particularly those in buildings three stories in height or higher, to file the bill or amend it to restrict its coverage to public facilities – those used by our public such as shopping centers, office buildings, etc. -- not those homeowners who are already careful to maintain the safety of their own buildings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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