



**PRESS CONERENCE REMARKS
OF
OHA CHAIRPERSON HAUNANI APOLIONA
MARCH 31, 2009
OHA BOARDROOM**

Aloha mai kākou,

More than a year ago, on January 31, 2008, the Hawai'i Supreme Court issued a unanimous, landmark decision prohibiting the State of Hawai'i from selling or transferring ceded lands to third parties until the unrelinquished claims of the Native Hawaiian people to those lands are resolved.

Since that ruling, the OHA Board of Trustees felt that the decision by the Hawai'i Supreme Court was correct -- it was pono.

With today's ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, the case now heads back to the Hawai'i Supreme Court and we applaud that decision to send the ceded-lands case back to the Hawai'i Supreme Court for further deliberations, as we had suggested in our brief and oral argument. We consider the U.S. Supreme Court's decision today to be a favorable one. While we would have preferred an outright dismissal of the petition, the result in this case is workable.

We believe that the U.S. Supreme Court clearly indicated that its decision today is not necessarily the end of the line for this case.

The case is headed back to Hawai‘i and will be decided by the state’s highest court where it rightfully belongs. As we have consistently said for months, this case should never have been taken outside of the state of Hawai‘i.

OHA will now focus on persuading the Hawai‘i Supreme Court that it should reaffirm the injunction that it ordered in last year's opinion as a matter of state law.

When we traveled to chilly Washington D.C. last month, we were warmed by the outpouring of support and the spirit of kūkulu kumuhana that reached from our Hawai‘i homeland across the nation.

On behalf of the OHA Board of Trustees, I would like to say, “Mahalo” to the entire Hawai‘i congressional delegation, various Native Hawaiian organizations and individuals and other organizations willing to speak up for fairness and justice who filed briefs as friends of the Court in support of OHA’s position.

The OHA Trustees also wish to say “Mahalo” to Native Hawaiians who led the “kūkulu kumuhana,” that reached from our homeland Hawai‘i across the nation to Washington D.C., and to all kama‘āina and malihini who joined

with us in this unified effort. Our collective actions and energies contributed to this favorable outcome. Now let us move forward in our reconciliation process with a similar spirit of collaboration and unified purpose. No Na ‘Ōiwi ‘Ōlino E Pūpūkahi I Holomua – Unite to move forward.

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