

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

HONOLULU

March 19, 2010

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIONS TO SENATE BILL NO. 771

Honorable Members  
Twenty-Fifth Legislature  
State of Hawaii

Pursuant to Section 16 of Article III of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii, I am returning herewith, without my approval, Senate Bill No. 771, entitled "A Bill for an Act Relating to Appraisals."

The purpose of this bill is to require real estate appraisers to comply with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice when they are acting as arbitrators. The bill also requires that the record of an award in an arbitration proceeding conducted by an appraiser include specific findings of fact, evidence, and the appraiser's reasoning for the award.

This bill is objectionable because appraisers who serve as arbitrators are not engaging in the practice of real estate appraisal. The fact that arbitration is being conducted for the purpose of determining the value of real estate does not cure this objection. Arbitration is an alternative dispute resolution process used to reach a compromise solution, and not an appraisal. In an arbitration proceeding, the parties submit their cases to an impartial person or panel for what is intended to be a final, binding decision.

During an arbitration proceeding to determine the value of real estate, both sides typically hire their own appraisers as expert witnesses. These expert witnesses are required by state statute to follow the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice ("USPAP") if they perform an appraisal. Arbitrators therefore have an opportunity to evaluate competing and USPAP conforming appraisals and make an accordingly informed decision.

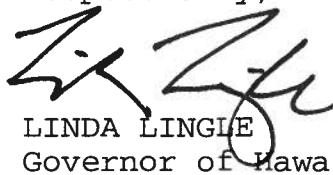
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Forcing arbitrators to use USPAP would require them to follow a standard that is not applicable to their proceedings, increasing costs and lengthening the process of arbitration. It would be more appropriate to require these panels to follow the Uniform Arbitration Act, as set forth in Chapter 658A of the Hawaii Revised Statutes, and amend the chapter to specify the award explanation.

While requiring arbitrators to comply with USPAP is not an appropriate mechanism for improving transparency, there is some merit in the second element of this legislation, which would require that the record of an award in an arbitration proceeding conducted by an appraiser include specific findings of fact, evidence, and the appraiser's reasoning for the award. Parties to arbitrations that determine the value of real estate might indeed benefit from a more detailed rationale for an arbitration award. Accordingly, legislation along these lines may be worth pursuing in the future, with the input of all stakeholders. However, while improving the transparency of these types of arbitration proceedings deserves attention, this bill, as written, is not the appropriate mechanism for achieving that goal.

For the foregoing reasons, I am returning Senate Bill No. 771 without my approval.

Respectfully,



LINDA LINGLE  
Governor of Hawaii