

TESTIMONY

HB 2543

The Senate
Twenty-Fourth Legislature
Regular Session of 2008

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Hearing
Wednesday, March 12, 2008
2:45 p.m.

Chairperson Hee
Vice Chairperson Kokubun and Honored Senators,

Testimony by: Ralph C. Boyea, Legislative Advocate, Hawai'i County Council

Testimony in favor of HB 2543 MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR A SHOOTING RANGE IN WEST HAWAII ON THE ISLAND OF HAWAII

On behalf of the Hawai'i County Council, I ask you to pass House Bill 2543. House Bill 2543 appropriates funds to plan, design, and construct a public shooting range in West Hawai'i.

There aren't any shooting ranges in West Hawai'i. Police, conservation officers, sheriffs, security guards, hunters and others licensed to carry guns have no official place to practice and sight-in their firearms. Shooters currently have to find unofficial, unsupervised sites to shoot. The safety of the shooters and individuals in proximity to these sites is of great concern. As the population continues to grow, so does the problem of uncontrolled discharge of firearms.

Unauthorized and unsupervised target practice, and weapons that have not been properly sighted, are a danger to the health and welfare of the public.

Members of the West Hawai'i community have formed the Hawai'i Island Public Shooting Range Working Group. This group is composed of police officers, DLNR conservation officers, other DLNR representatives, hunters, representatives of the Governor's office, representatives of the Hawai'i County Mayor's office, and other community members. The Hawai'i Island Public Shooting Range Working Group has come up with an excellent site location, by the West Hawai'i solid waste facility, and preliminary plans for a public shooting range. Representatives of the Department of Land and Natural Resources have indicated that \$250,000 would be needed to prepare an EIS and other tasks associated with creating a master plan for this project.

The Hawai'i County Council is aware that Mayor Kim has requested your support for this project. The Hawai'i County Council applauds the work of the Hawai'i Island Public Shooting Range Working Group and supports the Mayor Kim's request.

We humbly ask you to pass HB 2543.

testimony

From: Ron Finelli [konaron@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 9:08 AM

To: testimony

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 2543, Relating to a Public Shooting Range on the Island of Hawaii

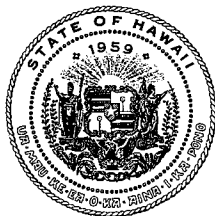
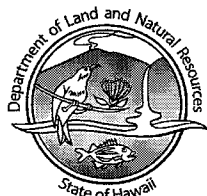
Dear Chairman Hee, Vice-Chairman Kokubun, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

I support the development of a public shooting range on the island of Hawaii because the Big Island has no public pistol or rifle range on either side. Hunters and shooters are forced to use unregulated areas to sight in and practice their skills. Shooting is a growing sport nationwide and a full range on the Big Island would become a draw for tourists. Reference the indoor shooting ranges on Ohau and the number of tourists who frequent them. As an avid shooter, I urge your support for the development of a long overdue shooting range on Hawaii. Thank you very much.

--

Ron Finelli
808-989-1758
Kona, Hawaii

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

LAURA H. THIELEN
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RUSSELL Y. TSUJI
FIRST DEPUTY

KEN C. KAWAHARA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

TESTIMONY OF THE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**on House Bill 2543 – Relating To Making An Appropriation For A Shooting Range In West
Hawaii On The Island Of Hawaii**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WATER AND LAND**

March 12, 2008

House Bill 2543 appropriates an unspecified amount of funds to the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) to plan, design, and construct a shooting range on the Island of Hawaii. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) acknowledges its supports for the establishment of this public shooting range, as the Department has been working closely with community members on Hawaii to accomplish this goal. The Department nonetheless is concerned with the fiscal impact this measure will have on the Executive Supplemental Budget request.

The Department supports providing additional staff and funding resources for the Department's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement branches across the State and the Department has been working closely with the Legislature to obtain the necessary funds for this broader initiative. And while the Department applauds the intent of this bill, the Department must be mindful that all our islands are crying out for additional enforcement. Rather than passing out this measure, the Department respectfully asks for the Legislature's support of the addition of eleven conservation and resources enforcement positions and four clerk typist positions for deployment statewide to each of the four counties as identified in the Department's supplemental budget request. These additional positions would increase needed staffing statewide and would help improve conservation enforcement capabilities in each of the four counties.

If however, the Legislature decides to pass out this measure to provide funding for a shooting range, the Department recommends that it be designated as the expending agency rather than DAGS.

testimony

From: Hilodik@aol.com
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 8:35 AM
To: testimony
Subject: HB 2543 Testimony

Testimony in Support of HB 2543, Related to a Public Shooting Range on the Island of Hawaii
Committee on Water and Land Hearing Scheduled Wednesday, March 12, 2008, 2:45 PM,
Conference Room 414

Dear Chairman Hee, Vice-Chairman Kokubun, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

My name is Richard Hoeflinger. I have personally been involved in the 20-year long effort to establish a public shooting range on the Big Island for the past 8 years. I am a founding member of the Hawaii Island Public Shooting Range Working Group which was formed in 2004.

A lifelong hunter, I can speak to the handicap island hunters face with lack of a designated venue to sight in firearms and develop the marksmanship skills essential to the humane taking of game. The proliferation of informal shooting sites around the island has raised growing concern among many of us over related safety issues and the increasing accumulation of debris on public lands.

In the years I formerly resided on the mainland, I was a competitive shooter in all disciplines: rifle, pistol, and shotgun. Lack of a multi-purpose shooting facility on the island now limits my participation solely to the latter. Competitive shooting is noted for its enviable safety record and ability to engender discipline, purpose, and commitment in participants, young and old alike. I share with others the sorely missed opportunity to engage in competitive rifle and pistol shooting that I so enjoyed in the past.

As a veteran Hunter Education Program instructor, I am concerned with the dichotomy of a state-mandated program for instruction in safe firearms handling and marksmanship training for new hunters, and the corresponding absence of a facility in which to conduct such a program. A former police officer, I also recognize the disadvantages our law enforcement personnel face with lack of a suitable facility in which to conduct training programs and routine firearms qualification exercises. The shooting facility we have proposed addresses all of the aforementioned concerns.

The Shooting Range Working Group, whose volunteer membership includes citizen and law enforcement user groups, state and county government agencies, related businesses and adjacent neighbors, has completed the conceptual design and site selection for a multi-purpose shooting complex on state land in west Hawaii. A preliminary sound survey has been conducted that suggests no adverse impact on surrounding property owners, and successful negotiations have been held to share site access through the adjacent county landfill. Land Board approval was received last year to proceed with planning activities associated with the designated site use. We now need some financial assistance to carry this effort forward.

I respectfully urge the Water and Land Committee to pass HB 2543, which will support preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement and other planning activities required for this much needed

public shooting facility.

Sincerely,

Richard Hoeflinger
Keaau, Hawaii
March 10, 2008

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testimony

From: J. C. Tyler III [jct3kona@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 10:00 PM
To: testimony
Subject: HB 2543 (In Support)

Testimony in Support of HB 2543, Relating to a Public Shooting Range on the Island of Hawaii Hearing Scheduled before the Senate Committee on Water and Land Wednesday, March 12, 2008, 2:45 PM, Conference Room 414

Dear Chairman Hee, Vice-Chairman Kokubun, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

Thank you very much for hearing HB2543. I have read the bill and speak for myself and my family IN STRONG SUPPORT of it.

As a lifelong resident of and former four-term county council member from the North Kona district, I know firsthand of the need for and strong interest in a public shooting range in West Hawaii, where no such facility currently exists.

For this reason, many Hawaii Island residents, like myself, have been personally involved in ongoing public-private grass-roots community efforts to bring this project to fruition for over 10 years. A volunteer community group, known as the Hawaii Island Public Shooting Range Working Group, comprised of both public and private sector members, is spearheading and coordinating these ongoing efforts.

Although I am a member of that group, my testimony today is being submitted on my own behalf.

By way of background and in support of passing this bill, please consider that:

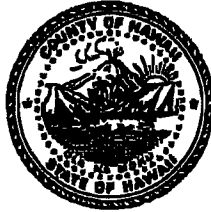
1. A suitable site for the range already has been selected and set aside by the DLNR Land Board.
2. A draft conceptual layout for a facility to accommodate anticipated and desired resident, visitor and public safety agency uses has been completed.
3. Range plans are being coordinated with existing roadway access points and utilities within the adjacent County Puuanahulu landfill site and will include state-of-the-art best practices.
4. In concert with the Federal Pittman-Roberts program and considerable volunteer community efforts, matching and in-kind funding opportunities are expected to augment the requested funding.
5. The range is supported by diverse community members, business groups, relevant public agencies, as well as the Hawaii County Council and Mayor Harry Kim.
6. The development of a public shooting range range in West Hawaii is vital for firearm training and safety needs of present and future generations of residents, visitors, and public safety personnel.
7. Passage of this bill will provide necessary funding to move this project to the next stage.

I respectfully request and thank you for your favorable consideration and passage of HB2543.

J. Curtis Tyler III
Kailua-Kona, Hawaii
Tel: (808) 325-6600

3-10-08, 8:00AM, 008 MAYOR

Harry Kim
Mayor



Dixie Kaetsu
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i

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(808) 329-5226 • Fax (808) 326-5663

March 10, 2008

The Honorable Clayton Hee
Chair, Committee on Water and Land
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Hee and Committee Members:

Re: HB 2543

The County of Hawai'i is in full support of HB 2543, which would appropriate funds for a shooting range in West Hawai'i. We have worked with the proponents of the shooting range for many months. The selected site is adjacent to the Puuanahulu Landfill, and we have been assured by the landfill operator that a shooting range would be compatible with their operation. Based on that assurance, we have endorsed the shooting range, and believe it would be a valuable addition to the recreation opportunities available to our community as well as a tourist attraction for many of our visitors.

I understand that \$250,000 would be the amount needed for fiscal year 2008-09 to get this project started, and I hope that this year's Legislature can see its way clear to providing these funds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harry Kim".

✓ Harry Kim
MAYOR

testimony

From: Brian Nakashima [bnakashima@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 9:28 PM
To: testimony
Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 2543, Relating to a Public Shooting Range on the Island of Hawaii, Hearing before the Committee on Water and Land, Wednesday, March 12, 2008, 2:45 PM, Conference Room 414

Dear Chairman Hee, Vice-Chairman Kokubun, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

My name is Brian Nakashima. I live at 81-6347 Keopuka Place in Kealahou.

I support HB 2543, development of a shooting range on the island of Hawaii, because there is a need for hunters and shooters to sight-in and practice with their firearms in a safe environment. Currently, there are a number of "ad hoc" shooting areas that are used. These are generally on state or county lands which are not approved for such use.

In addition to being a hunter and competitive high power rifle shooter, I run a gun repair and retail store in Kealahou. I have had to tell purchasers that there are no public ranges on the island and that the only legal option for them to use their firearms would be on private property where it does not affect the safety of others.

To compete in rifle competition, I have had to travel to Oahu or to a private club in Glenwood.

I believe that a public shooting range on island of Hawaii would be of benefit to local users as well as to visitors and might serve as a national destination provided that a "world class" range as envisioned is eventually built.

Please pass on HB 2543 and support the requesting start-up funds of \$250,000.00 (Two hundred fifty thousand dollars).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brian Nakashima

HAWAII RIFLE ASSOCIATION
Established, 1857
P.O. Box 543, Kailua, Hawaii 96734
March 11, 2008

Testimony **IN STRONG SUPPORT** on **HB 2543**, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR A SHOOTING RANGE IN WEST HAWAII ON THE ISLAND OF HAWAII
Before the **Senate Committee on Water and Land**,
Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Russell S. Kokubun, Vice Chair
Wednesday, March 12, 2008, 2:45 P.M.
Conference Rm 414

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair and Members,

HRA is in strong support of this bill. Our charter requires that we support range development, a place to shoot. Without exercise of our rights and skills, Hawaii's gun owners cannot remain "well-regulated" (Article 1, Section 17, Hawaii State Constitution). A safe place to enjoy our heritage and sport is increasingly rare, because of natural encroachment from other forms of land use and necessary restriction on formerly acceptable "informal" ranges. That's why DLNR may, by statute, develop shooting ranges throughout our State.

This planned range, in an area long without an appropriate facility, has the potential to provide such a place for Hawaii's people as well as attract shooting tourism. My wife, children, grandchildren, and I look forward to journeying from Oahu to West Hawaii, renting a car, booking a hotel room, shooting there, and dining afterwards in a good restaurant. Mainland shooters, with the proper marketing, will do likewise when snow and ice cover their home ranges.

Thank you for hearing this bill. We urge you to move it on to passage.

HRA pledges to participate in the correct development and safe stewardship of this gift.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify for HRA.

Dr. Maxwell Cooper,
Legislative Co-Chair,
808 225-6944

testimony

From: HENRY SILVA [silvahjrm@prodigy.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2008 1:58 PM
To: testimony
Subject: HB 2543 to be heard before the Senate Committee on Water and Land

Dear Chairman Hee, Vice-Chairman Kokubun, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land.

I am in support of HB 2543, a Public Shooting Range on the Island of Hawaii, Scheduled before your Committee on Wednesday, March 12, 2008 at 2:45PM, Conference Room 414.

As a Retired Police officer, a member of a gun club, and the father of a son who represented the State of Hawaii in the Junior Olympics for small bore rifle, while at Kamehameha Schools, a friend and associate of the many varied Law Enforcement personnel on our island and our citizens who want a safe place to practice shooting, I ask that you please support this bill.

There are many factors and reasons for this range that would take to long to state at this point. I am willing to answer any questions that you might have at any time. I can be contacted via this email address, or at 77-6309 Kaumalumu Drive, Holualoa, Hawaii or by telephone at 324-1583. Thank you for considering our community.

Henry (Hank) J. Silva
Major (retired) Hawaii P.D.

TESTIMONY

HB 2543

(END)