

TESTIMONY

HB 2873

March 12, 2008

To: Senator Clayton Hee, Chair
Senator Russell S. Kokubun, Vice Chair
Committee on Water and Land
testimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

From: Nancy J. Budd
Law Offices of Nancy J. Budd

Re: Support of H.B. 2873

This testimony is submitted in **support of H.B. 2873**, which clarifies that the conservation of park resources and values is the predominant concern of the state park system.

Unfortunately, the language of the current statute is not currently interpreted by the DLNR as clearly mandating conservation of the natural and fragile resources of the state parks over competing efforts to commercialize, over-develop and otherwise provide for concessions, sales points, visitor centers, enlarged parking lots, and other additions that DLNR has determined support the “enjoyment” of our parks by the public. **We face increasing pressures to use the state parks to generate income for broad DLNR purposes** as well as pressure from efforts to bring ever-growing numbers of tourists to our shores, both of which are **changing the mission of DLNR to one of revenue-generation via our state parks rather than conservation and protection of the state parks’ natural resources.**

Our State parks were set aside, in trust for the people of Hawai`i, to protect the fragile gifts they possess into the distant future. Our DLNR has been given the responsibility of that trust. We understand that our state parks exist in a complex context of geography, biology, economics and politics; that what was originally set aside for protection forever, can be destroyed. It is happening before our eyes.

If we move toward satisfying every tourist’s short-term appetite and DLNR’s need for a bank account it can control, we will necessarily give up the soul of these precious places over the long-term. We seem to be on the brink of allowing the ever-increasing tourist demands and lack of funds for DLNR operations to exceed our political resolve to protect our cherished state park lands. And the irony is that these changes threaten the very characteristics that draw the tourists as well as locals to our state parks.

All of our parks, but especially our cherished Koke`e and Waimea Canyon State Parks on Kaua`i, are fragile and contain unique native ecosystems, trails and historic-cultural qualities that are in danger of being compromised by commercialization and overuse. **We need to assure that these conservation values are always the predominant concern of our state park system.**

testimony

From: Donn Carswell [curly@aloha.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2008 12:52 PM
To: testimony
Cc: Rep. Roland Sagum; Rep. Hermina Morita; Rep. James Tokioka; Sen. Gary Hooser
Subject: HB2873

HEARD ON 14 MARCH AT 2:45 IN ROOM 414 OF THE HAWAII STATE CAPITOL BY SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

MR CHAIRMAN, MR VICE CHAIRMAN, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

I strongly support House Bill 2873. Conservation of park resources and values should be the predominant "steering star" for the State Parks administration.

I have worked on many volunteer projects with the Koke'e Leaseholders and Hui O Laka for the betterment of the Parks. It gives me a great sense of pride and accomplishment to see 30 picnic tables repaired and refinished in Kanalohuluhulu Meadow, and most of the pavilions and restrooms in the park reroofed and repainted by our volunteers. And after the big winds in December, we see volunteerism clearing the trails.

I have seen two attempts at master plan updates, costing the state \$600,000, with off island consultants analyzing and stressing "maximum revenues to the Parks", to the detriment of the cultural community and the park open spaces and resources. Planning is important, but I can see a lot of benefit in having that \$600,000 for Park resources. The Parks have historically been underfunded, relying on the lease rents of the recreational cabins and the Lodge for their \$300,000+ annual budget. Recently there have been some breakthroughs with Tourism Authority funding and the transfer of maintenance responsibility to the Dept of Transportation on the main road.

To keep the "steering star" in sight, the Parks need increasing support from our legislature. Predominately in funding an increased operational budget, capital improvements, and perhaps enabling legislation to assess U-Drive cars for a contribution directly to Koke'e and Waimea Canyon Parks. We need increased revenues to support the parks without commercialization of the parks!!! CONSERVATION SHOULD COME FIRST!!

When you compare our State Parks with parks in Oregon, or Washington, or some of the National Parks, you find a gap in quality standards. Even with this "gap", local residents and visitors find "The Mountains" enthralling in their natural beauty and exciting in their trails, waterfalls, and history. WE hear our local people say time and again: "The island of Kauai is changing rapidly, our only solace is in Koke'e, the Aina, where we can find space to enjoy nature and rejuvenate our souls!"

I believe House Bill 2873 will provide a strong, bright steering star for the DLNR, just as the star Hokulea guides the way to Hawaii in the summer voyaging months.

THANK YOU,

DONN A CARSWELL
P.O. BOX 24, HANAIEI 96714
LOT 61 KOKE'E CAMP LOTS

testimony

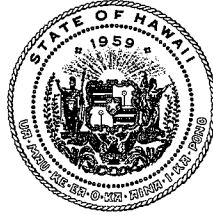
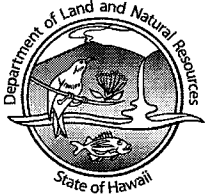
From: Sally French [french@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2008 2:36 PM
To: testimony
Subject: testimony in SUPPORT of HB2873.

This is for the following committee: The committee(s) on WTL has scheduled a PUBLIC HEARING on THIS FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2008 at 2:45 pm in conference room 414.

Please consider my testimony in favor of HB2873, as I strongly feel we must preserve the natural state of our parks, especially Kokee on Kauai.

aloha,
sally french
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kalaheo, HI
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808-651-5822

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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

On House Bill 2873 – Relating To State Parks

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

March 14, 2008

House Bill 2873 amends Section 184-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to make the conservation of park resources and values the fundamental purpose of the state park system. Where there is a conflict between the use and conservation of these resources, conservation shall take precedence. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly objects to this bill for the reasons stated below. Furthermore, this measure is not necessary as the Department already has a policy in place that meets the objectives.

The State Park System encompasses some of Hawaii's most significant scenic, cultural and natural places statewide. State parks are established because of these resources and have been developed so people can visit these special places, experience Hawaii's unique natural and cultural heritage, and learn more about Hawaii. The preservation and conservation of these resources are a priority in park planning and development.

The Department has concerns that, should this be put into statutes, extensive litigation will result. The State Parks are places for people to enjoy our resources and recreate in an outdoor setting. There is always the potential for impact and conflict when people go into nature. If this measure is enacted, the Department will run the risk of having the State Parks become "hands off" resources where people cannot recreate, and access to park areas closed.

The Board of Land and Natural Resources has a longstanding, formal policy which guides the Department in all decisions, which is that the natural and cultural resources will be given priority over public and commercial use of these resources. If the resources are too sensitive and protection and preservation requires restricted public access, these areas are placed under other programs, such as the Natural Areas Reserve System.

Accordingly, this bill is unnecessary.

testimony

From: ixaya chaska [ixohana@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2008 9:56 AM
To: testimony
Subject: HB 2873

hello.

i am writing in support of HB 2873. please vote YES on this bill.

thank you,

concerned resident of Kauai.

ixa chaska

testimony

From: Kathleen Ho [katho@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2008 11:17 AM
To: testimony
Subject: Support HB 2873

Chair Oshiro
Vice Chair Lee
and Honorable Committee Members
Aloha,
We STRONGLY SUPPORT HB 2873!
Mahalo,
Kathleen, Kelvin and Aliana Ho
P.O. Box 171
Lawai Hi 96765

testimony

From: Patrick W Owens [owens11@hawaiiantel.net]
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2008 12:53 PM
To: testimony
Subject: In support of HB2873:

Please accept this testimony in support of **HB2873**:

The department of land and natural resources shall preserve the parks and parkways in the state park system in their natural condition so far as may be consistent with their use and safety, and manage them in a manner as to retain to a maximum extent their natural scenic, historic, and wildlife values for the use and the enjoyment of present and future generations.

While this might seem to be a "no brainer" to those of us who love and/ or care for our state parks, it would be prudent to have this fundamental principle of land preservation written into law to guide the decision making of those who in the future must consider issues of development or commercialization in those areas.

While I may only formally speak for myself in this testimony, I assure you that many others in Kauai also share this view. In fact I have never heard a single comment to the contrary whenever the subject has been discussed.

Much mahalo,

Patrick W Owens
PO Box 324
Hanamaulu, HI 96715



The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
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nature.org/hawaii

MARK FOX
DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.B. 2873 Relating to State Parks
Senate Committee on Water & Land
Friday, March 14, 2008, 2:45PM, Room 414

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of Hawaii's native plants, animals, and ecosystems. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands for native species in Hawai'i. Today, we actively manage more than 32,000 acres in 11 nature preserves on O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i. We also work closely with government agencies, private parties and communities on cooperative land and marine management projects.

The Nature Conservancy supports H.B. 2873 Relating to State Parks.

This measure takes the important step of codifying as state policy the primary importance of managing our natural resources for long-term conservation. It is the primary responsibility of the department of land and natural resources to protect our limited natural resources. In the case of State parks, carrying out this responsibility must be balanced with the responsibility of ensuring the public's reasonable use and enjoyment of these resources if such use can be carried out without undue harm to the resources.

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TESTIMONY

HB 2873

(END)