

March 11, 2008

TO: Representative Ken Ito, Chair
Representative Jon Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair
House Committee on Water, Land, Ocean Resources, and Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: David Lawrence Brown, MA
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HEARING: March 12, 2008, 9:00am, House Conference Room 312

SUBJECT: Testimony in Strong Support of SB 2644, SD1, Relating to
the State Historic Preservation Officer

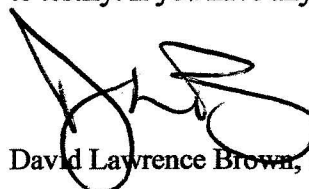
I am David Lawrence Brown, a former Branch Chief Archaeologist of the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Division. I am testifying in strong support of SB 2644, SD1, a bill that amends section 6E-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), and provides guidelines for the professional qualifications required of the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

As drafted, SB 2644, SD1, seeks to connect existing State of Hawaii legislative doctrine (6E-5, HRS) regarding the qualifications required of a SHPO with the federal professional qualifications set forth by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. ("Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards – CFR 36 Part 61).

The State Historic Preservation Division has tragically suffered collateral damage as a consequence of having a SHPO and Deputy SHPO who did not have "experience in the field of historic preservation" (section 6E-5, HRS). More alarming, previous appointees are alleged to have managed our State Historic Preservation Division with callous disregard for ethics, accountability, or the mission of an historic preservation program; against the better judgment and advisement of the experienced, professionally qualified staff. This ultimately lead to the breakdown of the State Historic Preservation Division, the exodus of over 20 qualified historic preservation professionals, and the irreversible damage, destruction, and loss of many nonrenewable historic resources (cultural, architectural, and archaeological) including the often avoidable desecration of human remains.

The inexcusable situation regarding our SHPD must not be allowed to occur in the future. The SHPO and Deputy SHPO must meet State and Federal professional qualifications standards; they must be able to uphold the regulatory and ethical obligations of their appointments, disregarding all political and special interest agendas that violate the mission and goals of an historic preservation program.

I respectfully advocate that this committee pass SB 2644, SD1, as worded. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.



David Lawrence Brown, MA