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Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2008 12:44 AM
To: WLHtestimony
Subject: SB 3206 SD2 - RELATING TO KAWAI NUI MARSH

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**COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES & HAWAIIAN
AFFAIRS**

Rep. Ken Ito, Chair
Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, Vice Chair

PUBLIC HEARING
9 am
Wednesday, March 12, 2008
Conference Room 312

SB 3206 SD2 - RELATING TO KAWAI NUI MARSH
STRONGLY SUPPORT

**TO THE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, OCEAN RESOURCES &
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS:**

Although some opposition to establishing the **Kawai Nui Marsh Advisory Council** has been raised by a few people representing organizations which have been involved over the years in planning the restoration of the *Marsh*, the *Windward Ahupua`a Alliance*, a **501c3** Hawai`i non-profit corporation which has several *on-the-ground* projects in *Kawai Nui Marsh*, continues to support **SB 3206 - SD2**. Their opposition seems to focus on their belief - albeit mistaken - that a **Council** is not necessary.

Although we appreciate their concerns that a **Council** might get caught in a bureaucratic morass, in fact this measure will help provide the necessary resources both human and financial for groups such as *Ahahui Malama I Ka Lokahi*, the *Kailua Bay Advisory Council*, the *Kailua Hawaiian Civic Club*, and the *Windward Ahupua`a Alliance* to continue our work in and around *Kawai Nui Marsh*.

WAA suggests that the dollar amount to be inserted in **SB 3206 - SD2** should come from the Department of Land & Natural Resources since they will be the government agency providing oversight for the entire *Marsh*.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit our testimony in support of **SB 3206 - SD2**.

Hawaii's Thousand Friends

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SB 3206, SD2

Relating to Kawainui Marsh

Committee Chair and members;

Hawaii's Thousand Friends, a statewide non-profit land use organization, supports bringing people together to better facilitate communication between community organizations and government but does not support the formalization of an advisory council.

Since 2003 organizations involved in the protection of Kawainui Marsh have come together under Ho`olaulima, a community-based network of organizations. Ho`olaulima does not limit the number of organizations that can participate nor is it seen as a threat as the selective decision-making Advisory Council will be seen.

Working to protect and preserve Kawainui Marsh has always been a collaborative effort with no single organization or collective organizations having more decision making power than any others. Working together the community prevented Kawainui Marsh from becoming a shopping mall, prevented houses from being built around the perimeter, stopped sewage from flowing into the marsh, barred sewage pipes from going through the marsh and prevented a myriad of other threats.

Working together organizations and government obtained international recognition for Kawainui Marsh when in 2005 the Kawainui/Hamakua Marsh Complex was designated a Wetland Of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, the twenty-second in the U.S., first in Hawai`i and the Pacific.

Years ago the community went through a formal process with DLNR. While the community was willing to meet and discuss issues DLNR representatives were either too busy or not interested in having and attending meetings. Frustration was extremely high on both sides and eventually the meetings stopped with nothing accomplished. This is not to say that sometime in the future there may be a need and willingness between the community and DLNR to begin such a process but for now Ho`olaulima provides the connection between community, DLNR and other government agencies.

Hawaii's Thousand Friends is very concerned that if adopted the Advisory Council will be seen as the ultimate decision maker having more power than others in the community. This perception or reality will be a first in the thirty plus year's battle to protect Kawainui Marsh

The present system of community coming together to protect Kawainui Marsh is not broken. SB3206 SD2 is not needed and should be held in committee,