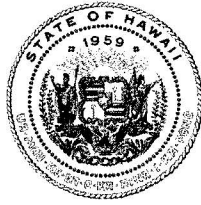


LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

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**Testimony of
LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
and
WATER, LAND, AND OCEAN RESOURCES**

**Wednesday, February 25, 2009
10:50am
State Capitol, Conference Room 329**

**In consideration of
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 28
REQUESTING A STUDY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNITY-BASED
CARETAKING AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR AREAS OF STATE PARKS
THAT CONTAIN HEIAU AND OTHER SACRED SITES**

House Concurrent Resolution 28 calls for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to study the establishment of a community-based caretaking and educational program for areas of state parks that contain *heiau* and other sacred sites. This study would include a cultural assessment of three sacred sites at state parks and the development of solution for caretaking problems. While the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) acknowledges the intent of this concurrent resolution, the Department does not feel it is necessary.

The Department has management responsibilities for five historical parks, two historic sites, and one historic monument within the State Park System. There are 27 *heiau* within the parks, the birthing stones on O'ahu and Kaua'i, and other significant Hawaiian cultural sites in at least 11 of the 55 parks statewide. Because these sites are within the State Park System, many are maintained, interpreted, and available for public visitation. As such, in addition to community-based caretaking and conducting educational programs, stewardship must take into consideration the significant tasks related to ensuring public safety and access in a manner that also is respectful and sustains the cultural value of these resources.

In recognition of this, the Department's Division of State Parks (State Parks) and the Historic Preservation Division created a curator program in 1987 to encourage community assistance with the care and management of historic sites on state land under the jurisdiction of the Department. There are currently nine curator organizations assisting with *heiau* and other cultural sites in the state parks. These groups include Hawaiian Civic Clubs, Royal Order of Kamehameha, and families with cultural ties to specific sites. In the case of Mo'okini Heiau, there is a recognized

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CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

kuhina nui for the site. State Parks has organized workshops for these curators in the past, but has not had the resources to do so in recent years.

The Department notes that this measure calls for a study of the establishment of a community – based caretaking and educational program. The Department’s current curator program is comparable and already in existence. Therefore the study to *establish* one is not necessary. Furthermore, since the Department welcomes opportunities to coordinate with OHA on methods to examine and improve the management of cultural resources, the passage of this measure to achieve this goal is not necessary.



House Concurrent Resolution No. 28
Requesting a Study of the Establishment of a Community-Based
Caretaking and Educational Program for Areas of State Parks that
Contain Heiau

House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs and Water, Land & Ocean

Date: February 25, 2009 Time: 10:50 am
Room: 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS House Concurrent Resolution 28**, Requesting a study to assess the current standard and level of care being given to Native Hawaiian sacred sites (wahi pana and wahi kapu) under the jurisdiction of the Division of State Parks to determine whether it is upholding the State of Hawai'i's constitutional kuleana.

This resolution was created in light of the State of Hawai'i's Constitution, Article XII, Section 7 pertaining to Traditional and Customary Rights states: " The State reaffirms and **shall protect** all rights, customarily and traditionally exercised for subsistence, **cultural and religious purposes** and possessed by ahupua'a tenants who are descendants of native Hawaiians who inhabited the Hawaiian islands prior to 1778..."

The Native Hawaiian community has capacity that is currently under-utilized, and State Parks has a large kuleana which requires additional and specific assistance. This is a potential partnership worthy of investigation and support. Further, assessing and developing specific protocol and diversified ways and means of caring for specific sites in our communities across our pae'äina is a good step for future reconciliation efforts, restorative justice and communal healing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.