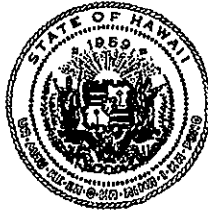


TESTIMONY
SB 167

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 Senate Committee on
WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Friday, January 30, 2009
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 167
RELATING TO CONSERVATION CORPS

Senate Bill 167 requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to establish a conservation corps pilot program for at-risk adults who have recently been released from prison or are recovering from drug addiction on the Island of Hawaii. While the Department recognizes that at-risk adults could benefit from programs that build life skills and a sense of responsibility and stewardship of the land, nonetheless the Department does not have the expertise to assist the at-risk population with life skills, job placement, and re-integration, nor the fiscal and personnel resources that would be necessary to develop and carry out a pilot program serving the at-risk community and therefore **the Department does not support this measure.**

Establishing a pilot project that would develop and implement an at-risk conservation corps program would require a full time coordinator, group leaders and counselors trained in dealing with issues such as drug addiction, life skills training and re-integration, and job placement to assist corps members find employment or otherwise attain personal achievements and growth. The Department is not equipped to provide these social type services.

The Department notes that all young adults aged 18 – 26 can apply to the existing Hawaii Youth Conservation Corp Year-Round program which placed 27 young adults in year round conservation positions throughout the State in Fiscal Year 2009 based on applicants interest and host entities' needs. To attempt the establishment of a new pilot program of this magnitude that requires a focus on social services, reintegration and tracking of corps member future employment and success is not feasible and would take away from the Department's core mission of preserving and protecting Hawaii's natural and cultural resources.

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

RUSSELL Y. TSUJI
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AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

TESTIMONY
SB 167
(END)