

SB

406

EDT

HISTORIC HAWAII FOUNDATION

VIA EMAIL: EDTtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

To: Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair
Committee on Economic Development and Technology

From: Kiersten Faulkner *Kiersten Faulkner*
Executive Director, Historic Hawai'i Foundation

Committee Date: Monday, February 9, 2009
1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016

Subject: **Support of SB406, Relating to Works of Art Special Fund**

On behalf of Historic Hawai'i Foundation (HHF), I am writing to support SB406, which would allow expenditures from the works of art special fund for costs related to the acquisition, display, disposal, upkeep, maintenance, repair, and restoration of works of art, artifacts or historic buildings for 'Iolani Palace and Bishop Museum.

HHF supports efforts to preserve and protect the historic and cultural resources of the Hawaiian Islands. 'Iolani Palace and Bishop Museum are important institutions that protect, preserve and interpret collections of art and artifacts that tell the rich history and storied legacy of Hawai'i. The historic buildings that house these collections are also fundamental to understanding and celebrating Hawai'i's past and making it accessible and relevant to present and future generations.

By extending the works of art special fund to support the palace and the museum, these two institutions will have greater financial resources to support their important work. Many additional members of the public—both visitors and kama'aina—will be able to enjoy these special places. This is an appropriate use of the works of art special fund, and will greatly increase the numbers of people with access to products from the fund.

Besides being a public benefit in its own right, the investment in these important historic and cultural resources will also serve a general economic development goal. In a study into the economic benefits of historic preservation completed last year, HHF found that improving historic resources attracts cultural heritage tourism. The National Trust for Historic Preservation lists the economic benefits of heritage tourism as creation of jobs, increased tax revenues, diversification of the local economy, opportunities for public-private partnerships, increasing historic attraction revenues, preserving local traditions and culture, generating local investment in historic resources, and building community pride in its heritage. A 2002 study by the Travel Industry Association of America reported that heritage and cultural tourists consistently stay in a place longer and spend more money than other types of travelers.

Since 1974, Historic Hawai'i Foundation has been a statewide leader for historic preservation. HHF works to preserve Hawai'i's unique architectural and cultural heritage and believes that historic preservation is an important element in the present and future quality of life, economic viability and environmental sustainability of the state. HHF's policy and practice is to follow strict procedures on conflicts of interest for its board members and staff. HHF's board president has not participated in developing the organization's position or testimony on this matter due to his position as president of Bishop Museum.





BISHOP MUSEUM

1525 Bernice Street • Honolulu, HI 96817 • Ph: (808)847-8274 • Fax (808) 841-8968

February 8, 2009

**TO: Senator Carol Fuknaga, Chair
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair
Committee on Economic Development and Technology**

**FR: Bishop Museum
Timothy Johns, President & CEO**

**RE: Senate EDT Hearing
Monday, February 9, 2009; 1:15 p.m.
Support of SB 406 Relating to Works of Art Special Fund**

Bishop Museum strongly supports SB 406, which allows expenditures from the special art fund to be used for Bishop Museum and 'Iolani Palace for the acquisition, care, and display of art and artifacts, as well as for the repair and maintenance of historical buildings.

Founded in 1889, Bishop Museum's mission is "to study, preserve and tell the stories of the cultures and natural history of Hawai'i and the Pacific." As the State Museum of Natural and Cultural History, we have a responsibility to be stewards of the priceless treasures of the host culture. Bishop Museum's founding collection includes the family heirlooms held by Princess Pauahi, Princess Ruth, and Queen Emma. Today, our cultural collection includes objects from Hawai'i and the Pacific. Our library and archives house Hawaiian Kingdom documents, Hawaiian language newspapers, among other valuable historical information, and an art collection of paintings and etchings of Hawai'i.

In this rapidly changing world, it is more important than ever that we remember what makes Hawai'i so special and unique. Bishop Museum's collections impart knowledge of the Native Hawaiian people – their culture, their values, and their history. Cultural practitioners, teachers, students, and families visit Bishop Museum because we are a resource to learn about Hawaiian history and culture. There are 56,000 people in our membership program who participate in Bishop Museum events and activities.

Bishop Museum also offers tourists an opportunity to learn what makes Hawai'i uniquely special from any other state in the union and from any other place in the world. It is one of the greatest attractions for the state's Asian visitors and a top attraction for mainland tourists. Over 300,000 visitors come to Bishop Museum annually.

We believe the measure should clarify the usage of costs related to “historical buildings” and would like to work with staff on agreeable language. As you know many of our artifacts need proper climate controlled storage, which is located in buildings that were built in recent decades.

The State has already recognized the historical significance and important role of ‘Iolani Palace and Bishop Museum as caretakers for Hawai‘i’s heritage. Passage of this bill will allow our institutions to further our work – to care for our collections and historical buildings – and that in turn allows us to continue as Hawaiian ambassadors to the community and the world.

We respectfully ask for your support of SB 406.