

TESTIMONY
GM 274

Debra U'ilani Ruiz
P. O. Box 982
Waimea, HI 96796

17 February 2010

Senator Clayton Hee
Chair, Senate Committee on Water, Land,
Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Nomination to the Island Burial Council, Islands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau
G.M. No. 274

Dear Senator:

I am in receipt of your letter dated 16 February 2010 in reference to the above subject matter. I am most honored to have been nominated to serve on the Island Burial Council for the Islands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau. The following is my testimony to address your questions in hopes that it will enable you to confirm my nomination.

1. Question: Why do you wish to be a member of the Island Burial Council, Islands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau?

Answer: I am born and raised in Waimea, Kaua'i where I continue to reside with my family. Having a life residency on Kaua'i and active in the community, there is a sense of ownership and responsibility to Kaua'i and Ni'ihau.

2. Question: How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the Island Burial Council, Islands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau?

Answer: I perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of being a person that understands and respects the traditions of our culture, to be a good listener and to attain facts that will enable the member to make sound and balanced recommendations for the preservation and protection of our Na kupuna.

3. Question: Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the Island Burial Council, Islands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a member of the Island Burial Council, Islands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau.

Answer: My qualifications for the position began at birth. Both my grandfather's were farmers, my father a fisherman. We were disciplined to work hard and to appreciate the land and sea from where we gathered our food. This life style that had been lived and taught is the same life style that my husband and I have chosen to live and raise our family. I was nurtured through the actions of my parents, grandparents and of my Kumu Hula. Taught to understand the philosophy of hula has given me the basis of my life and to appreciate the inner person. My involvement with a Benevolent Society for 30 years has taught me the responsibility to practice the beliefs of honor and dignity of our deceased. To educate our families of the protocol and to provide our deceased member the honor they deserve for their service. The skills, expertise and knowledge that I bring to the Council are of the life style and the nurturing of many people who have had a positive influence in my life since birth.

4. Question: What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?

Answer: I hope as a member, that my decision for those whom may be placed with the Council is treated with honor and dignity.

5. Question: Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the Island Burial Council, Islands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau?

Answer: I would bring to the Council the qualities of assertiveness, attentiveness, and compassion. To be able to state one's claim and yet to heed to one's care is a balanced quality of a member. Being compassion is to care for those whom you serve with on the Council and for those that have been put in your care. Always being mindful of complimenting others talents in what they do. These are qualities that will benefit the Council in our efforts to working together for the betterment of our objective.

6. Question: Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the Island Burial Council, Islands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau?

Answer: I experienced paddling the Na Pali Coast in 1975 in an outrigger canoe had been most challenging. Paddling together to overcome the treacherous waters only to enter the relative calm of Polihale is an experience that we can relate to in our lives. No matter how rough the waters may be or how long the journey, when we work together and strive for the good, together we will reach our destiny. Bringing the experience of endurance and perseverance is a benefit to the Council.

7. Question: Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the Island Burial Council, Island of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest?

Answer: At the present, I do not foresee any possible conflicts of interests that would arise during my service as a member of the Island Burial Council. At my employment, there is a periodic background check that enables me to have a clearance and I have no prior convictions. However, should a matter arise, I would ask to remove myself in any decision making process.

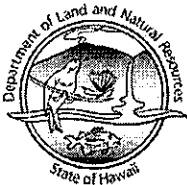
I hope I have addressed your questions and have provided you a clear testimony to confirm my nomination to the Island Burial Council, Islands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra U'ilani Ruiz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "R".

Debra U'ilani Ruiz

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

**Friday, February 19, 2010
3:15 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 274 - SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND
CONFIRMATION TO THE ISLAND BURIAL COUNCIL, ISLANDS OF KAUA'I AND
NI'HAU, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, DEBRA U'ILANI RUIZ, FOR A TERM TO
EXPIRE 6-30-2013.**

The Department of Land and Natural Resources strongly supports the gubernatorial appointment of Debra U'ilani Ruiz to the Kaua'i Island Burial Council for a term to expire 6-30-2013.

The Island Burial Councils were established under Section 6E-43.5, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to determine the preservation in place or relocation of previously identified native Hawaiian burial sites and to determine Hawaiian cultural and lineal descendent claims for specific burials.

State law requires that Island Burial Councils be established for Hawai'i, Maui/Lanai, Molokai, O'ahu and Kaua'i/Ni'ihau islands, and be comprised of representatives from specific geographic regions and representatives of developer/large property owners. Ms. Ruiz will serve as one of the regional representative on the Kaua'i/Ni'ihau Island Burials Council. The Department notes that Ms. Ruiz is currently serving as an interim burial council member on the Kaua'i/Ni'ihau Island Burial Council.

Ms. Ruiz is employed at the Pacific Missile Range Facility as an executive secretary for the Manu Kai Program. Ms. Ruiz was raised in Waimea Valley and taught to respect and malama the ocean and the land all her life. Ms. Ruiz continues to be active for more than 30 years with the Hale O Na Ali'i O Hawai'i and the Halau O Kapi'iolani Benevolent Society and has held various offices in both hui. Ms. Ruiz is trained in the protocols associated with funerals and other high ceremonies. Further, Ms. Ruiz mentors the next generation in their practice of cultural protocols as part of her kuleana.

Thank you for this opportunity to support Ms. Ruiz's appointment to the Kaua'i/Ni'ihau Island Burial Council.

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

RUSSELL Y. TSUJI
FIRST DEPUTY

KEN C. KAWAHARA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

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