

Rep. Maile Shimabukuro

From: Jeannine Johnson [jeannine@hawaii.rr.com]
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To: HAWtestimony
Cc: Rep. Lyla B. Berg; Rep. Barbara Marumoto; Sen. Sam Slom
Subject: Testimony in Support of HCR 336
Attachments: Preservation unit under probe - Hawaii News - Starbulletin.com.pdf

Aloha mai kākou,

The State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) has the responsibility of "preserving, restoring, and maintaining historic and cultural property, to ensure the administration of such historic and cultural property in a spirit of stewardship and trusteeship for future generations." Over the past six years, however, there have been management and staffing problems, backlogged paperwork, a severe lack of resources and inability to maintain an inventory of historic sites and properties. So many problems, in fact, that the National Park Service is investigating it. (See attached 8/6/09 Star Bulletin article.)

Moses Haia, who represented the descendents in the Ward Villages case where 53 sets of iwi kupuna were found after the historic preservation review process was substantially completed, has said that hundreds of iwi kupuna lie in SHPD's care, often for years, waiting to be reinterred. In fact, the 64 sets of iwi kupuna retrieved from the Wal-Mart property are still being held hostage in storage and have even been tampered with (written on with permanent marker).

Please heed the kahea of our kupuna and support HCR 336.

Mahalo,

Jeannine

Jeannine Johnson
5648 Pia Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96821
Ph: 373-2874 / 537-7261 (work)
Email: jeannine@hawaii.rr.com
"PUPUKAHI I HOLOMUA"
(Unite in Order to Progress)

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Preservation unit under probe

The state agency has drawn fire for failing to protect ancient sites

By [Kaylee Noborikawa](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 06, 2009

The National Park Service is investigating the state Historic Preservation Division, which has been under harsh criticism in recent years for its handling of ancient remains and historic sites, U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie said yesterday.

Abercrombie asked the park service to complete the evaluation as swiftly as possible due to its importance to the state's economy and "the danger that Hawaii's cultural and historical resources are not being adequately protected."

"I'm letting them know that I'm aware of it and that I don't want it to be on the back burner," he said. "I want it to be completed as fast as possible because everything is in limbo."

The Historic Preservation Division, which is responsible for preserving historical and cultural resources, has received many complaints about historic sites and ancient remains in recent years, including a recent bulldozing of Hawea heiau. There have been management and staffing problems, and many projects have stalled due to backlogged paperwork, posing problems for developers, archaeologists and the state's economy, Abercrombie said.

"This problem extends to projects funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which were intended to be implemented in an expedient manner in order to help the state and national economy," Abercrombie said. "It's very worrisome to me that we could see all kinds of federal dollars held up because we can't do the basic work of the state Historic Preservation Division. We simply can't have that."

Thomas Dye, member and former president of the Society for Hawaiian Archaeology, said he has encountered many problems with the division, part of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, over the past six years.

He said the agency has had problems such as lost reports, high staff turnover and an inability to maintain an inventory of historic sites.

"They used to do a pretty good job of keeping a library of archaeological reports, (but) the last thing I knew, they were missing well over 100 reports, but slightly fewer than 200 reports, from the island of Oahu alone," said Dye, who met with the National Park Service team that performed the audit.

"They're very aware of the situation out here. It's something that's now spread throughout the historic preservation community," he said.

In 2007, the Historic Preservation Division was under scrutiny for its management of native Hawaiian burials and the treatment of ancestral bones. As a result of the pressure, then-administrator Melanie Chinen resigned. According to a Star-Bulletin article, former employees and several community organizations

criticized her management style, which drove away qualified employees and possibly resulted in 19 employees leaving the division.

Several of those positions are still unfilled, according to Dye, who worked for the division from 1990 to 1996.

Dye believes that the division has no historian or architectural historian on staff, two positions required for the division to be eligible for federal grant money. Historic Preservation Division officials did not return phone calls yesterday, but four positions are listed as vacant on its Web site.

Dye said the agency receives \$500,000 in federal funds annually to implement the National Preservation Act, but if it fails to meet federal mandates, those funds will be in jeopardy.

State Sen. Clayton Hee and several members of Livable Hawaii Kai Hui visited the remnants of Hawea heiau yesterday to talk about the investigation and view physical evidence of the Historic Preservation Division's deficiencies.


Division Administrator Pua Aiu recently has been criticized harshly by community groups over the handling of the bulldozed heiau in Hawaii Kai that was destroyed in June.

Kaleo Pike, a former division archaeologist, remembers what Aiu told her when she brought up Hawea heiau two months ago. "She told me, 'You saw a pile of stones and you thought that was significant?'"

Hee (D, Kahuku-Kaneohe) announced that he planned to launch an investigation into the division through the Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs. "Several people in the community have asked for a state investigation and the two investigations are colliding into the perfect storm," Hee said.

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