

TESTIMONY
SB2524
LATE



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SB 2524 RELATING TO ISLAND BURIAL COUNCILS
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs

January 29, 2010

2:45 p.m.

Room: 229

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 2524 which authorizes the governor to waive the requirements that the Molokai island burial council membership include geographic region, development, and large property owner representatives.

OHA has monitored the administration and implementation of Chapter 6E, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), on the island of Molokai, especially the inability of the Molokai Island Burial Council to maintain a quorum and often to meet the statutory minimum requirements to even convene as an operating council. These systemic problems initially surfaced in 2004.

The unique nature of the Molokai community and the current land tenure situation there has created some difficulties in meeting and maintaining the existing statutory framework applied to all island burial councils.

The inability of the Molokai Island Burial Council to operate and meet has effectively disabled the only process for redress for the Native Hawaiian community to properly and legally pursue the appropriate identification, treatment and protection of their ancestral burial sites. This has led to direct harm to our beneficiaries.

SB2524 sets forth a means of exception in Chapter 6E, HRS to remedy this unfortunate situation, and Molokai, as an exceptional and unique island community certainly deserves such a remedy.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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