

SR 11

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 Committees on
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
and
WATER, LAND, AGRICULTURE, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

**Thursday, March 25, 2010
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

**In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 13/SENATE RESOLUTION 11
REQUESTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM FOR
VOLUNTEERS TO PICK UP LITTER FROM HAWAII'S BEACHES**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 13/Senate Resolution 11 requests that the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to establish Malama o ke Kahakai, a public service program for volunteers to care for beach areas by picking up litter and debris. The resolutions also requests that the Department coordinate the beach clean-up efforts with community groups, churches or businesses and also requests that the Department provide material support to participating volunteer groups. This measure is unnecessary as it would tie up existing robust decentralized beach cleanup measures with new red tape. Communities are doing well without government interference.

There are many existing avenues to achieve the goal of keeping beaches clean without the creation of another unfunded government program. Since 2008, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ("NOAA") has been implementing the Hawaii Marine Debris Action Plan. The Plan establishes a comprehensive framework for strategic action to reduce the ecological, health and safety, and economic impacts of marine debris in Hawaii by 2020. The plan establishes threat reduction goals and strategies to promote coordinated action to address the significant threats posed by marine debris. Due to the complexity of marine debris issues, the plan incorporates the roles and responsibilities of all affected and interested parties, including government agencies, academic institutions, private sector entities, public interest organizations, and the general community.

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
KAIHOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Additionally, Section 46-12, Hawaii Revised Statutes, impose upon the respective counties, the primary responsibility to remove and clear all seaweed, limu, and debris which are likely to create an unsanitary condition or become a public nuisance. Given this statutory directive, the Department believes the Counties are the most appropriate governmental agencies for coordinating the beach clean-up efforts with community groups, churches or businesses and also for providing material support to participating volunteer groups.

Due to the recent severe funding reductions, the Department simply does not have the resources to undertake any new unfunded mandates, despite the meritorious intent of such endeavors. In less than three years, the Department's general fund appropriations have decreased 32%, and the Department's special fund revenues have declined over 35%. In the past year, the Department has lost over 80 positions, which constitutes approximately 10% of the Department's workforce.