

SR109

URGING THE GOVERNOR TO NOT TRANSFER HAPUNA BEACH AND MAUNA KEA STATE RECREATION AREAS FROM THE STATE OF HAWAII TO THE COUNTY OF HAWAII.

Hapuna Beach and Mauna Kea State Recreation Areas; Hawaii County

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

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CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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WILLIAM M. TAM
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AQUATIC RESOURCES
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committees on
WATER, LAND, AND HOUSING
and
PUBLIC SAFETY, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS**

**Thursday, April 07, 2011
1:15 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

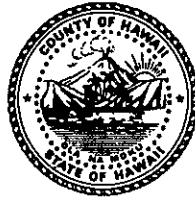
**In consideration of
SENATE RESOLUTION 109
URGING THE GOVERNOR TO NOT TRANSFER HAPUNA BEACH AND MAUNA
KEA STATE RECREATION AREAS FROM THE STATE OF HAWAII TO THE
COUNTY OF HAWAII**

Senate Resolution 109 urges the Governor to not transfer Hapuna Beach and Mauna Kea State Recreation Area from the State of Hawaii (State) to the County of Hawaii (County). The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the measure if it is the intent of the Legislature to have the Department retain these properties in the state inventory of public lands.

During the Regular Session in 2010, the Legislature introduced several measures requesting the Department to pursue transferring these recreation areas to the County. The Department testified that it would be willing to discuss the issue with the County. Subsequently, the County approached the Department, discussions occurred, and work has been done to develop agreements to effectuate such a transfer. If it is the Legislature's desire that such a transfer not take place, the Department will no longer pursue the issue.

The Department has determined that a cost savings of over \$500,000 would be realized if the transfer occurred. Should the State retain these recreation areas, the Department will be better able to operate and maintain the recreation areas with the Legislature's support of the funding requested by way of the Governor's Message amending the Administration's biennium budget request.

William P. Kenoi
Mayor



William T. Takaba
Managing Director

Walter K.M. Lau
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

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April 7, 2011

Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Water,
Land and Housing
Honorable Will Espero, Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety
Government Operations and Military Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 225,
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**RE: S.R. 109 URGING THE GOVERNOR NOT TO TRANSFER HAPUNA BEACH AND
MAUNA KEA STATE RECREATION AREAS FROM THE STATE OF HAWAII TO THE
COUNTY OF HAWAII**

Aloha, Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Espero and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to offer our comments on S.R. 109, and to ask your committees to defer this measure so that we may continue our discussions with the Department of Land and Natural Resources on this issue. Our goal is to shift management of Hapuna and Mauna Kea State Recreation Areas to the County of Hawai'i on a trial basis, and to eventually transfer both areas to county control once the county has demonstrated the benefits of this arrangement.

The Mauna Kea and Hapuna Recreational Areas have the potential to be public treasures, places that can be accessed and enjoyed by far more people than visit those sites today. With the proper public investment, these are places that can offer unparalleled recreational experiences.

The County of Hawai'i has met with the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and we are willing to work with the State to take over the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the Mauna Kea State Recreational Area and the Hapuna Beach State Recreation Area, without the transfer of any state personnel and equipment. The transfer of these facilities to the County will allow the Department to use its limited resources on other parks and state facilities.

Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz and Will Espero
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The challenging economic climate today requires that we work together to adjust State and County responsibilities to optimize the deployment of our limited resources to improve the operation and maintenance of park and recreational facilities.

Park maintenance and operations are core County services, and the County maintains other parks in South Kohala near Hapuna including Spencer Beach Park and the County parks at Waikoloa. The County is in an excellent position to take advantage of economies of scale to minimize its maintenance and personnel costs.

I believe shifting management of these areas to county control will achieve greater government efficiency and taxpayer savings, and will also result in greater utilization of these areas by larger numbers of people. This is a smart way to realign State and County responsibilities while enhancing the outdoor experience of people who visit these two important public recreational facilities.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. P. Kenoi', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

William P. Kenoi
MAYOR