



LATE TESTIMONY

HB396
RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

February 9, 2010

8:30 a.m.

Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) strongly **SUPPORTS** HB 396. This bill would require that certain council, board, and commission members attend a training course administered by OHA.

As entities of the State, certain councils, boards, and commissions administer public trust resources and programs that directly impact upon Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights, natural resource protection and access rights, and the public trust. These entities have a duty to protect and preserve these rights and a fiduciary duty to administer the public trust in the interest of the beneficiaries, including native Hawaiians and Hawaiians.

As the principal public agency responsible for ensuring that other state agencies protect Native Hawaiian rights, OHA sees this bill as an important opportunity to work with state councils, boards, and commissions to enable them to execute their roles better informed of their fiduciary obligations to native Hawaiians and Hawaiians, and their responsibilities to protect Native Hawaiian rights and interests.

Given the broad range of expertise and experience of the individuals selected to serve on these state councils, boards, and commissions, OHA recognizes that many members on these key policy-making entities may not possess knowledge of the unique rights and responsibilities that relate to the Native Hawaiian community. This training course, which will incorporate resource individuals with legal, historical, and cultural expertise, is intended to address this deficiency.

OHA strongly urges the passage of **HB396**. Mahalo nui loa for allowing us to provide testimony.