



HB414 HD2
RELATING TO WAIPIO VALLEY
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

March 28, 2013

9:05 a.m.

Room 211

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB414 HD2, which establishes the Waipi‘o valley advisory commission, which would provide advice on the long-term planning of management and activities in Waipi‘o Valley, Hawai‘i.

Waipi‘o Valley traditionally served as an agricultural center on Hawai‘i Island. As described in Hawai‘i Place Names (Clark, 2002), “[t]he valley floor was once the largest wetland taro cultivation site on the Big Island and one of the largest in the state, but only a small portion of the land is still in production today.” Today, Waipi‘o Valley users face a variety of challenges including competing land uses, visitor activities, stream water access, and flood control challenges. Understandably, there is a desire for long-term planning of Waipi‘o Valley to ensure that stewardship of the valley continues far into the future.

HB414 HD2 establishes an advisory commission to consider valley-wide planning goals and funding sources for an educational resource center in Waipi‘o Valley. In its current form, the advisory commission would invite a wide range of valley stakeholders to participate in a focused planning process undertaken by community user organizations, large landowners, and government agencies, among others. We believe that this advisory commission would be a benefit to Waipi‘o Valley users, many of whom are OHA beneficiaries, as well as to the overall state of the valley itself.

Therefore, OHA urges the committee to **PASS** HB414 HD2. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.