

HB 941

RELATING TO THE NATURAL AREA RESERVES
SYSTEM COMMISSION.

Amends the composition of the Natural Area Reserves System Commission by adding a member possessing a background in native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and removing the Superintendent of Education as a member.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
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 AND LAND
and
TOURISM AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Tuesday, March 12, 2013
1:20PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 941
RELATING TO THE NATURAL AREA RESERVES SYSTEM COMMISSION

House Bill 941 proposes to amend the composition of the Natural Area Reserves System (NARS) Commission by adding a member possessing a background in native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and to remove the Superintendent of Education as a member. **Like the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) had previously testified on the companion Administration measure, Senate Bill 1172, the Department strongly supports House Bill 941 as presently drafted.**



HB941
RELATING TO THE NATURAL AREA RESERVES SYSTEM COMMISSION
Senate Committees on Water and Land and
Tourism and Hawaiian Affairs

March 12, 2013

1:20 p.m.

Room 225

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB941, which seeks to add a cultural expert to the Natural Area Reserves Commission.

The Natural Area Reserves (NARS) Program carries out vital parts of the state's responsibility to conserve, protect, and manage our natural and cultural resources, and specifically works to preserve representative samples of Hawai'i's diverse biological systems for study by and the appreciation of Hawai'i's residents. The NARS commission accordingly consists of experts in various fields of environmental science, as well as representatives from the hiking and hunting communities, to provide recommendations as to the selection and treatment of areas to be included in the NARS program.

However, despite its broad representative knowledge from the scientific and outdoor recreational communities, the NARS commission currently lacks a member specifically qualified to provide insight as to the cultural value and significance of existing and potential future reserves, or the many cultural resources they may contain. This may lead to inefficiencies or oversights, particularly given the responsibilities of all state agencies to protect and enforce the rights of Native Hawaiians, and to fulfill the state's interest in perpetuating Native Hawaiian culture and cultural values.

Adding a cultural expert to the NARS Commission will mitigate any conflicts with traditional and cultural practices, help to better identify and preserve cultural sites and resources, and otherwise improve the overall effectiveness of both the NARS Commission and the NARS Program.

Therefore, OHA urges the Committees to **PASS** HB941. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs

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JOINT SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER & LAND
AND
TOURISM & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

HOUSE BILL 941 RELATING TO THE NATURAL AREA RESERVES SYSTEM COMMISSION

Tuesday, March 12, 2013; 1:20pm; Room 225

Aloha Madam Chair Solomon and Chairman Galuteria and members of the joint Senate committees meeting on SB1172 Re: to the Natural Area Reserves System Commission. I am Soulee Stroud president of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs(AHCC) speaking in support of this bill.

The AHCC has always supported the preservation of native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices as written in our constitution. To that end, we agree that the addition of a commission member with just that kind of comprehensive knowledge would be of great value to the NARS commission.

We urge your support of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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