



SB2875

RELATING TO THE ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY COMMITTEE House Committee on Ocean, Marine Resources and Hawaiian

March 19, 2014

10:15 a.m.

Room 325

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB2875, which would enable the Endangered Species Recovery Committee to more fully consider potential impacts to Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices in its advisory functions, by adding a person with a background in such practices to the committee.

OHA appreciates and supports the role of the Endangered Species Recovery Committee, in providing technical advice on the protection of Hawai‘i’s many endangered species and their respective habitats. Hawai‘i is known as the “endangered species capitol of the world,” with a renowned level of biodiversity that contributes significantly to our islands’ scientific, cultural, educational and economic interests. Accordingly, protecting our unique and fragile natural resources, including our endangered species and their habitats, should be a high priority of the state.

OHA also notes that the state, through its boards and agencies, has a constitutional and moral obligation to promote Native Hawaiian cultural perpetuation, through the reasonable protection and enforcement of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. Insofar as many of these practices are intrinsically connected to the land and its resources, certain endangered species recovery actions may unnecessarily restrict the exercise of these practices, or impact such practices to a greater extent than other potential alternatives.

Therefore, OHA believes that the inclusion of a member with a background in Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices will provide the Endangered Species Recovery Committee with an additional and important perspective through which to vet recovery action proposals, in carrying out its important advisory functions.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** SB2875. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
OCEAN, MARINE RESOURCES, & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Wednesday, March 19, 2014
10:15 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2875
RELATING TO THE ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY COMMITTEE

Senate Bill 2875 proposes to establish a new member to Hawaii State's Endangered Species Recovery Committee, which consults to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) and the Board of Land and Natural Resources on matters relating to endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species. **The Department strongly supports this Administrative bill.**

Currently, nearly all of the boards and commissions under the Department require a member with a background in native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. Last session, legislation was enacted requiring such expertise for the Natural Area Reserves System Commission. The remaining Department boards and commissions that need such expertise are the Board of Land and Natural Resources and the Endangered Species Recovery Committee.

As the Department is obligated under the Hawaii Constitution and Hawaii statutory and case law to preserve and protect the exercise of traditional and customary native Hawaiian rights, it would provide great value to have a member on the Endangered Species Recovery Committee to have expertise in this area to provide guidance on natural resource protection and management decisions.

WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

JESSE K. SOUKI
FIRST DEPUTY

WILLIAM M. TAM
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
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

COMMITTEE ON OCEAN, MARINE RESOURCES AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2014

10:15 AM

ROOM 325

PERSONAL TESTIMONY FROM BENTON KEALII PANG, PH.D.

IN **SUPPORT** FOR

SB 2875

RELATING TO THE ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY COMMITTEE

ALOHA NŌ CHAIR FAYE HANOHANO, VICE CHAIR TY CULLEN, AND
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

My name is Benton Kealii Pang. I am a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, current Chair of the Forest Stewardship Committee and Chair of the Clean Water and Natural Lands Commission. Please excuse my absence from being physically present at today's hearing.

I offer my personal testimony in support of Senate Bill 2875. The Endangered Species Recovery Committee is charged with protecting our rarest Hawaiian species from extinction. These species are important cultural treasures which hold special significance to native Hawaiians as kinolau (embodiments of Hawaiian gods), customary practices, and cultural traditions. Adding a native Hawaiian cultural expert to the Endangered Species Recovery Committee adds an important cultural dimension to the committee which ensures the long term protection of Hawai'i's threatened and endangered species.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

ALOHA 'ĀINA,

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