

# GM514

Measure Title: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Island Burial Council, Island of Molokai, Gubernatorial Nominee, MICHELLE PESCAIA, for a term to expire 6-30-2016.

Report Title: Island Burial Council, Island of Molokai

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

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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 Committee on  
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

**Friday, March 7, 2014  
2:45PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of  
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 514  
SUBMITTING FOR THE CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE ISLAND  
BURIAL COUNCIL, ISLAND OF MOLOKA'I, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,  
MICHELLE PESCAIA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6-30-2016**

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports Governor's Message 514, nominating Ms. Michelle Pescaia to the Island Burial Council, Island of Moloka'i, to expire June 30, 2016.

The Island Burial Councils are established under Section 6E-43.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes. With regard to previously known burials, the Councils determine whether to leave the burial in place or remove it, recognize lineal and cultural descendants and provide counsel and advice to the Department.

Ms. Pescaia is a current resident of Moloka'i and has genealogical ties to Ho'olehua, Pelekunu, Hālawā and Wailua. She pursued a degree in Hawaiian Studies and is currently employed as the Moloka'i Site Coordinator for the Nā Pua No'eau-Center for Gifted and Talented Native Hawaiian Children. Her past employment includes working as a Hawaiian language teacher for parents of children attending Hawaiian language immersion schools, as well as an a Pūnana Leo o Moloka'i teacher. In addition, she also served as the Cultural Education Specialist at the Bishop Museum.

Ms. Pescaia previously served on the Moloka'i Island Burial Council and has expressed great interest and commitment in continuing that kuleana. Senate confirmation will ensure that Ms. Pescaia's valuable knowledge and perspective informs the deliberations of the Island Burial Council until June 30, 2016.



## GM514

### **SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE ISLAND BURIAL COUNCIL, ISLAND OF MOLOKA'I, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, MICHELLE PESCAIA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6-30-2016** Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs

March 7, 2013

2:45 p.m.

Room 224

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** GM514, which would confirm Michelle "Miki'ala" Pescaia as the Kalawao regional representative to the Moloka'i Island Burial Council.

Ms. Pescaia's genealogical and familial roots, which run throughout her moku, and her kuleana to her kūpuna make her a uniquely fitting selection for the Moloka'i Island Burial Council. Ms. Pescaia was born and raised in Ho'olehua, and her family has genealogical ties to Pelekunu, Hālawā and Wailau. She has done significant research and continues to care for the iwi kūpuna buried at Kalawao. She has dedicated much of her life to service of her Moloka'i community, specifically focusing on Hawaiian cultural and historic preservation. She has formerly served on the Moloka'i Island Burial Council from 2009-2012 and as a cultural education specialist for the Bishop Museum where she coordinated protocol associated with cultural collections, designed community education programs, festivals and displays, and coordinated a kūpuna lecture series.

Ms. Pescaia constantly seeks opportunities to bring awareness to iwi issues by encouraging multi-generational discussion and participation while promoting self-determination over the kuleana to iwi kūpuna. She recently served five years as a Moloka'i planning commissioner helping to facilitate burial treatment plans, and cultural monitoring for projects conducted within the SMA. She organized Project Ola Nā Iwi for Moloka'i, a series of workshops that provided training for community members in protocol, lauhala and kapa preparation for use in burials. She has participated in repatriations in several capacities and firmly believes in training the next generation to carry on the kuleana. Ms. Pescaia currently serves as the Moloka'i site coordinator for Nā Pua No'ēau and formerly a Hawaiian language instructor for parents and students at Pūnana Leo O Moloka'i and Kualapu'u School and as a cultural advisor for Ka Li'i Mamo, Mōhala Ka 'Ike (a Maui Community College video production class focusing on Moloka'i issues, history and culture). Ms. Pescaia has been involved in projects in Kalaupapa for grave marker assessment and restoration as well as cultural protocols on burials and will be employed fulltime by the Kalaupapa National Historical Park at the end of March as a park ranger and interpreter.

The Moloka‘i Island Burial Council, like several other island burial councils, has historically faced significant challenges meeting composition and quorum requirements and, as a result, has been unable to convene for several years. Accordingly, during the 2013 legislative session, OHA partnered with the Governor’s Office, the State Attorney General, and the Department of Land and Natural Resources’ State Historic Preservation Division to pass legislation substantially reducing the composition and quorum requirements for the island burial councils to meet. After the passage of Act 276 (Session Laws 2013), OHA continued to collaborate with the Governor’s Office to expeditiously solicit and recommend nominees to fill longstanding vacancies and allow the burial councils to do business once again. With the more attainable composition and quorum requirements established by Act 276 and with Ms. Pescaia’s confirmation (as well as those of the two other anticipated Moloka‘i Island Burial Council appointees), the Moloka‘i Island Burial Council will finally be able to resume their work and fulfill their important kuleana.

For these reasons, OHA urges the committee to **PASS** GM514 to confirm Ms. Pescaia to the Moloka‘i Island Burial Council. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.