

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION
KAKUHIHEWA BUILDING
601 KAMOKILA BLVD STE 555
KAPOLEI HI 96707

**Testimony of
WILLIAM AILA, JR
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Wednesday, February 26, 2014
11:15 am
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1618
RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

House Bill 1618 proposes to provide that the Board of Land and Natural Resources has a board member with expertise in native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure and notes that it has submitted its own bill on this matter (House Bill 2324).**

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 Board of Land and Natural Resources 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

ESTHER KIA'AINA
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



HB1618
**RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL
RESOURCES**
House Committee on Finance

February 26, 2014

11:15 a.m.

Room 308

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** HB1618, which is a bill in OHA's 2014 Legislative Package. HB1618 would require at least one member of the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to be an expert in Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. **Ensuring that a member of the BLNR is an expert in Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices will help the BLNR to better administer our lands and resources with respect to Native Hawaiian issues and concerns, including traditional and customary cultural practices, the public land trust, and the recognition of Native Hawaiian cultural values that are intrinsically tied to the 'āina.**

The BLNR administers important programs that carry out the state's responsibility to conserve and manage our natural, water, and land resources on behalf of the people and environment of Hawai'i.¹ In addition, the BLNR frequently makes critical decisions that impact Native Hawaiians and their cultural practices, which are protected by Article XII, Section 7 of the Hawai'i State Constitution.² While many BLNR members possess specific expertise in a number of matters relating to natural resource management, water conservation, and land use controls, BLNR members do not necessarily have specific expertise relating to the cultural value and significance of the lands and resources they administer, or of their specific fiduciary and constitutional duties relating to Native Hawaiians and the public land trust.

Finally, OHA notes that HB1618 does not increase the number of members on the BLNR. Rather, HB1618 maintains the current composition of BLNR—seven members.

Therefore, OHA urges the committee to **PASS** HB1618. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

¹ Hawai'i Revised Statutes (H.R.S.) § 171-4 (2005).

² HAW. CONST., art. XII, § 7 (1978).

HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS CAUCUS

Democratic Party of Hawaii
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February 24, 2014

**LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF
HB1618, RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD OF LAND AND
NATURAL RESOURCES**

Hearing, Wednesday, Feb 26, 11:15 a.m., Room 308

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
Representative Aaron Ling Johanson, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Finance

Aloha mai kākou

The Hawaiian Affairs Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports HB1618 that would require that at least one member of the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR), other than the member appointed for having a background in conservation and natural resources, have demonstrated expertise in native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices.

The BLNR jurisdiction encompasses over 1.3 million acres of State lands, beaches, and coastal waters. These lands are largely comprised of former Hawaiian Kingdom crown and government lands to which Native Hawaiians have never relinquished their claims.

The lands that BLNR has jurisdiction over include vast areas where Native Hawaiians exercise their constitutionally protected traditional and customary practices. Hence, it is important and respectful to empower their mana'o via a BLNR voting member knowledgeable of native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices.

We urge your passage of HB 1618, Relating to the Composition of the Board Of Land And Natural Resources.

Respectfully

/s/ via on-line testimony

DAVIS PRICE
Chair

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HB1618

Submitted on: 2/25/2014

Testimony for FIN on Feb 26, 2014 11:15AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Daniel J. Southmayd	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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HB1618

Submitted on: 2/26/2014

Testimony for FIN on Feb 26, 2014 11:15AM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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