

SB 2511

**LATE
TESTIMONY**

Senator Malama Solomon, Chair
Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice Chair
Committee on Water and Land

Saturday, February 1, 2014

Support for S.B. No. 2511, Relating to Watershed Protection

My name is Tyler LaBonte, and I am a fourteen year old living in Aiea, Oahu, Senate District 16. I am testifying in support of S.B. No. 2511, Relating to Watershed Protection, which would establish a watershed initiative program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources to plan, monitor, and execute such initiatives.

Hawaii's watersheds are vital--they supply our drinking water, our water for industrial use, opportunities for recreation, and unique habitats for Hawaii's many native stream species. The Environmental Protection Agency stated that more than \$450 *billion* dollars in foods, fiber, manufactured goods and tourism depend on clean, healthy watersheds. Therefore, the protection and conservation of these areas are of paramount importance.

A watershed initiative program like the one proposed in S.B. No. 2511 would be a great asset to the DNLR, and it would be well worth the money it would cost to keep the program running. There are many things that threaten our precious watersheds: pollution, erosion, animal waste, sewage runoff, fertilizer runoff, the list goes on and on. It will take major work and dedicated people to keep our watersheds healthy and clean, but we need someone to do it, lest they become polluted and contaminate our water supply and the water supply of plants and animals. It would also be a chance to educate the next generation, myself included, about the benefits of watersheds and our duty in keeping them clean, which will ensure that Hawaii's resources are taken care of for years to come.

A watershed initiative program would be a step forward in preserving our watersheds and the resources they contain. I am in support of S.B. No. 2511, which would establish said program, and I urge the committee to pass it. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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