

**Aha Moku Advisory Committee
Testimony of Leimana DaMate**

Before the Senate Committee on
Ways and Means

Tuesday, February 25, 2014
9:10 A.M.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

**In Support of
S.B. 2678, S.D. 1**

**MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO SUPPORT CULTURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**

Senate Bill 2678 SD1 appropriates funds for the administration and operational expenses of the aha moku advisory committee and community education on the administrative structure regarding the aha moku system and on natural and cultural resource management.

One of the purposes of Act 288, Hawaii Session Laws 2012, under which the Aha Moku Advisory Committee (Committee) is established is to “formally recognize the Aha Moku System, a system of best practices that is based upon the indigenous resource management practices of moku boundaries, which acknowledges the natural contours of land, the specific resources located within those areas, and the methodology necessary to sustain resources and the community.”

Under Act 288, the Committee may provide advice on the following:

- 1) Integrating indigenous resource management practices with western practices in each moku;
- 2) Identifying a comprehensive set of indigenous practices for natural resource management;
- 3) Fostering the understanding and practical use of native Hawaiian knowledge, methodology, and expertise;
- 4) Sustaining the State’s marine, land, cultural, agricultural, and natural resources;
- 5) Providing community education and fostering cultural awareness on the benefits of the aha moku system;
- 6) Fostering protection and conservation of the State’s natural resources; and,
- 7) Developing an administrative structure that oversees the aha moku system.

When the Bill that created the Act was passed, the legislators made it clear that the voices of the Native Hawaiian whose expertise in natural and cultural resource methodology, handed down

through generational and traditional knowledge, was brought forward to the attention of the State's land and natural resources regulatory agencies and included those mandates.

Since the Committee became officially operational in July, 2013 they have established a strong and good rapport with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), the agency they are attached to, and are working to fulfill the mandates of Act 288. Unfortunately, the legislature did not fund FY 2013-14. However, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs assisted by funding operational expenses in the amount of \$76,500 so that the Committee's programs could be started. Those funds were planned to be matched by the Legislature, however that did not happen. Currently, funds will be depleted very shortly and we have asked OHA to assist for the few months left in this fiscal year. We are waiting approval for that request.

The Aha Moku System is inclusive of eight main Hawaiian Islands and forty-three (43) traditional moku districts. In the eight months that we have been in operation, in addressing each of the mandates in the Act, we have begun with the official organization of a communications route for each of the moku and all of the islands. However, with just one staff member working on the administration and operation of the Committee, it has been difficult to fully integrate the mandates of Act 288 into all of the moku.

The funds appropriated in this Bill will be truly helpful. The DLNR has appropriated in their package to the governor the sum of \$110,000 for the operational expenses for FY 2014-2015, and we are very grateful for that. However, that amount is for the salary of one position and some travel for the Committee to meet.

It is important that the Aha Moku System become fully operational so that the mandates of the Act are fulfilled. Community outreach is critical and that entails public community meetings, moku meetings and the expenses incurred in these operations.

The Aha Moku System is comprised of Hawaiian communities and the general public within an ahupua'a and moku who are dedicated to the sustainability of Hawaii's natural and cultural resources.

We are strongly in support of the Aha Moku system and urge the Legislature to support S.B. 2678 S.D.1

Respectfully yours,

Leimana DaMate, Executive Director
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
Ph: 808-587-1498