

GM 509

TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE

Honorable Chair, Senator Mike Gabbard and
Honorable Vice Chair Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: In support of GM 509 – Nomination of Dr. Wendy Wiltse to Legacy Lands
Conservation Committee**

Monday, February 29, 2016
2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 224
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii

Written Statement for Legacy Lands Conservation Commission

By Wendy Wiltse, Ph.D.

February 26, 2016

1. Why do you wish to be a member of the Legacy Lands Conservation Commission (LLCC)?

I am very proud of my State for sponsoring the Legacy Lands Conservation Program. I believe in its mission to acquire, protect, and manage private lands for public purpose. This is one of the most effective actions we can take to preserve the aesthetic, cultural, ecological, and agricultural value of Hawaii. I am nearing retirement after >30 years of service as a federal employee (>20 yrs in Hawaii) and I want to be useful in retirement. I want to put my years of knowledge and experience to constructive use, to make a contribution to the 'aina, and the LLCC is a rich platform for my continued service.

2. How do you receive the role and responsibilities of a member of LLCC

I have had the privilege of serving on the LLCC for the last 8 months prior to my confirmation and it has been a fulfilling experience. This opportunity has clarified for me the role and responsibilities of LLCC members. In my mind the LLCC's purpose is to acquire private lands, in partnership with Land Trusts, conservation organizations, and government agencies, for the purpose of protecting valuable lands for public trust purposes.

The role of LLCC members is to review annual Legacy Land grant proposals and recommend projects for funding to the Board of Land and Natural Resources. The LLCC's role is purely advisory.

In addition to reviewing proposals, we confer with the applicants, conduct site visits to see firsthand the value and potential of the land, and we hear testimony from cultural practitioners and concerned citizens. After gaining familiarity with the proposals, sites, and the applicants, we evaluate the applications against the criteria in the Rules, then make recommendations to the BLNR.

Although we do not directly fund land management, the LLCC considers the proposed management and protection measures for the land and we make recommendations for the oversight of conservation easements.

3. Why do you believe you are qualified for the position? Statement of skills, knowledge, expertise.

I have a long career in environmental science and protection. My Ph.D. is in marine ecology but I have also worked extensively on connections between watersheds and the adjacent streams, coastal waters and coral reefs...I have cultivated a ridge to reef/ahupuaa perspective.

In my current job with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), I oversee wetland and coral reef protection efforts. This work involves meeting with project proponents and making recommendations to lessen impacts, commenting on US Army Corps of Engineers and Dept. of Health permits, and assessing the success of any mitigation efforts. I also conduct inspections and participate in enforcement actions under the Clean Water Act. As I explain in Question 7, I will soon be retired from EPA.

I have reviewed many grant applications and made recommendations for funding. This aspect of the LLCC is very familiar to me. I have learned to document the selection criteria and my ratings so that I have never had my selections challenged. I work for a regulatory agency so I am also very familiar with the interpretation, application, and enforcement of government regulations. I am committed to fairly and accurately implementing the laws and rules that apply to LLCC.

In my professional and volunteer life, I've worked on a wide range of environmental programs including research, pollution control, water conservation, habitat restoration, watershed protection, voluntary partnerships, algae blooms, erosion control, enforcement, and grant funding. Land acquisition, with protection and management for public benefit, is another effective tool that we need to promote in Hawaii, and I appreciate the opportunity to be an advisor to the LLCC.

I have good familiarity with all of the main Hawaiian Islands. I've lived on Maui and Oahu and worked extensively on Molokai, Kauai and Big Island. I am familiar with environmental threats and concerns across the state.

4. What do you hope to accomplish?

After participating in the 2015 funding recommendations by the LLCC, I can comfortably say that I hope to help acquire and protect thousands of acres of valuable land in Hawaii. The sustainable future of Hawaii can best be insured if we set aside some of our land as "resting areas" where threats are lessened and drinking water supplies are protected, and as natural buffers around developed areas, and sensitive areas such as streams, wetlands, and coastal waters. We also have the opportunity to acquire lands of cultural significance and unique ecological value before they are degraded or lost. I hope to help the LLCC make a difference for the future of Hawaii before all the important lands are gone, and before they are too costly to protect.

5. Name 3 qualities that best describe you, and how these will benefit LLCC.

- Love for the 'aina. I hope this doesn't sound trite but I have to say #1 is my love for the land and water of Hawaii. The last 20+ years of my career have focused on promoting protection, restoration, and wise use of Hawaii's very special land and water resources. I've lived and worked

in 10 or more states and none has grabbed my heart, spirit, respect, and love as Hawaii does. This is my home and I want to be useful here and ensure a good future for my state.

- Diplomacy. Working in government for 30+ years, I have become a diplomat. In the federal government, the importance of consensus cannot be overstated. When someone has to make a big decision -- a costly decision, a significant decision, one that affects a lot of people -- the best way to weigh the options is to ask a wide variety of experts for input, and take the route that has the least risk and the most benefits. I have worked to cultivate the manners of a diplomat, so that I can work with people representing a full range of interests and personalities. I've learned to "play well with others" and to seek compromise solutions that satisfy the most interests. For example, when asked to comment on controversial development projects, I never oppose the development but I always offer recommendations to lessen any adverse impacts. On the LLCC I hope to use my diplomacy to contribute to smooth decision making and defensible recommendations.
- Long term perspective. After enjoying a long career, I find that I can more easily think and plan with a long term perspective. I've come to appreciate actions that can endure through time, more than the sexy actions that wither and die without maintenance or a persistent champion. Land acquisition is an enduring action, and appeals to me for that reason. When I look back at my work as Watershed Coordinator on Maui, I see that that the County Ordinances we contributed to and the infrastructure we built are still functional 20 years later. The booklets, workshops, trainings, best management practices have not endured and were less impactful in the long term. These may however be important in building support for the more enduring actions.

I have also studied predictions for climate change in Hawaii and know that prolonged drought, more intense sporadic storm events, more likelihood of hurricane hits, a meter of sealevel rise, increasingly acidic oceans, etc. are things we need to consider in our everyday business now. We must build these considerations into our plans and actions for the future, including land acquisitions by LLCC. I am particularly interested in supporting acquisition of lands that contribute to infiltration and protection of water supply, and that buffer streams and coastal waters.

6. Name one experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit LLCC?

My first (and favorite) job in Hawaii was as Watershed Coordinator in West Maui in the 1990's when noxious algal blooms were closing beaches and causing visitors to complain and leave waterfront accommodations. I was hired to work with local stakeholders to find solutions. I talked with everybody I could about the current problems, local history, potential solutions, and I organized advisory groups. By consensus, we established our goal: to improve land and water management in the watershed and reduce sediment and nutrient inputs to coastal waters. In this position I worked with the full range of landowners and stakeholders including elected officials, agricultural plantations, resort managers, cultural practitioners, developers, the Chamber of Commerce, homeowners, environmental activists, reporters, scientists, and state, federal and county staff. I learned to appreciate all these perspectives and work collaboratively toward workable solutions. The Watershed "Owners Manual" or watershed plan that I facilitated is one of my most satisfying accomplishments. We implemented over 75% of the recommendations in the Manual. I developed a deep enduring connection with the land, water and people of West Maui and also gained a wealth of knowledge about Hawaiian water rights, land ownership, agricultural work, the visitor industry, ocean recreation, and watershed hydrology.

In my opinion, the knowledge and skills that I developed provide a strong foundation for the kinds of decisions we make in LLCC. It's useful to consider a proposed property in a landscape perspective, in relation to surrounding land and water resources, and to consider the perspectives of local stakeholders and cultural practitioners. I will draw from my ahupua'a style watershed perspective to see the bigger picture.

7. Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest and how would you overcome conflicts?

I really do not anticipate conflicts of interest. I currently work for the US Environmental Protection Agency. I will enter a phased retirement program in 2016 in which I will work half time until early 2017, then fully retire. While my phased retirement application is in the approval process, I am using vacation time for all LLCC activities.

I could potentially have conflicts with properties where EPA has funded habitat restoration, pollution control activities, or taken enforcement actions. Frankly, there are not many sites in Hawaii where this applies. In the 2014 and 2015 LLCC funding cycles, I did not identify any conflicts. If a conflict did arise, I would explain any connection to my work or my employers, and abstain from voting on that proposal.

Please see attached letters of support

February 25, 2016

TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE

Honorable Chair, Senator Mike Gabbard and

Honorable Vice Chair Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: In support of GM 509

Monday, February 29, 2016

2:45 p.m.

Conference Room 224

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, Hawaii

I strongly endorse and recommend **Wendy Wiltse** for the Legacy Land Conservation Commission (LLCC). As an active member of the LLCC, I recognize the benefits and contributions that Ms. Wiltse would bring to our decision making.

Wendy and I have worked together both professionally and as volunteers over the past decade. She is an excellent water quality specialist and dedicated to ensuring long-term sustainability of our coral reefs, fisheries and coastal environments through upland management and intervention strategies. When reviewing lands proposed for acquisition or protection, Wendy's insight would be of valuable in determining what watershed management strategies would be most effective and how best to improve water quality. Wendy would bring considerable expertise and background in *ahupua'a* techniques to restore stream, forest, wetland and marine resources.

Wendy has a long history of volunteer activities and we both serve as advisors to the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council, where we have helped develop and review the organization's Maui Coral Reef Recovery Plan. The Council and its Plan received national recognition this past fall from the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, which praised the Plan's community and watershed-based approach to reef recovery and fisheries management. Wendy played a key role in recommending best practices and nonstructural techniques to improve watershed and marine water quality.

Her in-depth understanding of regulations and the government's role in water quality issues would be a tremendous asset to the LLCC and its decision making. For example, she testified at our November 2015 meeting about factors that likely contributed to a fish die off at the time at Wai'opae or "tide pools" on the Island of Hawaii. Her input on the *actual protection* afforded by existing water quality regulations and the State Department of Health enforcement activities helped the LLCC recommend that the County of Hawaii's request to purchase the property should be funded and supported. The purchase not only helps protect the area's spectacular coral reefs and fisheries, but also guarantees the public has access to, and along, the shoreline that would otherwise be lost if the property was developed.

The State of Hawaii and my fellow Commissioner's would benefit greatly from having Wendy as a member given her water quality and regulatory expertise. I strongly encourage her approval.

As a the Legacy Land Conservation Commissioner, I consider it a great honor and privilege to serve Hawaii on this unique and diverse commission and I would welcome Wendy's contributions.

Please feel free to contact me by mail, phone at 808-344-1595, or by email at Thorneabbott@yahoo.com if you would like to discuss my support for the nomination or if I can be of assistance in any fashion. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo!

Thorne Abbott

Legacy Land Conservation Commissioner

3993 Maalaea Bay Place,

Wailuku, Maui, HI 96793

Website: www.coastalzone.com

To: Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture
From: Robin Newbold, Chair, Maui Nui Marine Resource Council and
Member of Natural Area Reserves Commission
Date: February 22, 2016
Re: Dr. Wendy Wiltse Nomination to the Legacy Lands Conservation Commission

I enthusiastically support Dr. Wendy Wiltse for a scientist position on the Legacy Lands Conservation Commission. Wendy, a well-known and highly respected scientist and environmental representative whose life work has been focused on water quality protection and connections between land and water resources in Hawaii, will bring a watershed/ahupua'a perspective to this position.

I have known Dr. Wiltse for 20 years, stemming from her 1993-97 position with Hawaii Department of Health as West Maui Watershed Coordinator. At that time Wendy worked cooperatively with County and State government, plantation personnel, and the local community to find solutions to nuisance algae problems in West Maui. With local stakeholders she oversaw implementation of erosion controls, sediment retention basins, and sewage improvements to reduce sediment and nutrient loads to coastal waters.

Dr. Wiltse has served as an invaluable advisor to the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council (MNMRC) for the past seven years on both water quality and watershed issues. Currently she is assisting in the development of a Quality Assurance Program Plan (QAPP) required by the DOH for voluntary water quality monitoring efforts to be useful to DOH.

When the MNMRC formed the Coral Reef Recovery Team (MCRT) in 2010 Dr. Wendy enthusiastically agreed to represent the US Environmental Protection. Over 2.5 years this team of experts, fishers, cultural representatives, planners and community folks developed a Coral Reef Recovery Plan (Plan) for Maui, where valuable coral reefs are in rapid decline at numerous sites. Without healthy coral reefs to protect our shorelines from storms and rising sea level, Maui's beaches, coastal developments, fisheries, and tourism will suffer. Wendy contributed to the entire plan and was especially helpful on the section that addresses water quality protection. She also served on selection committee to hire an implementation coordinator for the Plan.

In collaboration with other MCRT members Dr. Wiltse is providing guidance and trainings for implementation of the Plan at three priority sites. Wendy has been an active participant contributing a valuable watershed and water quality perspective to the on-going work of the MCRT and the MNMRC.

Without hesitation the MNMRC unanimously voted to support the nomination of Dr. Wendy Wiltse to the Legacy Lands Commission. We have experienced her dedication, expertise and experience first hand and know she will contribute productively to the discussions and decisions of the Commission.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE**

**Monday, February 29, 2016
2:45 PM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 224

**In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 509
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE LEGACY
LAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, WENDY
WILTSE, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2017**

**The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports
Governor's Message 509, nominating Wendy Wiltse to the Legacy Land Conservation
Commission for a term to expire June 30, 2017.**

Pursuant to Section 173A-2.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the Legacy Land Conservation Commission shall: 1) Advise the Department and the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board) on any proposal, public or private, for the acquisition of any interests or rights in land having value as a resource to the State; 2) Advise the Department and the Board on any requests for grants from the fund to a qualifying state or county agency or nonprofit land conservation organization for the preservation of lands having value as a resource to the State; 3) Recommend to the Board the acquisition of interests or rights in certain lands having value as a resource to the State; and 4) Review and adopt rules relating to the criteria it applies in advising the Department and the Board and making recommendations to the Board regarding land acquisitions and grants made pursuant to Chapter 173A, HRS.

Ms. Wendy Wiltse is a marine ecologist possessing a M.S. in Marine Science, a Ph.D. in Zoology, and 30 years of experience working for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). She has worked on the protection of a range of marine and aquatic resources, including coral reefs and near-shore waters, shorelines and beaches, and watersheds and underground aquifers. Ms. Wiltse has also worked in a variety of contexts, from leading community based restoration and management projects in West Maui to overseeing governmental regulatory

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

KEKOA KALUHIWA
FIRST DEPUTY

JEFFREY T. PEARSON, P.E.
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

compliance and permit processes as an EPA Senior Environmental Scientist. Ms. Wiltse's expertise and breadth of experience makes her an excellent member representing the Island of Oahu and Science on the Legacy Land Conservation Commission.

February 24, 2016

Senate Committee on Water Land & Agriculture

GM509

Confirmation of Wendy Wiltse to the Legacy Land Conservation Committee

Dear Sirs,

I would like to support the nomination of Dr. Wendy Wiltse for a member of the **Legacy Land Conservation Commission**.

I myself was a member of that commission for my maximum of two terms and I am thus very familiar with the duties and the expertise needed for successful fulfillment of the mission of the commission.

I hereby recommend a scientific colleague and environmentalist, **Dr. Wendy Wiltse**.

Dr. Wiltse earned a Ph.D. as a marine ecologist, but her work over the past twenty years here in Hawaii has focused on the effects of land management on water resources; Ridges to Reefs.

Working for the U.S. Environmental Protect Agency, she has lived and worked on Oahu and Maui, but her professional career has extended to all of the islands of Hawaii and U.S. territories of the Pacific. The recent emphasis was on wetlands and coral reefs as threatened by land-use and climate change. She worked in the field of policy and management by bringing the best and latest science to bear on practical environmental problems.

In so doing she worked with a range of stakeholders and interest such as native Hawaiians, taro farmers, business community, concerned citizens, scientists and environmentalists.

Through her work over the past decades she has demonstrated her care about Hawaii's special places and the need to preserve them.

She will be retiring from federal employment in the coming year and is looking for volunteer opportunities to use her considerable knowledge and skills to contribute to preserving the environmental heritage of Hawaii.

Her background and expertise make her a perfect addition to the Legacy Land Conservation Commission.

Please consider her appointment to fill the exiting vacancies.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carl J. Berg', is written in black ink on a light yellow rectangular background.

Carl J. Berg, Ph.D.

Former member of Legacy Land Conservation Commission

Former Chief Scientist of Hanalei Watershed Hui

Chair, The Surfrider Foundation – Kauai Chapter

Scientist and Owner, Hawaiian Wildlife Tours

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WLA Testimony](#)
Cc: rtb808@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for GM509 on Feb 29, 2016 14:45PM*
Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 12:38:27 PM

GM509

Submitted on: 2/24/2016

Testimony for WLA on Feb 29, 2016 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Randal Bartlett	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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To: Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture
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Member of Natural Area Reserves Commission
Date: February 22, 2016
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Senator Mike Gabbard
Chair, Water, Land, & Agriculture

Re: GM 509 - Dr. Wendy Wiltse

Dear Senator Gabbard,

I am submitting this letter in support of the nomination of Dr. Wendy Wiltse to join Legacy Lands Conservation Commission of DLNR. I have known Dr. Wiltse for approximately 18 years and believe that she is a good fit for this commission. Her work since coming to Hawaii has focussed on the health and preservation of our island reef system - an area that is intimately associated with land management practices. Wendy has lived on both Maui and Oahu and has spent many days working on other islands, predominantly in Hawaii, but also throughout the western Pacific Ocean. She understands, as did the ancient Hawaiians, that everything in the environment is linked, from mauka to makai. She has extensive knowledge of wetlands and associated water use issues facing our state. Beyond her direct activities, Dr. Wiltse has a long history of reviewing both research and management proposals during her years working for the Environmental Protection Agency. Dr. Wiltse is passionate about preserving our island environment for future generations. I believe that she will be a valued member of the LLCC and look forward to her appointment.

Sincerely,

Dr. Roy H. Wilkens, PhD
Emeritus Research Scientist
Hawaii Institute of Geophysics
and Planetology
University of Hawaii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WLA Testimony](#)
Cc: menardtheresa@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for GM509 on Feb 29, 2016 14:45PM
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2016 11:42:31 AM

GM509

Submitted on: 2/23/2016

Testimony for WLA on Feb 29, 2016 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Theresa Menard	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a current commissioner on the Legacy Lands Conservation Commission, I have worked with Wendy Wiltse while she served in an interim capacity. She is qualified for this position as her resume shows. I hope to continue working with her. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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February 25, 2016

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Honorable Vice Chair Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

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Mahalo!

Thorne Abbott

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thorne Abbott', written in a cursive style.

Legacy Land Conservation Commissioner
3993 Maalaea Bay Place,
Wailuku, Maui, HI 96793
Website: www.coastalzone.com