

GM 728

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



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

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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
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ENGINEERING
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

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

POST OFFICE BOX 621
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**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

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

**Monday, April 18, 2016
2:50 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 728
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE NATURAL
AREA RESERVES SYSTEM COMMISSION, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,
THOMAS RANKER, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2018**

**The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports
Governor's Message 728, nominating Thomas Ranker to the Natural Area Reserves System
Commission for a term to expire June 30, 2018.**

Pursuant to Section 195-7, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the Natural Area Reserves System Commission shall: (1) Establish criteria to be used in determining whether an area is suitable for inclusion with the reserves system; (2) Conduct studies of areas for possible inclusion within the reserves system; (3) Recommend to the Governor and the Department areas suitable for inclusion within the reserves system; (4) Establish policies and criteria regarding the management, protection, and permitted uses of areas which are part of the reserves system; (5) Advise the Governor and the Department on any matter relating to the preservation of Hawaii's unique natural resources; (6) Develop ways and means of extending and strengthening presently established preserves, sanctuaries, and refuges within the State; (7) Advise the Department and other public agencies managing state-owned land or natural resources regarding areas under their respective jurisdictions which are or may be appropriate for designation as natural area reserves; and (8) In carrying out the above duties, consult the most comprehensive up-to-date compilation of scientific data on the communities of natural flora and fauna of Hawaii.

Dr. Thomas Ranker meets the qualifications of one of six appointed members with an academic degree. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies from California State

University of Sacramento in 1974; a Master of Arts in Biology from Humboldt State University, California in 1982, and a Ph.D. in Botany (with Honors) from the University of Kansas in 1987. Dr. Ranker has been conducting research on the flora of the Hawaiian Islands since 1988. He has a good knowledge of the biodiversity of the Hawaiian Islands as well as the conservation management issues facing our islands. Additionally, Dr. Ranker is the only scientist in the State whose research focuses specifically on the biology, ecology, conservation, and evolution of ferns and lycophytes. Ferns and lycophytes are particularly important plants in mesic to wet ecosystems in the Hawaiian Islands, as well as elsewhere in the tropics, because they often comprise a large part of the biomass of these ecosystems, and thus, are critical to ecosystem function and watershed management.

Dr. Ranker has been a Professor of Botany at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa (UHM) since January 2008. He is also currently Associate Chair and Graduate Chair in the Department of Botany. Between 2005-2006, Dr. Ranker held the Garret Parmile Wilder Chair of Botany at UHM while on sabbatical leave from the University of Colorado at Boulder. He has had extensive experience with research, identifying botanical specimens (especially ferns), guiding graduate students, as well as previously serving as the Program Director for the National Science Foundation, Division of Environmental Biology, Systematics and Biodiversity Science Cluster, in Washington, DC. He is committed to a great understanding of the Hawaiian flora through his unique perspective.

The Department strongly supports the appointment of Dr. Thomas Ranker to the Natural Area Reserves System Commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this nomination.

GM 728

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Natural Area Reserves System Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, THOMAS RANKER, for a term to expire 06-30-2018.

COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

Hearing on Monday, April 18, 2016

2:50pm, State Capitol, Conference Room 224

Testimony by

Lara Reynolds

1549 Wilhelmina Rise

Honolulu, HI 96816

Speaking as a twenty-five year Hawai'i resident and a professional botanist, I am writing in support of the nomination and appointment of Dr. Thomas Ranker to the Natural Area Reserves Commission. Dr. Ranker is well qualified to join and contribute greatly to the commission based on the breadth and depth of his academic and professional experience. I trust that Dr. Ranker will carefully and objectively evaluate all facets of the issues heard by the commission and will make thoughtful decisions based on the best available science and knowledge of the valuable resources in the Natural Area Reserve System.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this nomination.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WLA Testimony](#)
Cc: robin@mauirobin.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for GM728 on Apr 18, 2016 14:50PM
Date: Friday, April 15, 2016 11:28:59 AM

GM728

Submitted on: 4/15/2016

Testimony for WLA on Apr 18, 2016 14:50PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Robin Newbold	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: As a current member of the NARS Commission I recommend confirming the nomination of Thomas Ranker to continue to serve on the Commission. He brings valuable experience and expertise to the often difficult issues brought to us for consideration. Thank you for your consideration.

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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13 April 2016

GM 728, Tom Ranker

Senator Mike Gabbard
Chair, Water, Land, and Agriculture Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 201
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Gabbard,

I include here my answers to the question you sent me regarding my nomination to serve on the Natural Area Reserves System Commission.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tom A. Ranker

(1) Why do you wish to be a member of the Natural Area Reserves System Commission?

My life and career have benefitted greatly from having the privilege of living and working in the Hawaiian Islands and for the State of Hawai'i. Although I have been engaged in teaching at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and, thus, provide a critical service to our island community, I now wish to broaden my service role beyond academia and in a way that will directly impact biological and cultural conservation and preservation. As a former recipient of NARS special-use permits for my research, I am especially interested in serving on the NARSC.

(2) How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the Natural Area Reserves System Commission?

Members of the NARSC should apply their experience, expertise, and judgment to assist in the wise management and preservation of the state's natural area reserves as clearly specified by Hawai'i Revised Statutes §195-7.

(3) Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the Natural Area Reserves System Commission, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, or knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a member of the Natural Area Reserves System Commission.

I have over 35 years of experience as an educator, a research botanist, and an administrator, including over 25 years of conducting research and fieldwork in the Hawaiian Islands. Thus, I have a good knowledge of Hawaiian ecosystems and plant life. My research has mostly focused on plant taxonomy and evolution, but I also have experience in the fields of ecology, population genetics, demography, and conservation biology/genetics. Much of my research

has focused on the biology of Hawaiian ferns, which are especially important components of our mesic and wet forests. I believe that my scientific experience and expertise will complement the combined knowledge and experiences of the other members of the NARSC.

I also believe that my administrative experience as a museum curator, natural history museum director, department chair, associate dean, and program director (the last, at the US National Science Foundation), will be of value in my role as a member of the NARSC.

(4) What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?

I primarily hope to complete my duties on the NARSC in a responsible and thoughtful manner.

(5) Name three qualities that best describe you and that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the Natural Area Reserves System Commission?

To my knowledge I am the only scientist in the State of Hawai'i who specializes in the study of ferns and lycophytes. Since fern species comprise a primary component of all of our mesic to wet forests and, thus, are critical to the functioning of many of our native ecosystems, my experience and knowledge of this important group of plants will aid the NARSC in making decisions concerning conservation and land management of our Natural Area Reserves.

Outside of Hawai'i, I have professional experience in the states of California, Colorado, Kansas, Virginia, and Washington. Because of these experiences I have first-hand knowledge of at least some aspects of species conservation and land management practices across a wide variety of habitats and ecosystems, which may assist the NARSC in viewing and developing its policies within a broad conservation context.

I have conducted botanical field research in Canada, China (Yunnan Province), Costa Rica, Cuba, Hawaiian Islands, Jamaica, La Réunion, Malaysia (Sabah, Borneo), México, Papua New Guinea, Puerto Rico, Society Islands, Taiwan, continental USA, and Vanuatu. This experience has given me a broad knowledge of biological diversity and ecosystems, especially in the tropics. As with the above, I believe such experience may allow me to assist the NARSC in viewing and developing its policies within a broad conservation context.

(6) Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the Natural Area Reserves System Commission?

This is not a single experience, but I have experience generally as a molecular taxonomist and population geneticist, i.e., one who employs molecular techniques to study organismal and species relationships and the levels and distribution of genetic variation in populations. Molecular techniques have been used increasingly over the last couple of decades to address conservation management issues that relate to such things as species identification, species delimitation (e.g., do groups of slightly dissimilar populations represent one or more species?), and the reproduction of species of plants, animals, and microbes. Resolving these kinds of issues can directly relate to identifying and managing threatened and endangered

species, many of which inhabit Natural Area Reserves in Hawai‘i. My knowledge in this area would benefit the NARSC by offering a perspective different from and complementary to most of the other commission members.

(7) Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests that could arise during your service on the Natural Area Reserves System Commission? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest?

No, I do not foresee any possible conflicts of interest.

Conflicts of interest are best dealt with by being honest about all of the facts and attempting to resolve them by changing conditions such that a conflict no longer exists or finding a way to minimize the conflict in such a way that is acceptable to all involved parties.