



**Department of Land and Natural Resources
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
State of Hawaii
Post Office Box 621
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809**

Testimony of
Rocky Kaluhiwa, Acting Chair
Aha Moku Advisory Committee

Before the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Thursday, March 29, 2018
10:50 A.M., State Capitol, Conference Room 211

**In SUPPORT of
House Bill 2613 HD1 SD1
Making an appropriation for He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve**

House Bill 2613 HD1 SD1 appropriates funds for fiscal year 2018-2019 to maintain the initial staff positions that are necessary to develop and manage the He'eia national Estuarine Research Reserve and its programs.

On behalf of the Aha Moku Advisory Committee, the Moku of Ko'olaupoko and the Ahupua'a of He'eia and Kaneohe, we **SUPPORT** this Bill.

The Aha Moku System encompasses the eight main Hawaiian Islands and supports the traditional and generational knowledge of the people who are connected to each of the 46 Moku and 606 Ahupua'a. Our purpose is to bring forth the voices – concerns and recommendations for solutions – from the communities of an ahupua'a on natural and cultural resources to the attention of government. Towards this end, we have been successful with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), the entity we are attached to. Aha Moku brings forth and shares generational knowledge of methods handed down practitioner to practitioner in ways to protect, preserve and sustain the land, ocean, watershed and every natural resource within a site-specific ahupua'a. This knowledge, often combined with modern scientific methods, further ensures that natural and cultural resources are protected and perpetuated. It also emphasizes that all who live in Hawaii are stakeholders and responsible for the health of our ecosystem.

We are pleased that the He'eia National Estuarine Reserve was designated as the twenty-ninth site in the national estuarine research reserve system. We believe this designation should be under the umbrella of the Hawaii Institute of marine biology and the University of Hawaii who can consult with and receive the input of those who have indigenous Hawaiian traditional and generational knowledge of the natural and cultural resources of He'eia. Together, they can perpetually sustain this unique and beautiful place in Hawaii as long as they have the appropriate funds and staffing for this important Bill.

We humbly ask that HB 2613 HD 1 SD 1 be passed by the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Aha Moku Advisory Committee and the Ahupua'a of He'eia and Kaneohe

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Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.B. 2613 HD1 SD1 Making an Appropriation for He'eia
National Estuarine Research Reserve
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, March 29, 2018, 10:50AM, Room 211

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which life depends. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i. We manage 43,000 acres in 14 preserves and work in 19 coastal communities to help protect the near-shore reefs and waters of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties and communities to protect Hawai'i's important watershed forests and coral reefs.

The Nature Conservancy supports H.B. 2613 HD1 SD1 which would provide funding for staffing in support of the He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve. State funding is anticipated to be matched by \$700,000 in federal funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) partners with states and territories to ensure long-term education, stewardship, and research on estuarine habitats. Atlantic, Gulf, Pacific, Caribbean and Great Lakes reserves advance knowledge and stewardship of estuaries and serve as a scientific foundation for coastal management decisions.

The ahupua'a of He'eia on the island of O'ahu is one of twelve NOAA-designated Sentinel Sites and in January 2017 was designated as the [29th National Estuarine Research Reserve](#). The He'eia NERR encompasses upland forests and grasslands, wetlands, reefs and seagrass beds, as well as Kāne'ohe Bay—the largest sheltered body of water in the Hawaiian Islands. The designation reflects the community's desire to ensure the protection and sustainable management of valued cultural, historical and natural resources. The proposed NERR will also enhance the community's capacity to use scientific information for decision-making, and increase local and national support for research, education, and restoration efforts in the region.

He'eia contains a world-class research institution (Hawai'i Institute for Marine Biology) and multiple community organizations including Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, Ko'olau Foundation, Kāko'o 'Ōiwi, Paepae o He'eia, and the He'eia State Park working together to develop and implement effective management strategies in an entire ahupua'a. Collaboration between these organizations is recognized as necessary because of the interconnected relationship each ecosystem has to another within the He'eia ahupua'a. Any effect up in the mountains will work its way into the wetlands and lo'i (traditional wetland agriculture systems), flow downstream to the loko i'a (fishponds) and eventually into the bay and onto coral reefs.

Ecologically, Kāne'ohe Bay is unique and the opportunity to highlight this special type of estuarine system is unparalleled in Hawai'i. From a research perspective, Kāne'ohe Bay has experienced a history of significant disturbances, from wastewater effluent to invasive algae. However, its variety of corals have shown to be some of the most resilient and able to recover from recent bleaching events around the entire state. This condition may provide insight into how to save other coral reefs around the state from future unfavorable ocean conditions.

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KO`OLAUPOKO HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB

March 28, 2018

To: Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair
& Members, Senate Ways & Means Committee

From: Alice P. Hewett, President
Ko`olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club

Re: H.B. 2613, HD1, SD1, Relating to the He`eia NERRS Cultural Resource Position

Aloha, Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of this Committee:

The Ko`olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club strongly supports this bill to establish the final position necessary to complete the He`eia National Estuary Research Reserve System team as designated by President Barack Obama on January 19, 2017.

As you may know, three other positions were approved last year and are currently embedded in the University of Hawaii budget and administered by the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB); this fourth, cultural resource position, had not yet been funded.

This He`eia NERRS is the only one of 29 in the nationwide system of estuary research and education systems that has a cultural component, identifying ways in which traditional Hawaiian sustainability practices can help address various environmental challenges to a healthy estuary and environment. Having a responsible traditional practitioner among the core staffing can help guide their decisions on research, education and restoration potential for the area. This position is what makes it different - not just among other NERRS, but also here within our state, where integrating Hawaiian thinking into policy and decision-making can help mitigate and even avoid problems in land and resource management.

Because this program is funded 70% with federal dollars, its impact on state resources is a positive one, both with financial and natural resources as well.

We would like to note that we have slightly changed our position from past testimonies, in that we now ask that the funding and position be attached administratively to the UH Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, which is a key partner in the program. We would appreciate if you would specify that in your legislation, should this receive favorable consideration.

We humbly urge your committee to approve this funding.

Mahalo.

The Ko`olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club was established in 1937 and is one of the largest in the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs nationwide. Ko`olaupoko HCC is a not-for-profit community organization dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the history, heritage and culture of Native Hawaiians and providing leadership and scholarships. Its membership is open to people of Hawaiian ancestry and those who are "Hawaiian at heart."

HB-2613-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2018 10:46:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/29/2018 10:50:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for Oahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2613-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2018 9:46:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/29/2018 10:50:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB 2613 HD1 SD1. The work being done in the He'eia ahupua'a by community based groups and NOAA are increasing our knowledge ahupua'a based resource management, and Hawaiian traditions.

HB-2613-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2018 7:02:48 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/29/2018 10:50:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rob Toonen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

I thank you for this opportunity to provide my personal testimony in support of HB 2613 HD1, SD1 Making an Appropriation for the He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve. I strongly support the intent of this bill.

I wish start by saying that while I am a professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, I am offering this as personal testimony and do not speak on behalf of the University.

I currently have the privilege of serving as the Acting Manager for the He'eia Reserve until permanent staff can be hired. We are currently in the process of recruiting a Reserve Manager, Research Coordinator and Education Coordinator through positions allocated during the last legislative session. However, because NOAA mandates only these three positions as a condition of the funding, the requested fourth position, the Cultural Resources Coordinator, was not funded in the last round.

As the Acting Manager, I am currently responsible for administering the Federal funding allocated to make progress on the Reserve Management Plan, which seeks to remove alien invasive species and replant native and naturalized species throughout the site. The major goal of the management plan is work with the site partners to restore the He'eia NERR to a functional ahupua'a and determine whether the restoration activities, by changing the land use and management practices, results in a more productive and resilient watershed where human and natural communities thrive.

This is an ambitious goal, and one that holds both great promise and responsibility. Clearly, the goal of restoring an ahupua'a is by its very nature a cultural effort and needs constant input from He'eia Site Partners, including, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, Ko'olaupoko Foundation, Paepae O He'eia, and KĀ• ko'o 'ĀĀiwi. I find myself constantly asking for information about history, cultural knowledge or traditional practices in my efforts to fill the role of Acting Manager. The allocation of a Cultural Coordinator is critical to achieving the long-term vision for this effort.

The NERR system provides Federal funding dependent on the number of Reserves and appropriated Federal budget each year. He'eia is the youngest and 29th site in the system, but the oldest sites have been continuously funded for over 40 years already. NOAA funding is limited to 70% of the total operating budget (NERRS regs 921.32), requiring a 30% match from the State to secure this long-term investment. Last year, He'eia received \$673,000 of Federal funds, which requires a \$289K State match. This year, Federal appropriation to the NERR System in the recently announced omnibus was increased by \$1.5M, which is a good indication of the continued bipartisan support for this program across the Nation.

The three positions allocated last session by the State provided \$240,800 in State match, but the Governor's 10% restriction results in 2 of these positions (the Research and Education Coordinators) being 0.82 FTE for a total of \$216,720 allocated State salary match, with the remainder coming from the University of Hawai'i. Federal support is capped by State matching, so securing the 4 full-time positions requested originally will ensure that He'eia is able to obtain its full share of available Federal funds from the National System each year.

In my opinion, providing this match is a good investment for the State. At the very least it will provide a 70:30 return through Federal investment to the site, but most NERRS successfully leverage State match even further through competitive grants. For example, NY, NJ & FL all reported greater than 4:1 leveraging last year. Finally, there is additional Procurement, Acquisition and Construction funds on the order of \$5M per year available only to Reserves with available match to secure some portion of it. The allocation of an additional 1.36FTE required to bring the current positions to full time and add a full-time Cultural Resources Coordinator to the staff will State secure the match needed to ensure that Federal funding continues to support the efforts of the community to restore He'eia and to document whether traditional Native Hawaiian practices realized under the ahupua'a system provides a better strategy for sustainable management than that currently implemented.

He'eia NERR is leading the country in being the first site to explicitly incorporate culture into the reserve design and management. The other sites are watching and Hawai'i can set a new standard for this National program which reaches over half a million students and educators each year. I ask that you consider the same mechanisms by which the bill last year resulted in 2.64FTE of permanent G-funded positions to increase this to the 4 full-time positions needed to fully staff the NERRS and empower the community to achieve the goals that they have been working towards for decades.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my enthusiastic support for HB2613 funding the much needed Cultural Resources Coordinator position, and I want to thank your committee for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

Sincerely,

Rob Toonen.

HB-2613-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2018 9:28:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/29/2018 10:50:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nancy Davlantes	Individual	Support	No

Comments: