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LAND  
STATE PARKS

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of  
SUZANNE D. CASE  
Chairperson

Before the House Committees on  
WATER & LAND  
and  
HIGHER EDUCATION

Wednesday, March 21, 2018  
10:50 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 2078, SENATE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO PUEO RESEARCH

Senate Bill 2078, Senate Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to support research in collaboration with the University of Hawaii (UH) on a two-year breeding and foraging ecology study of the pueo or Hawaiian short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus sandwichensis*) on O'ahu. **The Department supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

The Department sees a need for more studies on the pueo, especially on the island of O'ahu where the species is listed as endangered by the State. Since 2017, the Department, in collaboration with UH, has been studying the island wide distribution of pueo on O'ahu. The final results of this study are still pending analysis, but thus far a standardized survey protocol has been developed for pueo, a citizen science project implemented, and surveys at 35 sites over six different habitat types (wetland, grassland, agricultural fields, shrub-land, alien forest, native forest) on O'ahu have been completed. Survey data will be used to model predicted distribution and abundance across these six habitat types on O'ahu. On completion of the study, further studies on distribution, biological threats, and life history traits for this species are recommended.

This measure would provide the funding support for a comprehensive research study on pueo breeding and foraging and is expected to provide information on preferred habitat characteristics for nesting and foraging and identify threats to the species over its life-cycle. The Department notes that the current proposed measure doesn't specify the amount of funds to appropriate for

such an effort and recommends the amount of \$330,063 in the previous draft of this bill be used. This funding would support the necessary personnel and equipment for a two year study as described in the measure. The information gained from such efforts would be strongly beneficial for the species and allow for better informed management decisions directly benefitting the pueo.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



**SB2078 SD1**  
**RELATING TO PUEO RESEARCH**  
House Committee on Water and Land  
House Committee on Higher Education

March 21, 2018

10:50 a.m.

Room 325

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers the following **COMMENTS** on SB2078 SD1, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to conduct a two-year breeding and foraging ecology study of pueo on O'ahu, in collaboration with the University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Research and Human Resources (UH).

OHA appreciates this measure's recognition of the need better understand and protect the endangered pueo, an animal of great Native Hawaiian cultural significance, and believes this measure would support DLNR's kuleana contained in Hawai'i Revised Statutes §195D-5, to "conduct research . . . on endangered species and their ecosystems."

Unfortunately, O'ahu's pueo are now considered endangered by the State. While pueo populations thrived and were widespread at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, experts now believe that the pueo population has been declining for many years. Currently, little data exists to inform potential conservation strategies to stop and reverse this decline. Habitat loss, predation of eggs and young, contaminants or toxins, and human interaction are believed to threaten the pueo population. In 2017, DLNR conducted a four-month pueo habitat inventory survey on O'ahu. During the survey of thirty-five sites, only eleven pueo were observed. A more substantial body of data is therefore needed to estimate pueo populations and identify threats to their survival.

OHA believes that the study contemplated under this bill would provide DLNR and the State with critical data necessary to plan and implement conservation management strategies for pueo on O'ahu and throughout the islands, which may allow our pueo to thrive once again.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Water and Land  
And  
House Committee on Higher Education  
Wednesday, March 21, 2018 at 10:50 a.m.

By  
Nicholas Comerford  
Dean, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources  
And  
Michael Bruno  
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
Vice Chancellor for Research  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### SB 2078 SD1 – RELATING TO PUEO RESEARCH

Chairs Yamane and McKelvey, Vice Chairs Todd and Hashem, and members of the House Committee on Water and Land and Committee on Higher Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 2078 SD1.

The Hawaiian short-eared owl (Pueo) is on the endangered species list for the state of Hawai'i. This subspecies has a unique place in the Hawaiian culture, and its survival is complicated by the fact that it is a ground nesting species. This characteristic, along with diminishing habitat, cause concern for the ultimate survival of the Pueo. The ground nesting habit leaves its eggs vulnerable to predators that were not part of its natural history.

The hope is that the proposed research on the Pueo's interaction with its habitat, and identification of preferred breeding habits, will provide the necessary information to land managers that will assure the continued survival of a species which is considered to be the guardian of Hawaiian families. This research will help to better identify its autecology, potential ecological benefits, and the ecosystem services that it provides to society.

Dr. Melissa Price of CTAHR has been working with the UH West O'ahu (UHWO) group to develop the ideas behind this research. This bill represents a collaboration between the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, UHWO and CTAHR. Another benefit gained from passing this bill will be the training of one postdoctoral fellow, two graduate students, and two undergraduates in ecology and ecosystem service disciplines. This workforce will be well-suited to work in state agencies or private enterprises to further protect Hawai'i's fragile ecology.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2078 SD1.

**SB-2078-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2018 3:22:28 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/21/2018 10:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-2078-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2018 11:11:35 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/21/2018 10:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Warren Watanabe	Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-2078-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2018 10:45:21 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/21/2018 10:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
De MONT R. D. CONNER	Ho'omanapono Political Action Committee (HPAC)	Support	Yes

Comments:

We STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill. Mahalo.



## Hawaii's Thousand Friends

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March 21, 2018

### COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair

Rep. Chris Todd, Vice Chair

### COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Rep. Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair

Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair

### SB 2078 SD1 RELATING TO PUEO RESEARCH

Aloha,  
Chairs Yamane and McKelvey  
Vice Chairs Todd and Mashem  
Committee Members

Hawaii's Thousand Friends supports SB 2078 SD1 that appropriates funds to DLNR to conduct, in collaboration with the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, a two-year breeding ecology study and two-year foraging ecology study on Oahu's pueo.

Very little is known about the Oahu pueo. There is no data on population size, population trend estimates, distribution or movement estimates and little understanding of ecology, especially breeding.

While pueo are found on all the main islands and protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act only the Oahu pueo is listed by the State as *endangered*.

Pueo were wide spread at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but are thought to be declining

Unlike most owls, pueo hunt during the day mostly during twilight hours, eat small mammals, hunt in open areas and nest on the ground year round.

Due to its nesting habits the pueo is vulnerable to habitat loss at any season due to conversion of open habitats to recreation, housing and resort development. All key factors in their decline.

Information from these studies will provide data so that well-informed decisions can be made to prevent the extinction of the unique culturally significant Oahu pueo.



**SB-2078-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/20/2018 9:43:32 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/21/2018 10:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Randy Cabral	Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation	Support	Yes

Comments:

**SB-2078-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/20/2018 10:45:49 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/21/2018 10:50:00 AM

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

Comments:

To the Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair; the Honorable Chris Todd, Vice-Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Water & Land:

To the Honorable Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair; the Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Vice-Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

Good afternoon, my name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on **SB2078 SD1**, relating to Pueo; Research; Study; Appropriation; UH; and the DLNR.

The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in favor of **SB2078 SD1** and supports its passage.

**SB2078 SD1** is in alignment with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it appropriates funds for the department of land and natural resources to conduct, in collaboration with the University of Hawaii college of tropical agriculture and human resources, a two-year breeding ecology study and two-year foraging ecology study on the pueo on Oahu, effective 7/1/2050.

The DPH Platform states that "[w]e support the growth of Native Hawaiian farming, agricultural and healing practices. We value and wish to foster the preservation of our host culture." (Platform of the DPH, P. 4, Lines 213-214 (2016)).

Given that **SB2078 SD1** appropriates funds for the department of land and natural resources to conduct, in collaboration with the University of Hawaii college of tropical agriculture and human resources, a two-year breeding ecology study and two-year foraging ecology study on the pueo on Oahu, effective 7/1/2050, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Priorities Committee to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee

Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com, Text/Tel.: (808) 258-8889



**SB-2078-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2018 8:45:38 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/21/2018 10:50:00 AM

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

Comments:

**SB-2078-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2018 9:10:03 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/21/2018 10:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Nancy Davlantes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-2078-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/20/2018 4:04:39 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/21/2018 10:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I continue to support this bill for the reasons given in earlier testimony.

**SB-2078-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/20/2018 4:57:56 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/21/2018 10:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Tom Berg	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Truth about Senator Gabbard and this bill-

Gabbard supported the developments of UHWO, DHHL East, Hoopili, and Gentry- all of which properties in Ewa were teaming with Pueo-- but now, the Pueo have been extirpated by development/loss of known habitat by design at the hand of Gabbard and his ilk.

This bill delays all action to save Pueo where they are now and by passing this bill, will certainly kill off Pueo at UHWO etc--- so Gabbard and his ilk, can cash in. Graft City.

If you care about the Pueo- then read the attachment and tell the truth- do the truth- be the truth- for to support Gabbard's phony fake bill here, is to support the con artist. And you know it.

Letter to Editor exhibits pure truth:

RE: COMPROMISE FOR SENATOR MIKE GABBARD PUEO STUDY

See Letter to Editor 2/12/2018 Honolulu StarAdvertiser:

POINT: Why Risk Losing Pueo Habitat @ UHWO Forever

**Conflicting legislation to save Oahu's pueo**

Michael Lee's letter, ["House bill would save Ewa wildlife" \(Star-Advertiser, Jan. 27\)](#), gave hope that the last pueo habitat in the region would be preserved.

However, state Sen. Mike Gabbard held a hearing on Senate Bill 2078 that would, if passed into law, do three things after a two-year study: Appropriate funds to research where pueo inhabit; identify habitat on a map; and monitor and manage pueo to garner data on the species.

What is odd is that House Bill 2629, which Lee referenced, would accomplish what Gabbard seeks to achieve, without delay and without the need for any additional funds.

The Legislature received a report in October 2017 that identified pueo inhabiting the University of Hawaii-West Oahu campus. The pueo are there right now, available to study.

If saving pueo is indeed the goal, SB 2078 should adopt the language of HB 2629.

**Edlynn Taira**

*Ewa Beach*

History will judge you all in office as killers of this sacred bird- for SB2078 is a ruse. You have Pueo on State Land right now- undeveloped State Land- why not protect that? Got Gabbard's Graft? You betcha!



**LATE**

**SB-2078-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/20/2018 7:03:05 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/21/2018 10:50:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Chad Wilhite	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear chairs and members,

I would like to express my strong support for the passage of SB2078 SD1.

Thank you,

Chad