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**Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education
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**By
Chris Conger
Vice President
Hawai'i Shore and Beach Preservation Association**

SB3063 – RELATING TO AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF BEACHES ON THE NORTH SHORE OF OAHU

Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Mercado Kim and members of the committees:

The Hawai'i Shore and Beach Preservation Association (HSBPA) supports the intent of Senate Bill 3063. This legislation appropriates research funds to Hawai'i Sea Grant to conduct an economic analysis of North Shore beaches for the area of the North Shore of O'ahu that stretches from the Kawailoa to Waiale'e ahupua'a in order to estimate the economic value of North Shore beaches.

Hawai'i's beaches have become increasingly threatened by coastal erosion. According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) *National Assessment of Shoreline Change for the Hawaiian Islands*, 70% of Hawai'i's beaches are eroding and 13 miles of beach have been lost over the last century. Beach erosion affects shoreline access, recreation, cultural activities, coastal environments, and our economy. Beaches are a critical component of Hawai'i's \$15-billion tourism industry and are central to Hawai'i's unique culture and lifestyle. With sea level rise and chronic coastal erosion, the state is challenged to find effective and efficient ways to preserve and maintain our naturally occurring sand beaches. The HSBPA believes SB3063 will help support the long-term preservation and protection of Hawai'i's coastal resources.

Beaches on the North Shore of O'ahu are at increasing risk of deterioration from intensive shorefront development, chronically-retreating beaches, and sea level rise. The North Shore is host to championship surfing contests throughout the winter season, bringing millions of dollars into the local economy. It is also an invaluable public and cultural resource for residents of O'ahu and the neighbor islands.

While the beaches of the North Shore of O‘ahu are regarded as a cherished public resource, the actual economic value of North Shore beaches is currently unquantified and therefore, likely undervalued. Moreover, having quantitative economic and natural resource value estimates of North Shore beaches will assist local decision-makers regarding critical issues, such as coastal land use, shoreline management, and applications for armoring of the shoreline for private development. Other applications of natural resource valuation estimates include assessing long-range planning options, such as managed retreat. One suggestion we offer is to consider expanding the study boundaries to include the Kaena‘ Ahupua‘a.

HSBPA supports SB3063 in the effort to establish an economic justification for beach management and conservation, and to inform the selection of appropriate coastal management policies to protect and conserve the beaches of the North Shore of O‘ahu. Hawai‘i Sea Grant has the demonstrated capacity and experience to successfully carry out this research having just completed a similar economic study for Waikīkī Beach that values the beach at \$20 billion per year.

*The Hawai‘i Shore and Beach Preservation Association (HSBPA, <http://asbpa.org/hawaii/>) is an organization of private sector, academic, and government professionals, students and local community members dedicated to the preservation and restoration of Hawai‘i’s beaches and coastal environments. The HSBPA aims to bring together various members of the coastal community to foster dialogue and cooperation on beach and coastal resource conservation, management, and regulation; supporting professional development of chapter members; and providing education to students and community members on Hawai‘i’s beaches and coastal environments.

Thank you for considering our testimony on the bill.