



# OFFICE OF PLANNING STATE OF HAWAII

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Statement of  
**LEO ASUNCION**  
Planning Program Administrator, Office of Planning  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**  
Friday, April 12, 2019  
10:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

in consideration of  
**SCR 205**

**URGING THE STATE BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES TO CONSULT WITH  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO HAVE DIRECT TRADITIONAL, CULTURAL, AND  
FAMILIAL TIES TO THE DISTRICT OF PUNA TO ESTABLISH APPROPRIATE NAMES  
FOR THE FISSURE 8 VENT AND OTHER FEATURES OF THE 2018 ERUPTION OF  
KILAUEA VOLCANO.**

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Todd, and Members of the House Committee on Water, Land, and Hawaiian Affairs.

The Office of Planning (OP) supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 205, which urges the Hawai'i Board on Geographic Names (HBGN) to "consult with community members who have direct traditional, cultural, and familial ties to the district of Puna to establish appropriate names for the fissure 8 vent and other features of the 2018 eruption of Kīlauea volcano."

OP notes that a similar resolution was adopted in 2018 by the Hawai'i County Council (Res. 640-18). Councilmember Susan Lee Loy, who introduced the resolution, and Councilmember Ashley Kierkiewicz, who represents the Puna District, both attended meetings of the HBGN in recent months and have expressed their willingness to help facilitate meetings with the Puna community.

HBGN is moving forward with the naming process and has established a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) which is expected to engage in dialogue with and collect feedback from the community through one or more meetings in the Puna area. The PIG is tasked with setting a submission deadline for any new name proposals for the fissure 8 vent, review the proposed names for all features associated with the 2018 Kīlauea eruption event, and report back to the full Board with its recommendations no later than December 31, 2019.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



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

Testimony of  
Aha Moku Advisory Committee

House Committee on Water, Land and Hawaiian Affairs

Friday, April 12, 2019  
10:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 325

**In Support of SCR 205 (SSCR1800)  
Relating to Kilauea Volcano; Fissure 8; State Board on Geographic Names**

SCR 205 SSCR 1800 urges the State Board on Geographic Names to consult with community members who have direct traditional, cultural, and familial ties to the District of Puna to establish appropriate names for the fissure 8 vent and other features of the 2018 eruption of Kilauea Volcano. **Aha Moku strongly supports SCR 205 (SSCR 1800) .**

It is collectively believed within the culture of Native Hawaiians that the names for geographic places have specific and special meanings that relate only to that specific place. In Puna, this is traditionally so. And while we can appreciate the global community of amateur lava watchers, well-meaning University of Hawaii advisors, and others who have offered their suggestions of names for this Pu'u, commonly known now as Fissure 8, we ask that the correct protocol of consulting only with those who have direct traditional, Native Hawaiian cultural and familial ties, as well as those who have generational knowledge of the mo'olelo, cultural history and natural and cultural resources of what was once there, from ancient times to now; and what can be again. The generational knowledge of the Native Hawaiian elders and communities of Puna is essential to the correct physical and spiritual naming of Fissure 8. If this naming is not spiritually and culturally correct, then it will be probably satisfy those who live outside of Puna. But will be a great insult and disservice to those who have, for hundreds of years, been directly connected to Puna and been most impacted by the eruptions that resulted in Fissure 8.

It is stated in the resolution that Section 4E-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, provides that the members of the State Board on Geographic Names shall consist of the following or their representatives: The Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, the Chairperson of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission, the Director of the Office of Planning, the President of the University of Hawaii, the State Land Surveyor, and the Director of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum. These are the entities who will approve the naming of Fissure 8. Our fear is that it is not known if any of these people are from Puna or have the generational and lineal knowledge of that place. Only the people of Puna have that spiritual connection to their lands that have been devastated by lava, only to be renewed now through future growth.

We pray that the members of the State Board on Geographic Names have the sensibility, compassion and wisdom to work with the community members who have direct traditional, cultural, familial and generational ties to the District of Puna; and to turn to them to establish the appropriate names for fissure 8. As Aha Moku is attached to the Department of Land and Natural Resources, already makes recommendations to the Board of Land and Natural Resources in regards to natural and cultural resources, and already works for, and with, the traditional and generational families of Puna, we offer our assistance to the State Board on Geographic Names on connecting to the 'ohana of Puna who are the only correct ones to name this fissure as they are part of the 'ike and 'uhane of Puna.

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