

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF  
HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of  
SUZANNE D. CASE  
Chairperson**

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

**Monday, March 11, 2019  
1:15 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 558, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO KEKAHA KAI STATE PARK**

House Bill 558, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment at Kua Bay in the Kekaha Kai State Park on Hawai'i Island. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

The Department has supported proposed legislation to provide for lifeguard services since 2015 and currently has a contract with the County of Hawai'i (County) for lifeguard services at Hāpuna Beach State Recreation Area. There is currently no lifeguard protection for visitors to Kua Bay and the Department must contract lifeguard services with the County to provide this service. Due to the increasing access and use of Kua Bay by out of state visitors, the fluctuating ocean condition and reports of the need for rescue due to significant injuries – Kua Bay has been identified as the next State Park beach that warrants trained ocean safety officers on site.

The Department supports the appropriation of general funds in the amount of \$400,000 for the establishment of four full time equivalent (4.0 FRE) ocean safety officer positions in fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 and \$80,000 for equipment purchases in the fiscal year 2019-2020.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

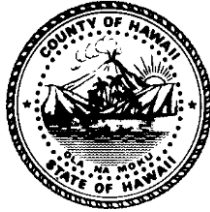
**SUZANNE D. CASE**  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**ROBERT K. MASUDA**  
FIRST DEPUTY

**M. KALEO MANUEL**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

**Harry Kim**  
Mayor



**Wil Okabe**  
Managing Director

**Barbara J. Kossow**  
Deputy Managing Director

## County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553  
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740  
(808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

March 8, 2019

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
Senator Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Dear Chair Kahele, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee members:

**Re: HB 558, HD1, RELATING TO KEKAHA KAI STATE PARK**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 558, HD1, which would fund lifeguard services at Kua Bay in Kekaha Kai State Park.

Kua Bay is one of the most beautiful locations in the islands, but its hidden hazards can prove deadly. It is now easily accessible, so for the sake of locals and visitors alike, a lifeguard at that location is definitely warranted and would be much appreciated.

Please act favorably on HB 558, HD1, including consideration of the recommendations for funding set forth in the House WLH Committee report. Please also consider putting the proposed funding in your Committee's priority list for the State budget. The need for these services has been recognized for years, but never seems to quite make the cut.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Kim  
Mayor

**VALERIE T. POINDEXTER**

*Council Member  
Chair, Committee on Parks and Recreation  
Council District 1*



Phone: (808) 961-8018  
Fax: (808) 961-8912  
Email: [valerie.poindexter@hawaiicounty.gov](mailto:valerie.poindexter@hawaiicounty.gov)

## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

*County of Hawai'i  
Hawai'i County Building  
25 Aupuni Street, Suite 1402  
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720*

March 8, 2019

Committee on Water and Land  
Senator Kaili'i Kahele, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Email: [senkkahele@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:senkkahele@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
Email: [senkeithagaran@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:senkeithagaran@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Subject: Testimony Supporting HB558 HD1, Relating to Kekaha Kai State Park  
Hearing: March 11, 2019, 1:15 p.m., Conference Room 229

Dear Chair and Vice Chair:

On behalf of myself and the constituents of Council District 1, Hāmākua, I would like to express our support of HB558 HD1, which appropriates funds for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment at Kua Bay in Kekaha Kai State Park on Hawai'i Island.

Kua Bay is located in a remote location in West Hawai'i that has now become easily accessible to an overwhelming amount of beach goers. The amount of ocean related incidents have increased, including spinal injuries and drownings.

According to the Hawai'i Health Department EMS patient care data base, there were 32 patients who required treatment at Kua Bay between 2013 and 2018. Most (94%, or 30 patients) of these patients required transport to a hospital with the majority (84%, or 27 patients) being for traumatic injuries. Per the Trauma Registry there were 10 spinal cord injuries suffered at Kua Bay over the 2009-2017 period. The nearest rescue or medical assistance to Kua Bay is approximately 20 minutes away. The absence of lifeguard services and medical equipment at Kua Bay decreases the chance of mitigating or surviving major injury or serious medical events.

I strongly support and urge the enactment of HB558 HD1.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Valerie T. Poindexter

**HB-558-HD-1**

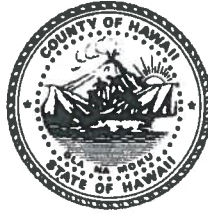
Submitted on: 3/8/2019 5:37:25 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/11/2019 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS, III	Testifying for Hawaii County Council	Support	No

Comments:

REBECCA VILLEGAS  
Council Member  
District 7, Central Kona



PHONE: (808) 323-4267  
FAX: (808) 323-4786  
EMAIL: [Rebecca.villegas@hawaiiicounty.gov](mailto:Rebecca.villegas@hawaiiicounty.gov)

## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A  
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.  
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

**LATE**

March 11, 2019

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS  
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL  
ON HB558 HD1, RELATING TO KEKAHA KAI STATE PARK  
Committee on Water and Land  
Monday, March 11, 2019  
1:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 229

Aloha Chair Kahele and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 558 HD1, relating to Kekaha Kai State Park. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Hawai'i County Council and Chair on the Committee of Public Safety.

The purpose of this measure is to save lives and prevent injury at Kehaka Kai State Park (Kua Bay) by appropriating funds for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment at Kua Bay.

Kua Bay is one of the most beautiful locations in the islands, but its hidden hazards can be deadly. With the easier accessibility to this location, for the sake of locals and visitors alike, being the primary responders for emergencies on shorelines and within nearshore waters, where the majority of ocean recreation activity occurs, lifeguards provide injury control and dispatch ocean rescue services. With Kua Bay under state jurisdiction, state funded lifeguards are a necessity for this very popular beach and is a priority need.

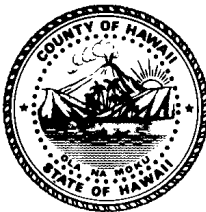
For the reasons stated above, I urge the Committee on Water and Land to support this measure as well. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Villegas".

Rebecca Villegas  
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

**Karen Eoff**  
Council Vice Chair  
Council District 8 - North Kona



Phone: (808) 323-4280  
Fax: (808) 329-4786  
Email: karen.eoff@hawaiicounty.gov

## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i  
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A  
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.  
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740



March 11, 2019

### COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Kaialii Kahele, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S. C Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

**Testimony supporting HB 558 RELATING TO KEKAHA KAI STATE PARK.**  
Appropriates funds for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment  
at Kua Bay.  
WTL – March 11, 2019 at 1:15 p.m., Conference Room 229

Dear Committee:

On behalf of myself and constituents of Council District 8, North Kona, support for the  
above referenced Bill is expressed, with brief testimony provided as follows:

Skilled lifeguards, appropriate rescue equipment and a lifeguard tower for adequate field  
of sight are essential to save lives and prevent injuries at the heavily-visited Kua Bay. West  
Hawai'i residents have strongly voiced concerns regarding the disturbing number of reported and  
unreported incidents which have occurred at Kua Bay.

Hawai'i County has continuously urged the Hawai'i State Legislature to appropriate  
funds to employ lifeguards and to purchase a lifeguard tower and rescue equipment for Kua Bay  
at Kekaha Kai State Park. Once again, we urge you to approve a measure to do so, for the sake  
of Hawai'i Island residents and visitors.

Sincerely,

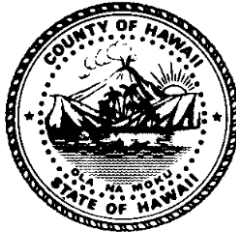
---

KAREN EOFF, Council Vice Chair  
Council District 8, North Kona

KE.wpb

Harry Kim  
Mayor

Wil Okabe  
Managing Director



Gregory Henkel, Chair  
Ralph Yawata, Vice Chair  
Robert Becker, Member  
Kyle Keamo, Member  
Donna Payesko, Member  
Marcella St. Ambrogio, Member  
Scott Susman, Member

**COUNTY OF HAWAII**  
**Fire Commission**

101 Pauahi Street, Suite 9 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720  
Phone: (808) 932-2950 • Fax: (808) 932-2949

**Hawaii County Fire Commission**  
**Testimony**

Senate Committee on Water and Land  
Hearing: March 11, 2019 @ 1:15 p.m.

To: Senate Committee on Water and Land  
From: Hawaii County Fire Commission  
Re: HB558  
Relating to appropriation for lifeguards at "Kua Bay"

---

Thank-you for the opportunity to offer comments from the Hawaii County Fire Commission in STRONG SUPPORT of the appropriations request included in House Bill 558 to appropriate funding for lifeguards and equipment at Kua Bay, Kekaha Kai State Park, North Kona District, County of Hawaii.

In recent years, our State has expended significant resources to improve the facilities at the beach park commonly called "Kua Bay" including paved roads, showers, improved comfort stations and stair access to beach. The park is now easily accessible for all to visit. As a result of these improvements, Kua Bay is now heavily visited by many locals and tourists on any given day. This increase in use, coupled with an often dangerous shore break, necessitates the need for ocean safety patrols at the beach to keep beachgoers safe. The other local beach parks that see this level of use have lifeguards and the time has come for the funding to be approved to place lifeguards at Kua Bay.

This appropriation of public resources is necessary to keep our community safe.

Thank you.

GREGORY HENKEL  
CHAIR

# Hawai'i State Association of Counties (HSAC)

Counties of Kaua'i, Maui, Hawai'i and City & County of Honolulu

25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 (808) 961-8828 www.hawaiicounties.com



March 8, 2019

To: The Honorable Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair  
Senate Committee on Water and Land

FROM: Valerie T. Poindexter  
HSAC President  


SUBJECT: HEARING OF MARCH 11, 2019; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB558 HD1,  
RELATING TO KEKAHA KAI STATE PARK

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Hawai'i State Association of Counties in full support of HB558 HD1 which appropriates funds for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment at Kua Bay in Kekaha Kai State Park on Hawai'i Island.

Kua Bay is located in a remote location in West Hawai'i that has now become easily accessible to an overwhelming amount of beach goers. The amount of ocean related incidents have increased, including spinal injuries and drownings.

According to the Hawai'i Health Department EMS patient care data base, there were 32 patients who required treatment at Kua Bay between 2013 and 2018. Most (94%, or 30 patients) of these patients required transport to a hospital with the majority (84%, or 27 patients) being for traumatic injuries. Per the Trauma Registry there were 10 spinal cord injuries suffered at Kua Bay over the 2009-2017 period. The nearest rescue or medical assistance to Kua Bay is approximately 20 minutes away. The absence of lifeguard services and medical equipment at Kua Bay decreases the chance of mitigating or surviving major injury or serious medical events.

I strongly support and urge the enactment of HB558 HD1.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



**HB-558-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/10/2019 10:35:52 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/11/2019 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Stephanie Donoho	Testifying for Kohala Coast Resort Association	Support	No

Comments:



Hawai'i Convention Center  
1801 Kalākaua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815  
**kelepona** tel 808 973 2255  
**kelepa'i** fax 808 973 2253  
**kahua pa'a** web hawaiiauthority.org

**David Y. Ige**  
Governor

**Chris Tatum**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Statement of  
**CHRIS TATUM**

Hawai'i Tourism Authority  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

**LATE**

Monday, March 11, 2019  
1:15 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room #229

In consideration of  
**HOUSE BILL NO. 558 HD1**  
**RELATING TO KEKAHA KAI STATE PARK.**

---

Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the Committee on Water and Land: the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) **supports** House Bill 558 HD1, which appropriates funds to employ lifeguards and purchase life-saving equipment for Kua Bay in Kekaha Kai State Park.

House Bill 558 HD1 would strengthen the State's community infrastructure, and ultimately, Hawai'i's brand, by making Kua Bay safer for both residents and visitors. Furthermore, HTA is actively involved in supporting State, county and community ocean safety programs, as well as programs focused on education and increasing visitor awareness of dangerous ocean conditions.

It is for these reasons that the HTA **supports** House Bill 558 HD1. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony.