



O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities

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

DATE: Monday, February 4, 2019

TIME: 1:15 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 229, State Capitol

LATE

RE: SB 1262 Relating to Increased Funding for Land Conservation

Aloha mai kakou Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

The O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities (OCCLP) of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i (DPH) hereby submits its testimony in **SUPPORT of SB 1262 relating Increased Funding for Land Conservation.**

SB 1262 provides: Disposition of [conveyance] taxes. Disposition of taxes. All taxes collected under this chapter shall be paid into the state treasury to the credit of the general fund of the State, to be used and expended for the purposes for which the general fund was created and exists by law; provided that of the taxes collected each fiscal year: (1) Ten per cent, shall be paid into the land conservation fund established pursuant to section 173A-5.

DPH believes that the conservation, preservation and restoration of Hawai`i's natural resources are connected to the health and welfare of our people; therefore, we support the conservation and protection of our natural environment, which includes reducing our carbon footprint for the benefit of our aquifers and take appropriate actions to secure our fresh water resources. *Democratic Party of Hawai`i Platform (2018), p. 17, ln. 14-16.*

For the foregoing reasons, i.e., to support the conservation and protection of our natural environment, OCCLP supports SB 1262 and urges its passage out of the Committee on Water and Land.

Mahalo nui loa
Me ka `oia`i`o

/s/ *Melodie Aduja*

Melodie Aduja

Chair, O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities
of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i

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LATE

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting SB 1262 Relating to Increased Funding for Land Conservation
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Monday, February 2, 2019, 1:15 PM, Room 229

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 40,000 acres in 13 preserves and work in over 30 coastal communities to help protect the near-shore reefs, waters and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnership with government, private parties and communities to protect forests and coral reefs for their ecological values and the many benefits they provide to people.

The Nature Conservancy supports SB 1262 that would increase the revenue into the Land Conservation Fund.

Since its inception in FY2006, the Legacy Land Conservation Program (LLCP)—with revenue from the Land Conservation Fund—has resulted in a diverse variety of positive environmental, cultural, historical, and agricultural land protection projects supported by communities, government agencies and non-profits. These projects produce food, protect drinking water, preserve Hawaiian culture, and save iconic landscapes, beaches, and shorelines for future generations. On average, only 1/3 of the cost of purchasing the land has been borne by the State, with 2/3 of the cost coming from federal, county and private sources, and often discounts from sellers.

Currently, applicants for LLCP funding participate in a transparent competitive process. Proposals are reviewed and ranked by a diverse Commission of experts from a variety of fields as required by the Legacy Land authorizing law. The Legacy Land Commission makes recommendations on funding. Senate and House leadership is consulted prior to approval by the Board of Land and Natural Resources. Following BLNR approval, funds are released by the Governor.

However, every year, there are many more worthy projects that apply for funding than there is funding available. More special places throughout Hawai'i could be conserved and protected with the Legislature's increased support of this program.

Thank you.

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SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

MĀLAMA I KA HONUA. *Cherish the Earth.*

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

February 4, 2019 1:15 PM Room 229

LATE

In **SUPPORT** of **SB 1262**: Relating to Increased Funding for Land Conservation

Aloha Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee,

On behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **supports SB 1262**, which adjusts the proportion of conveyance tax revenues deposited into the Land Conservation Fund.

This bill will increase funding for land conservation by removing the \$6.8 million cap on the 10% conveyance tax to the Legacy Land Conservation Program. In addition to removing the cap on spending, we would like to see a corresponding increase in the spending ceiling of the fund, which is set annually in the budget adopted by the legislature. We support the full 10% of the real estate conveyance tax to be appropriated for this program.

Removing the spending cap and appropriating the full 10% of the conveyance tax to the Legacy Land Program within the state budget would make more funding available to preserve important native species habitat, watersheds, agricultural lands, coastal areas, and cultural sites. It also allows partner organizations and community groups to continue to keep up with increasing real estate costs and development pressures.

Last year, the Sierra Club O'ahu Group was fortunate to partner with several organizations to help build a new hiking trail and lead 15 public access hikes in the recently conserved Ka Iwi mauka lands. This purchase of over 180 acres in East O'ahu was funded in part by the Legacy Land Conservation Program. We look forward to more funding being made available and projects completed through this program.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB 1262**.

Mahalo,

Jodi Malinoski

Jodi Malinoski, Policy Advocate