

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**

**Friday, February 1, 2019
1:15 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 654
RELATING TO KEKAHA KAI STATE PARK**

Senate Bill 654 proposes to appropriate funds for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment at Manini'ōwali beach at Kua bay in the Kekaha Kai state park on the island of Hawaii. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) support 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 the 2015 and currently has a contract with the County of Hawaii (County) for lifeguard services at Hapuna Beach State Recreation Area. There is currently no lifeguard protection for visitors to Kua Bay and the Department would have to contract lifeguard services with the County. After Hapuna Beach, Kua Bay would be the next location to provide for lifeguard services as it has the most reported spinal cord injuries.

The Department supports the appropriation of general funds to contract lifeguard services at Kua Bay.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

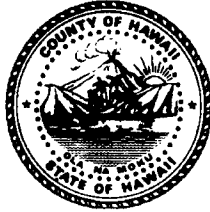
SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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

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January 30, 2019

Senator Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair
Committee on Water and Land
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Kahele and Committee Members:

Re: SB 654 Relating to Kekaha Kai State Park
Hearing Date: February 1 2019 – 1:15 PM; Senate Conference Room 229

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 654, which would fund lifeguard services at Kua Bay in Kekaha Kai State Park.

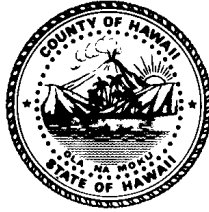
Kua Bay is one of the most beautiful locations in the islands, but its hidden hazards can prove deadly. It is now easily accessible, so for the sake of locals and visitors alike, a lifeguard at that location is definitely warranted and would be much appreciated.

Please act favorably on SB 654.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Kim
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

Karen Eoff
Council Vice Chair
Council District 8 - North Kona



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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

January 29, 2019

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Testimony supporting SB 654 RELATING TO KEKAHA KAI STATE PARK.
Appropriates funds for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment
at Kua Bay – WTL - February 1, 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, and West
Hawai'i residents have voiced strong 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

SB-654

Submitted on: 1/31/2019 11:13:35 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/1/2019 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

SB-654

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 11:47:37 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/1/2019 1:15:00 PM

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

Comments:



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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

Friday, February 1, 2019
1:15 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room #229



In consideration of
SENATE BILL NO 654
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** Senate Bill 654 which appropriates funds to purchase equipment to be used by state ocean safety officers at Kua Bay in Kekaha Kai State Park.

Senate Bill 654 would strengthen the State's community infrastructure, and ultimately, Hawaii'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** Senate Bill 654. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony.



**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

Before the Senate Committee on Water and Land

Friday, February 1, 2019
1:15 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

LATE

In **SUPPORT** of Senate Bill 654
Relating to Kekaha Kai State Park

Senate Bill 654 makes an appropriation for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment at Kua Bay. **The Aha Moku Advisory Committee (AMAC) supports this measure.**

Under the Aha Moku Process, a traditional land and ocean management system restored from the translation of oral chants of the 9th century, the Kona Moku (District) on Moku O Keawe (the Island of Hawaii) has for centuries retained the traditional practices of *lawaiia*, ocean and marine fishing methods that are unique to the Kona Moku. These practices have been kept alive from ancient times to current times by the empirical knowledge of the marine resources of Kona that have been handed down generation to generation by expert Native Hawaiian fishermen of Kona. In this last century, the *lawaiia* of the ahupua'a of Kona, particularly the Ahupua'a of O'oma, Kalaoa, and Kau continue to use Mahaiula, the beach area where Kua Bay is located for traditional and cultural practices.

Since the Kekaha Kai State Park (Kua Bay) was publicly opened to all in 1995, Native Hawaiian *lawaiia* (fishermen), and other practitioners now share these natural and cultural assets with others. The Kekaha Kai State Park is comprised of Manini'owali Bay (Kua Bay), Makalawena beach at Pu'u Ali'I Bay, and Mahai'ula Bay. Along this stretch of coast, these beaches and bays are well-known for their pristine waters and white sand beaches. They are frequently used by the honu (turtle) who congregate along this coast.

However, Native Hawaiian communities who have traditionally gathered and continued their ocean practices over the decades know, there are definite seasons, changes of currents and wave sizes. In their hospitable Hawaiian culture, local communities who share these beaches with malihini, visitors and tourists often warn people about the currents that are unseen but can be deadly. Locals have often saved the unwary tourist from harm, and usually at their own risk. Resorts that have come up along the Kohala Coast contribute to the popularity of Kekaha Kai State Park, and to possible injury to the unwary.

Since the restoration of the Aha Moku Process by the Legislature in 2012, via Act 288, §171.4-5, the AMAC has successfully strived to bring the voices of the communities and 'ohana of ahupua'a districts forward to work with Hawai'i government in addressing and sustaining the natural and cultural resources of our Pae'Aina. We are attached to DLNR, and through this venue, our people have been able to collaborate with government to address critical issues that are important to the people. A critical issue for the people of Kona is ensuring that the safety of those who come to enjoy some of the most beautiful bays and stretches of coastline in Hawaii can do so safely, especially in a Hawaii public State Park. Adopting this Bill not only provides critically needed lifeguards, equipment and infrastructure that will save lives and reduce injuries, it will also protect and relieve the locals from harm as they currently continue to rescue the unwary when needed.

On behalf of the Moku of Kona, Moku O Keawe, we humbly ask that Senate Bill 654 be passed by the Senate Committee on Water and Land.

Respectfully yours,

Rocky Kaluhiwa, Acting Chair
Aha Moku Advisory Committee

For the Moku o Kona, Moku O Keawe Phone: 808-286-7955 Email: rockykaluhiwa1122@gmail.com



January 31, 2019

Senator Kaiali'i Kahele,
Chair, Water and Land Committee
Hawaii State Capitol Room 213
Honolulu, HI 96813

LATE

Aloha Chair Kahele:

As the Co-Chairperson of the Hawaii State Drowning and Aquatics Injury Prevention Advisory Committee (DAIPAC) and a recently retired Battalion Chief of the Hawaii Fire Department, I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the DAIPAC's full support of SB 654 that appropriates funds for the employment of lifeguards, and for life-saving equipment at Kua Bay (Kekaha Kai State Park).

Kua Bay is located in a remote location in West Hawaii and was mainly inaccessible in the past. However, about 10 years ago, there have been many improvements to this beautiful beach that make it now easily accessible to many locals and visitors alike. With the increased number of beach patrons, the amount of ocean related incidents including spinal injuries and drowning has increased.

According to the Hawaii 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) 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.

Our Advisory Committee, whose mission is to prevent drownings and to minimize water related injuries, is in full support of this bill. Lifeguard services are one of the few evidence-based practices that we plays a protective role in drowning/ injury prevention.

Please support this bill to decrease in injury, suffering and death at Kua Bay.

Sincerely,
Gerald Kosaki Co-Chair, Drowning and Aquatics Injury Prevention Advisory Committee

- Hawaiian Lifeguard Association
- Kauai Lifeguard Association
- Maui Lifeguard Association
- City and County of Honolulu Parks and Recreation
- City and County of Honolulu Ocean Safety Division
- County of Kauai Fire Department Ocean Safety Bureau
- County of Maui Fire Department Ocean Safety Division
- County of Hawaii Fire Department Ocean Safety Division
- County of Maui Parks and Recreation
- County of Kauai Parks and Recreation
- County of Hawaii Parks and Recreation
- Hawaii Trauma Program
- Hawaii Tourism Authority
- Kama'aina Kids
- Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources
- US Coast Guard Sector Honolulu
- Hawaii Military Safety Division
- University of Hawaii
- Hawaii Department of Health



The Hawaii Drowning and Aquatic injury Prevention Advisory Committee is coordinated by the Hawaii Department of Health Emergency Medical Services and Injury prevention System Branch and was established reduce the incidence of drowning and water related spinal cord injuries in Hawaii through networking, education, advocacy, research and resource development.

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.hawaiiicounties.com



February 1, 2019

LATE

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

FROM: Valerie T. Poindexter
HSAC President

SUBJECT: HEARING OF FEBRUARY 1, 2019; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB654, RELATING
TO KEKAHA KAI STATE PARK

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Hawai'i State Association of Counties Legislative Package. Therefore, I submit this testimony on HSAC's behalf.

This bill appropriates funds for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment at Kua Bay.

This measure is supported via HSAC resolution in the 2019 Hawai'i State Association of Counties Legislative Package.

I strongly support and urge the enactment of SB654. Mahalo for your time and consideration.



January 29, 2019

Senator Kaiali`i Kahele
Chair, Water and Land Committee
Hawaii State Capitol, room 213
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Chair Kahele,

I am the Co-Chairperson of the state Drowning and Aquatics Injury Prevention Advisory Committee and a recently retired Battalion Chief of the Hawaii Fire Department, and I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 654 that appropriates funds for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment at Kua Bay (Kekaha Kai State Park). As the past Battalion Chief of Special Operations, part of my duties was to oversee the Ocean Safety division on the island of Hawaii. I am also a board member of the Hawaiian Lifeguard Association.

Kua Bay is located in a remote location in west Hawaii. Until recently, Kua Bay was not routinely visited by beach patrons due to the unimproved beach access. However, in the recent years, there have been many improvements to this beautiful beach that is now easily accessible by many locals and visitors alike. With the increased number of beach patrons, the amount of ocean related incidents including spinal injuries and drowning has increased. Kua Bay is now one of the top ten locations in the state where spinal injuries occur. The nearest rescue or medical assistance to Kua Bay is approximately 15 to 20 minutes away that would seem like an eternity for someone suffering from a serious condition.

With the absence of lifeguard services or lifesaving equipment at Kua Bay, the chances of someone surviving who sustains a major injury or medical condition is very low. I have gotten many calls, including some from our own lifeguards who informed me that they performed many rescues at Kua Bay on their days off due to the absence of lifeguards there. I have also received a call from a victim who was rescued by a bystander after being caught in the rip current. He stated that he would have drowned if he didn't get help, and questioned why we do not have lifeguards there.

Our lifeguards are in full support of this bill and have testified at our council meetings in the past to plead their case. I understand that there are many budgetary constraints moving forward, however, we cannot put a price on a life. In my previous position, I can recount too many times having to be the bearer of bad news to local families who visit our beautiful beaches or to visitors who come to experience paradise that ultimately ends in tragedy.

Sincerely,

Gerald Kosaki
Co-Chair, Drowning and Aquatics Injury Prevention Advisory Committee

SB-654

Submitted on: 2/1/2019 6:21:49 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/1/2019 1:15:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Charlene Dierking	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Lots of tourists go there. A lifeguard is needed.

VALERIE T. POINDEXTER
Council Member
Chair, Committee on Parks and Recreation
Council District 1



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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

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

LATE

February 1, 2019

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

Email: senkkahele@capitol.hawaii.gov
Email: senkeithagaran@capitol.hawaii.gov

Subject: Testimony Supporting SB654, Relating to Kekaha Kai State Park

Hearing: February 1, 2019, 1:15 p.m., Conference Room 229

Dear Chair Kahele and Vice Chair Keith-Agaran:

On behalf of myself and the constituents of Council District 1, Hāmākua, County of Hawai'i, I would like to express our support of SB654, and submit a brief testimony as follows:

This bill appropriates funds for the employment of lifeguards and for life-saving equipment at Kua Bay.

I strongly support and urge the enactment of SB654. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Valerie T. Poindexter