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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Wednesday, February 24, 2021
2:00 PM

State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 325

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1028
RELATING TO THE KOKE'E STATE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL

House Bill 1028 proposes to repeal Section 171-8.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, establishing the Kōke'e State Park Advisory Council. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this Administration measure and offers the following comments.**

As response to the current COVID economic crisis, the State has implemented the Fiscal Biennium 2021-2023 Program Review to identify ways to: (1) Reduce expenditures; (2) Identify programs, functions, and/or activities for possible elimination that, although well-intentioned, are of marginal benefit, low performing, or of lesser priority; and (3) Identify cost-saving opportunities in core and primary programs and services through tightening program eligibility, reducing program benefits, improving efficiency, or cost shifting.

The Department acknowledges the contributions of the Kōke'e State Park Advisory Council during the long planning process which led to the completion of the Kōke'e/Waimea Canyon Final Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement in 2015. The Department further realizes that implementation of this plan, which can take years if not decades, requires consultation and community collaboration to have a successful outcome. However, for a variety of reasons, the Kōke'e Advisory Council has neither been populated with necessary members, nor has it met in over five years.

The role of the Kōke'e Advisory Council includes: (1) review and assist the State in revising and updating the Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks Master Plan; (2) advise and assist in the management of the Kōke'e recreation residence leases; (3) enhance community education and cultural awareness of Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks; (4) participate in the preservation

and protection of the area's natural and cultural resources; and 5) advise and assist in the implementation of the Master Plan recommendations.

Public and community input is critical to successful implementation of approved Master Plans. A successful model that is pertinent at this point in time is the fruitful collaboration during the planning and implementation of the Hā'ena State Park Master Plan, which utilized an ad hoc Community Advisory Committee throughout the process. This type of advisory group is far less rigid than a legislated body subject to Governor's appointments, confirmation hearings, and sunshine laws. This model fits into the new "adaptive management" paradigm that has gained traction to allow for government actions to be more nimble. The Department believes a similar community organization(s) can fill the role of the Kōke'e State Park Advisory Council. State Parks has already begun to collaborate with the Kōke'e Leaseholders Association (KLA) on actions pertaining to the Kōke'e leased recreational residences. KLA has a 30-year organizational history of advocacy within the parks. Other organizations, including Hui o Laka, provide additional historically grounded memberships who may contribute members to a newly formed community advisory group.

The Department looks forward to continuing to consult and collaborate with the community on park planning and management with a new entity should the Kōke'e State Park Advisory Committee be repealed by this act.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.