



**Testimony in Support of H.B. 1176, Relating to a Jobs Corps Program**

Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Submitted by Kupu CEO John Leong, hearing date March 15, 2021

Aloha e Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is John Leong, and I am the Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Kupu, a statewide youth-focused conservation organization. On behalf of Kupu, I am pleased to testify in **strong support of H.B. 1176, Relating to a Jobs Corps Program, with a suggested amendment**. As written, this measure would establish a jobs corps program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) focused on providing job opportunities and diversifying our economy. Having administered a CARES Act-funded program that is highly similar to this proposal, Kupu agrees with the value and need of establishing such a program on a longer-term basis. Additionally, we agree with the numerous organizations and individuals who testified in previous hearings that this program would be best administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) rather than DLIR.

Kupu was established in 2007, in the early stages of the Great Recession. Today we are a statewide organization, developing youth and young adults through hands-on service training in conservation and natural resource management professions. Since 2007 we have trained close to 5,000 youth in conservation, sustainability, and environmental education. Young adults served by Kupu have provided more than 3 million service hours during this time, which included planting over 1 million native plants and removing over 100,000 acres of invasive species. This has created a cumulative \$155+ million in impact for Hawai‘i with a 1:3 cost to benefit ratio. We believe more investment in the green economy - as this bill provides - would enable similar economic benefits to our state, create jobs in related fields, and help diversify our economy.

In the early stages of the pandemic, Kupu saw the economic devastation happening in Hawai‘i and wondered what more we could do to help. We created a new program -- in concept -- that would help unemployed and underemployed people of all ages work in the green economy during the pandemic. This program, called the Kupu ‘Āina Corps, received funding and partnership from DBEDT thanks to the foresight of the legislature and the support of Governor Ige, as provided by Act 9 (SLH 2020). With this program Kupu helped over 350 displaced workers and recent graduates connect with work, training, and the dignity of helping themselves and their communities. We are humbled that our program was mentioned in the background portion of this legislation as an example of what a permanent fund of this nature could achieve.

The ecological, economic, and human benefits of the Kupu 'Āina Corps were clear. Over 90 percent of our participants completed the program, gaining its full benefits and helping 150 different host sites across the state. Based on a post-program evaluation survey completed by participants, one in three remained employed or were moving on to other employment at the end of the program. Logging over 89,000 work hours, these participants produced an economic benefit estimated at \$6.55 million, based on a formula developed by Columbia University. (This was more than twice the cost of the program.) Additionally, these participants collectively improved over 21,700 acres of land across our state. Community-based conservation corps around the nation have inquired about the program, which has also received national media coverage.

While the funding and authorization for the Kupu 'Āina Corps has ended, the need for this kind of program has not. We believe that future partnerships, like what is possible through this bill, can continue to provide urgent relief for underemployed kama'āina and struggling green entrepreneurs in the immediate term, and gradually help the long term pivot towards the kind of diversified economy that Hawai'i needs. For these reasons, we strongly support H.B. 1176 and urge the committee to pass this bill.

Additionally, we join those individuals and organizations who have suggested that DLNR is best suited to administer this program. While the purposes of this bill - especially economic and workforce diversification - are aligned with DLIR's mission, our view is that subject matter expertise, experience administering the most similar program, and overall capacity to hit the ground running are critical to this bill's success. In all of these respects, DLNR is the superior program. First, DLNR's subject matter expertise in the area of green jobs, especially natural resource management, is greater. Secondly, DLNR already administers the Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps, as authorized by Chapter 193 of Hawai'i Revised Statutes, giving them substantial experience administering a similar program. In fact, the Committee could place this program within HRS 193-32 with a new section as follows:

**[\$193-32] Administration**

**(4) Designate the department of land and natural resources to administer or enter into one or more agreements for the administration of a Green Jobs Youth Corps to provide temporary work and training opportunities in one or more of the following fields: natural resource management, agriculture, or other sustainability professions. These opportunities shall prioritize programming for young adults (30-years-of-age or younger) and economic diversification; provided that the department shall partner with an organization that has experience providing similar programming statewide in Hawaii.**

While Kupu supports this bill with or without the suggested amendments, we believe that placing the program within DLNR (via the suggested language or other language deemed appropriate by the Committee) will best position this program. Additionally, the prioritization of young adults (30-years-of-age or younger) aligns with the overall purpose of Chapter 193 and places the attention of a segment of the community that historically has a much higher unemployment rate than the general population. However, prioritization would not require the exclusion of other populations, so this green job corps could still also directly benefit older adults. Lastly, including language on economic diversification as a goal of this program provides a clear direction of this program's purpose, as compared to the programming already authorized by Chapter 193.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in strong support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

*John Leong*

John Leong, CEO  
Kupu

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 2:48:13 PM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Emma Yuen	Testifying for DLNR	Support	No

Comments:

I am available for questions. Please allow me Zoom access. Thank you.

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 2:47:08 PM

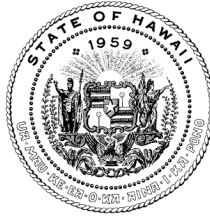
Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Robert K. Masuda	Testifying for DLNR	Support	No

Comments:

I am available for questions. Please allow me Zoom access. Thank you.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF  
HAWAII



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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  
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COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT  
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

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  
LABOR, CULTURE, AND THE ARTS

Monday, March 15, 2021  
3:00 PM

State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 225

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1176, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO A JOB CORPS PROGRAM

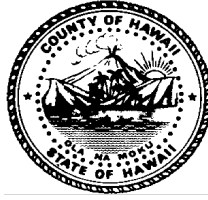
House Bill 1176, House Draft 1 establishes a job corps program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to help address unemployment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, support economic diversification, and focus on resiliency and green sector jobs and appropriates funding. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill and offers comments.**

The State of Hawaii's commitment to uphold the Paris Climate Accord and progressive move towards zero emissions clean economy by 2045 requires that we actively invest in the community and emerging economic sectors and provide residents with the education and training opportunities they need to succeed. A job corps program designed specifically to address the State's climate change goals would be beneficial in helping the growing green sector scale up efforts to address climate change, and provide diversified training opportunities to a displaced workforce, supporting a resilient local economy.

The Department has been long-time partners with AmeriCorps and Kupu through their mentorship programs which have been hugely successful in getting the youth of Hawaii not only into conservation jobs but into the workforce at large. The Kupu Aina Corps program, funded by the CARES Act, demonstrated how eager the local workforce is to get back to work, and provided new training opportunities for many to enter into new and growing fields of work. Because of this partnership and the benefits to date, and the potential demonstrated by last century's Civilian Conservation Corps program, the Department would find this to be a natural fit.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

County of Hawai'i  
Council District 4 -  
Lower Puna



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## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

### OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER ASHLEY L. KIERKIEWICZ

Chair: Committee on Planning, and Housing Agency  
Vice-Chair: Committee on Governmental Operations, Relations & Economic Development, and Health & Social Services  
25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

March 14, 2021

#### **Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts**

Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice-Chair

#### **RE: Support for HB 1176 relating to a jobs corps program**

Aloha, Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Ihara, and Esteemed Committee Members:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support for HB 1176, relating to a jobs corps program.

The Hawai'i County Council recently adopted Resolution 35-21, which calls creation of a resilient jobs corps program that puts people back to work and fosters economic development and diversification. I put the resolution forward to foster greater collaboration across sectors, harnessing their energy and contributions to develop a trigger-ready workforce development plan that springboards off successful programs such as KUPU 'Aina Corps and Aloha Connects Innovation. Hawai'i County is working to activate a small-scale program; I hope our data and research can help inform design and implementation of the jobs corps concept. And with your support, we can scale up to help residents eager to upskill and retool for an ever changing economy.

I kindly ask that you consider a friendly amendment to this bill regarding administering agencies – change or add DLNR as well as county economic development boards; these entities are best positioned to assist in administration of the program.

Thank you for recognizing the importance of building up our local talent and proactively seeking ways to invest in a more regenerative, resilient and innovation-based local economy.

Mahalo nui loa,

Ashley Lehualani Kierkiewicz  
Hawai'i County Council, District 4

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

JOSH GREEN  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



ANNE E. PERREIRA-EUSTAQUIO  
DIRECTOR

JOANN A. VIDINHAR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

[www.labor.hawaii.gov](http://www.labor.hawaii.gov)  
Phone: (808) 586-8844 / Fax: (808) 586-9099  
Email: [dlir.director@hawaii.gov](mailto:dlir.director@hawaii.gov)

March 15, 2021

To: The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair,  
The Honorable Les Ihara Jr., Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Date: Monday, March 15, 2021  
Time: 3:00 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

From: Anne E. Perreira-Eustaquio, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: H.B. No. 1176 HD1 RELATING TO A JOB CORPS PROGRAM**

**I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

HB1176 HD1 proposes to establish a job corps program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) similar to programs administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), to help address the unemployment impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and support economic diversification.

DLIR appreciates the intent provided that it does not conflict with the priorities identified in the Governor's Supplemental Budget request, and has comments on the measure.

**II. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL**

DLIR recognizes the importance of assisting and retraining the state's unemployed residents and diversifying the state's economy. DLIR notes that the intent of the measure involves establishing an existing federal program at the State level. Currently, the Hawaii Job Corps Center in Waimanalo helps to administer the education and career technical training program authorized by Title I-C of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 through the DOL.

If the legislation is passed and funded by the Legislature, DLIR will work with Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), the



Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), the Hawaii JOB Corps Center and other educational partners to build upon any existing programs similar to those proposed in this measure and establish a curriculum and training program.

The DLIR believes that there are a number of variables, including the number of anticipated participants, number of educational entities and program costs, the award amount(s), and application time frame, that would cause difficulty in estimating the appropriation required to fund the State's establishment and operational costs for this measure.



Testimony Before The  
Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB 1176 HD 1**  
Monday, March 15, 2021, 3:00PM, Room 225

We are Kevin Chang and Miwa Tamanaha Co-Director of Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (or KUA). KUA works to empower grassroots rural and Native Hawaiian mālama 'āina groups -fishers, farmers, families- to celebrate their places and pass on their traditions to better Hawai'i and achieve 'āina momona— an abundant, productive ecological system that supports community well-being.

KUA employs a community-driven approach that currently supports a network of more than 36 mālama 'āina community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together), 40 fishpond projects and practitioners called the Hui Mālama Loko l'a, and a growing hui of Limu practitioners all from across our state.

**KUA generally supports HB 1176 HD 1.** This bill establishes a state job corps program within the department of labor and industrial relations to help address the unemployment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support economic diversification. Appropriates funds KUA for this purpose

A primary function of KUA includes development of an 'auwai, a stream of resources, tools, bridges, relationships, and networks that help to cultivate and take our communities' work to greater levels of collective impact. A core catalyst for the flow in this 'auwai includes increasing the percentage of our economy which helps to manage and better the condition of the natural resources systems that sustain us. Indeed, the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization, with input from KUA and a number of partners (DLNR, Kupu, TNC, KS,OHA etc.) now tracks natural resource workforce development as a key part of a "Green Economy."

We are also excited for what this opportunity could mean for increased environmental co-management, co-governance and uplifting an ethic of mālama 'āina. Our current state institutions lack in resources but also in institutional ethos and policies could better bolster citizen stewardship of our home. Key new generation staff members -such as exist within the Division of Aquatic Resources community-based subsistence fishing area and DOCARE Makai Watch programs- that do more work in partnership with communities are the future of environmental stewardship.

A state job corps that can build a conservation workforce for Hawai'i is a necessary pathway toward uplifting the environment which sustains and undergirds the "economy" for our state. It also further places our island community like others in the Pacific as a leader for environmental leadership and adaptation.

Please pass this bill out of your committee and mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Aloha 'Āina Momona.

March 14, 2021



## **Testimony in Support of H.B. 1176 Relating to a Jobs Corps Program**

To: House Committee on Finance

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Committee Members,

Re-use Hawai'i is a non-profit organization working to create a long-term solution to Hawaii's waste management challenges by keeping building materials out of the landfill. The materials we recover are provided to the community as an affordable and locally produced resource.

HB1176 relating to a Jobs Corps Program would be tremendously helpful for Hawai'i as we work to become more sustainable, self-reliant and resilient. Re-use Hawai'i was a host site for ten participants of the Kupu 'Āina Corps program in late 2020. We employed and trained individuals whose jobs were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Training included specific skills in deconstruction, lumber processing, customer service, and administration. We also held workshops on woodworking, welding and safety.

HB1176 and the creation of a Job Corp Program will allow Re-use Hawai'i and other green job providers to expand our impact, reduce unemployment and contribute to a regenerative economy.

We strongly support HB1176 and Re-use Hawai'i is eager to participate toward a brighter future for Hawai'i's workforce, industries and families.

Mahalo nui loa,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Quinn Vittum".

Quinn Vittum  
Executive Director  
Re-use Hawai'i

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 10:21:22 AM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Amedeo Markoff	Testifying for Mainstreet Pahoia Association	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

The Mainstreet-Pahoia Association is a 501 c 6 non profit whose mission it is to promote the economic vitality of Pahoia, Puna, and the Big Island. We have approx. 40 businesses and numerous individual members and we are the longest running organization of this kind on the east side of the Big Island.

**We strongly support the creation of a job corps program to address unemployment and support economic diversification.**

To that end we ask that you **please pass HB 1176**

Thank you, Amedeo Markoff president Mainstreet Pahoia Assoc.



## Young Democrats of Hawai'i

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**President**

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**Vice-President**

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Saumalu Mataafa  
**Young Democrats of  
America National  
Committeeman**

Radiant Cordero  
**Young Democrats of  
America National  
Committeewoman**

Scott Grimmer  
**Communications and  
Digital Director**

Cameron Deptula  
**Legislative Liaison**

Kaleo Chang  
**Policy and Research  
Director**

**March 13, 2021**

### **Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts**

Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara Jr., Vice-Chair

### **Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee,**

The Young Democrats of Hawai'i (YDHI) **supports HB1176 HD 1**, which establishes a state job corps program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to help address the unemployment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support economic diversification.

YDHI is a caucus under the Democratic Party of Hawai'i. Our mission is to increase the political strength of our members by providing opportunities for civic engagement, political advocacy, and participation in the Democratic Party of Hawai'i.

In 2020, our membership established our top three legislative priorities to advocate for affordable housing, healthcare, and the economy.

We support HB1176 HD 1 because it directly addresses our membership's desire for a healthy economy during this pandemic in the following ways:

- It provides a pathway for our generation to obtain skills that prepare them for high-paying jobs right here at home.
- It transitions our State away from relying on tourism by attracting new industries in local agriculture, conservation, climate adaptation, renewable energy, cesspool conversion, and technology.
- It addresses another critical issue for our generation, climate change. By attracting these new industries in sustainability, we can bring green jobs that can also help our State reach its 100% carbon-neutrality goal by 2045.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill, and we urge you to pass HB1176 HD 1 to create the vibrant economy our membership desires and deserves.

Sincerely,  
The Young Democrats of Hawai'i

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2021 11:10:50 AM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Diane Leimomi Riley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture, and the Arts,

My name is Leimomi Riley, and I am a Hawaiian Mother, Tutu, musician, harpist, writer, and resident of the Big Island of Hawaii. I thank you for this opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 1176.

I was born in Hilo in 1956, and I have seen many changes through the years. Plantations closed and resorts opened. Tourism became a major provider of employment to the people of Hawaii. I raised my children on the Big Island of Hawaii, and I worked at many jobs as a single mother in order to provide for my family, sometimes working at 4 different part time jobs at a time, and I am well aware that it is a struggle for many families to provide for their households in Hawaii.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented further complications in so many ways. We need to support green jobs and programs like KUPU to help address unemployment impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, and to support businesses which are edifying to the natural resources of Hawaii and which are not dependent upon tourism.

I appreciate your time and consideration regarding this matter. Thank you for hearing HB 1176. Please pass this Bill.

Sincerely, Leimomi Riley

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2021 10:39:47 AM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Douglas Callison	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, & Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture, & the Arts,

My name is Douglas Callison, & I am testifying in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 1176. Please pass this Bill.

I am a construction worker by trade, specializing in Plastering. I was born & raised in California, but I have lived on the Big Island of Hawaii since 1990. Over these past 30 years I worked on many projects, homes & resorts. The recessions of 1993 & 2008 closed down many projects, & there was a huge decline in construction employment. In March 2020, due to Covid-19, construction declined again. When tourism declines, construction declines. In my opinion, it would be wise to create industries in Hawaii which are NOT dependent upon construction or tourism.

Thanks to Kupu 'Aina Corps, I was able to work at the Hakalau Sanctuary under the supervision of Susan Cordell PhD (Director & Research Ecologist, & Director of the Forest Service Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, Pacific Southwest Research Station) & Dr. Patrick Hart (Professor of the Department of Biology with the University of Hawaii in Hilo) in the program for Conservative Leadership (CLDP) with Kupu 'Aina Corps (KAC).

Before the opportunity with KUPU 'AINA CORPS, I had bills to pay but no one was hiring. KUPU gave me a chance to work hard in return for a paycheck. This opportunity provided me with income, a sense of purpose, & hope for the future. I am very pleased with the renovative & restorative work that I was able to do for them. My supervisors are wonderful people who worked closely with me, & they were very supportive & appreciative of my work. I learned alot about Conservation from them in this program, & I feel that we need to create businesses which protect the land of Hawai'i.

I feel strongly that green jobs & programs like KUPU are very valuable, especially in a time like this when we are experiencing such a huge decline in employment of all kinds because of the Covid-19 pandemic, & all it entails. Please watch Kupu's video, & take to heart the many genuine testimonials of my KUPU co-workers. Please lend an ear to the voices of the people. Thank you for this opportunity to be heard. Thank you for hearing HB 1176. Please pass this Bill.

Sincerely, Douglas Callison



**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2021 11:25:46 AM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dr. Jana Bogs	Testifying for Beyond Organic Consulting, Inc.	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, This bill is important to provide long term government funding for farmers and other mālama 'āina organizations to employ workers and engage in land management for food production. The food security and health of our people depend on getting people back to the land with the meaningful work of growing food in sustainable ways.

Mahalo

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 7:55:38 AM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Walter Ritte	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in strong support of hb 1176. We have an obligation to support job creation that advances our environment for the sake of our future generations and their survival in this Pacific continent.

Walter Ritte

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 8:16:56 AM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Susan Osborne	Testifying for Kua O Ka La NCPCS	Support	No

Comments:

Mahalo for supporting this important bill which will provide our Lahui with upskill and/or retool for our changing economic landscape.

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 9:26:43 AM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Noel Morin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Ihara, and members of the Labor, Culture, and Arts Committee,

**I am in strong support of HB1176 HD1** and urge support of this timely and meaningful bill. As a member of several sustainability groups on Hawaii Island, I know and appreciate the benefits that a Job Corps Program can bring, e.g., economic recovery, environmental revitalization, and enablement of social equity.

While we see the end of the COVID-19 tunnel, we have the chance to mitigate the challenges and consequences of the pandemic, the impact of which will be with us long after it ends. HB1176 HD1 proposes changes that will enable a more sustainable economy and encourage economic diversification while creating meaningful jobs for our people.

Thank you for supporting HB1176 HD1.

Noel Morin  
Board Member  
**Think B.I.G.**  
[thinkbighawaii.org](http://thinkbighawaii.org)



Organic Weed Control/Restoration/Edible Landscapes

March 14, 2021

**Testimony in Support of H.B.1176, Relating to a Jobs Corps Program**

Aloha, Chair Quinlan, Vice-Chair Holt, and Esteemed Members of the EDC:

My name is Robin Leimomi Proctor, Founder and Manager of Weedsteam Hawai'i, a Native Hawaiian owned company that provides Organic weed control, land restoration and edible landscapes. We are an example of a "green job" and a business that is part of the restoration economy.

I write in strong **support** for HB 1176, relating to establishing and allocating funds for a jobs corps program.

We participated as a Host Company, working with Kupu 'Āina Corps and Aloha Connects Innovation programs. This funding support was invaluable for us to expand our work during the Covid Pandemic by hiring trainees that were unemployed. This was a WIN/WIN. We got the helpers we needed and the trainees got paychecks and training on jobs they may wish to continue with, in a field that is environmentally friendly and innovative.

State funding of a Jobs Corps Program is key to lasting change for our State. Funding and supporting green jobs and mālama 'āina organizations will make us more resilient and sustainable. It will also inspire new "green jobs" businesses and help existing ones expand.

Mahalo nui loa,  
*Robin Leimomi Proctor*

Robin Leimomi Proctor  
Founder/Manager



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture, and the Arts  
Monday, March 15, 2021 at 3:00 P.M.  
Written Testimony**

**RE: HB 1176, HD 1, RELATING TO A JOB CORPS PROGRAM**

Chairs Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Ihara, Jr., and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** HB 1176, HD 1 which establishes a state job corps program help address unemployment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support economic diversification.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

To accelerate Hawaii's economic recovery, industry leaders must collaborate to support innovative solutions to grow and strengthen the workforce and ultimately Hawaii's economy. In order to guide the right tools and tailoring them to the current employment environment, the establishment of a job corps program could be another tool in the toolbox to catalyze the challenges ahead such as development strategy through expanding work-based learning, retraining, industry-credentialing programs, and industry-driven solutions.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 10:15:58 PM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Douglass S. Adams	Testifying for Research and Development, County of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts,

I support the job corps initiative envisioned by HB1176 HD1, and I encourage your committee to recommend its passage by the full Senate.

very respectfully,

Douglass S. Adams

Director, Research & Development

County of Hawaii

Testimony presented to the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts  
March 15, 2021 at 3:00pm  
By Farrah-Marie Gomes

HB 1176, HD1 – RELATING TO A JOB CORPS PROGRAM

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara and Committee Members,

I am providing testimony today in strong support of HB 1176, HD1 which proposes to establish a state job corps program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to help address the unemployment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support economic diversification.

I am a resident of Hawaii Island and graduated high school in the same year that the Hamakua Sugar Co. closed. Three generations of my family worked for that plantation, my dad being one of those who worked until its closure. I witnessed firsthand how difficult it was for my dad to transition into another industry. Today, he is a member of the tourism industry and while he is eligible for early retirement, he is trying to hang on a few extra years for full retirement benefits. The current state of tourism on our island has us wondering if there will need to be one more "career change" for him or if he will need to just settle for early retirement benefits.

These are not the types of decisions we want our island residents to face after spending most of their life contributing to society. Yet, for my dad, he finds himself at another one of these crossroads with about a quarter of a century between two devastating economic disasters that impacted his career.

I have a teenager who is keenly watching what is happening in the world around him. I am fully aware that how our island bounces back from this pandemic is likely to determine whether my son decides to stay on island or in the state after high school or not. I work in the field of education as a state employee and if there is one thing that I would like to impress upon us, it is this - let us learn from our own history and do what we can to prevent history from repeating itself. We cannot predict when the next economic disaster will hit Hawaii, but we can better prepare our workforce with the necessary, progressive, and transferable skills that can support them in being more adaptive and responsive to change, and at the same time, we must also cultivate a more sustainable and resilient economy that will be able to better withstand different tests over time.

That is why I strongly support HB 1176, HD1. While intended to help address short-term and immediate unemployment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, I see potential longer term benefits for our island residents and our island economy. As we look at rebuilding our economy, we must look at how to rebuild our workforce and a state job corps program would be a great start toward that endeavor. I urge you to please support this measure.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1176, HD1. While my testimony is from the perspective of one family, I know many others with similar experiences.

Mahalo,

  
Farrah-Marie Gomes



**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy  
In Support of HB 1176, HD 1 Relating to a Job Corps Program**

Committee on Labor, Culture, and the Arts  
Monday, March 15, 2021, 3:00 PM  
Conference Room 225, Via Teleconference

**The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports HB 1176 HD1, which establishes a state job corps program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to help address the unemployment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support economic diversification, and appropriates funds for this purpose.**

Hawai'i's natural environment is the engine that drives our state's economy and a natural, recreational, and cultural treasure supporting our island lifestyle and livelihoods. Careful, thoughtful, and intentional conservation, management, and restoration is required to ensure our environment can withstand the increasing impacts of climate change while continuing to fuel our islands' economic engine. TNC is proud of our 40 year history of working in partnership with so many local organizations, agencies, and communities to care for this vital and fragile resource.

Since 2011, TNC has benefitted from the tremendous work of 63 Kupu interns, including five Kupu 'Āina Corps CARES Act-funded interns from October through December 2020. These interns have provided much needed capacity to help us manage our native forested watersheds and coral reefs. These young, enthusiastic, and committed interns have created positive environmental, cultural, and community impact across the islands while also learning under the mentorship of environmental experts. Through their work, these interns are making a positive difference right now while also paving the way for the next generation of conservationists dedicated to perpetuating our unique island environment.

HB 1176, HD 1 provides the platform and funding for additional Kupu internships and other green jobs across our islands. As we work together to create a diversified economy, green jobs can and must play a role. By providing immediate relief and opportunity for local jobs while also paving the way for long-term green jobs, environmental expertise, and local leadership, this legislation is an important step in the right direction, and we urge the committee to pass it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1176, HD1.

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*The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a non-profit 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 nature preserves and work in over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties, and communities to protect forests and coral reefs for their ecological values and for the many benefits they provide to people.*

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**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 2:39:08 PM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Suzanne Frazer	Testifying for Beach Environmental Awareness Campaign Hawaii (B.E.A.C.H.)	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing on behalf of Beach Environmental Awareness Campaign Hawaii (B.E.A.C.H.) in strong support of HB1176 HD1. B.E.A.C.H. had the opportunity last year to have 3 people work with us through the Kupu Aina Corps program for 2 months. It was such a beneficial program for both the young people and our organization that we wish it could have been longer and continue. Our organization gave the participants a lot of knowledge and work experience in the conservation field that they wouldn't have gotten otherwise. B.E.A.C.H. is an all volunteer organization so it was the first time we had the opportunity to have paid staff helping out (paid through Kupu). This really made a difference for us and we were able to accomplish a lot. We are really grateful for the help because of the lockdowns last year putting us behind in our work.

All of the young people we worked with were out of work and were having a hard time getting a job. The Kupu Aina Corps experience provided a transformational learning experience which has positively impacted their lives. One now has a job and another was inspired to start her own non-profit. This program was only made possible due to funding that Kupu got which has now run out. We hope that you will pass this bill and allow more young people to take part in this program.

Thank you,  
Suzanne Frazer  
B.E.A.C.H. Co-Founder.

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 1:52:50 PM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ronald Weidenbach	Testifying for Hawaii Fish Company Inc.	Support	No

Comments:

Hawaii Fish Company strongly supports HB1176 HD1 to create and fund a Hawaii Job Corps to help address Covid-19 impacts and state economic diversification. Our company was a host site under the excellent but all too short Kupu Aina Program with two outstanding individual participants who were committed to assisting our small sustainable fish and aquaponics farm prepare for farm expansion and increased local food production. Both participants were graduates in natural resource fields and seeking opportunities to gain hands-on sustainable farming experience. We believe the proposed Hawaii Job Corps program could provide similar opportunities, laying the groundwork for diversifying our economy to include increased conservation and sustainable agriculture, and reversing the current brain drain from our State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this important measure.



March 12, 2021

To: The Senate Committee on Labor, Culture, and the Arts  
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Re: **Strong Support** of HB1176 HD1, Relating to a Jobs Corps Program

Hrg: March 15, 2021 at 3:00 PM at Capitol Room 225 and Videoconference

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 600 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being.

HPHA strongly **supports** HB1176 HD1, which will establish a state job corps program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to help address the unemployment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, this measure will support economic diversification in the state and appropriate funds for this purpose.

Reliable employment is an important determinant of health. It impacts health behaviors (i.e., health eating, physical activity), health risk factors (i.e., stress, blood pressure), and healthcare access (i.e., insurance) on individual and family levels. Sustainability addressing the unemployment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has will improve health, over time. The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the precariousness of Hawai'i's economic dependence on the visitor industry. The proposed legislation will work to diversify the state's workforce and create a more robust economy long term.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on important issues affecting the health of people in Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Claire Townsend Ing', is written over a faint, light blue circular stamp.

Claire Townsend Ing, DrPH  
Legislative Committee Chair  
Hawai'i Public Health Association

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 12:31:26 PM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Robert Golden	Testifying for Robert Golden	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha-

As president of Lower Puna Rising and one of the co-founders of the Village Makery Team in Pahoā, I strongly support passage of HB 1176. This bill represents one of the most impactful ways that the State can support job creation in our district.

Underemployment is one of the chronic conditions here in Puna, hence our interest in creating an accelerator hub, i.e. Village Makery, here in Pahoā to support job creation and to help give our residents a sense of economic confidence that they have opportunities here and don't have to move elsewhere to see their lives flourish.

Mahalo for all that you are doing.

Robert Golden

**HB-1176-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 1:48:07 PM

Testimony for LCA on 3/15/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Midori Satoh	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**This is a support letter for HB 1176 relating to a jobs corps program.**

**My name is Midori Satoh, and my husband and I take care of 2 acres of old Hawaiian agriculture land called Kona Mamaki Farm/Ooma Native Preserve.**

**In 2001, we purchased our property in the Kona Coffee belt. When we first arrived, there were many old rock walls that were covered by invasive trees such as silver oak, Christmas berry, rose apple, African turnip, strawberry guava, and others. We cleared the invasive trees and planted Hawaiian Native trees.**

**Last year, I participated in the Kupu Aina Corp's program, and I am very thankful that they were able to pay for a worker who helped to remove invasive species, mulch around the Native trees, as well as collect seeds and plant them. Kupu allowed my field participant to gain new skills, receive a CPR license, a chainsaw safety certificate, and a Native Hawaiian tree recognition certificate. He enjoyed working outside in the field and wanted to continue, but the fund ended and it was not possible. Right now, thanks to the program, the native trees on my property stand happily without being covered by weeds. I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with Kupu Aina Corp.**

**There are so many insects, birds, and trees that only live in these Hawaiian islands, and because of this many visitors come to enjoy the uniqueness of Hawaii. We are responsible to pass these native insects, birds, and their habitat of the Hawaiian forest down to future generations.**

**So much time and energy are needed to care for Native Hawaiian forests, and the bill HB 1176 will help gain the people who will work in these lands. Please help us preserve and cultivate the land.**

**Mahalo Nui loa,**

**Midori Satoh**

**Kona Mamaki Farm / Ooma Native Reserve**

**73-4445 Old Government Mauka RD**

**Kailua Kona, HI 96740**