



**Hawai'i Wildlife Center**  
P.O. Box 551752 • Kapa'au, HI 96755

**TESTIMONY OF LINDA ELLIOTT,  
PRESIDENT AND CENTER DIRECTOR  
HAWAII WILDLIFE CENTER**

**PRESENTED TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND**

**DATE: Thursday, February 11, 2021**

**TIME: 8:30 A.M.**

**PLACE: Via videoconference**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B.46/S.B.573, Relating to Wildlife: Habitat Conservation Plans**

To the honorable Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair, Representative Patrick Pihana Branco, Vice Chair and members of the Committees:

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB 46. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

HB 46 Requires all habitat conservation plans (HCPs) to include an agreement for plan participants to enter into and maintain an annual service contract with a stand-by and response facility available to provide emergency medical and rehabilitation services to native wildlife affected by activities undertaken within the scope of the plan. Since the costs would be incorporated into the fees already being paid by entities that are required to have a Habitat Conservation Plan, this does not raise taxes or require State funding.

This amendment would require a thorough and proper response procedure for indigenous and endemic wildlife species covered by HCPs when individuals of these species are found injured, as well as a clear means of support for such response actions. At present HCPs do not require an adequate response plan that sets forth an agreement with and funding support for a permitted response organization to ensure response resources are available for injured wildlife treatment and rehabilitation expertise when needed. Funding support should be provided as a basic measure to prepare for injured wildlife response and to keep resources available year-round.

Of the agreements we reviewed, all have failed to cover this specific response need and instead focus mainly on habitat improvements (i.e. in planting, invasive weed control) and population protection methods (i.e. predator control, re-introduction of species, captive breeding programs). Although those conservation programs are also important, the inclusion of the process for funding the response to injured wildlife covered by HCPs provides a missing piece

necessary to fully respond to protected wildlife species and creates more robust protection of native wildlife throughout the year.

From previous discussions with wildlife agencies and from our first-hand experiences, we have gathered that:

— Indigenous and endemic wildlife is under the responsibility of the Department of Land and Natural Resources. DLNR administrative rules mandate that if indigenous wildlife is injured, it must be brought to a permitted entity for care. Additionally, Hawai'i's indigenous wildlife is protected by federal Migratory Bird Act and or the Endangered Species Act. State or Federal wildlife agencies are not able to provide wildlife rehabilitative care services and therefore rely on partnerships with other organizations to fulfill this role.

— Current HCP requirements only focus on quantifying and mitigating for dead wildlife, while wildlife that are injured and still alive - wildlife that have the possibility of recovering and returning to their wild populations - are neglected because there is no statutory mandate requiring action and follow through.

— The State provides permit regulations as to what is required to care for native species, but in our experience have not been responsible for funding the care of patients impacted by HCP participants. Nor does the State's limited funding allow them to keep these services available in the case members of industry need it.

— Though DLNR may have a cost recovery process for their time, organizations that are not State-run yet provide services for the State are neglected and do not receive support to be ready to provide treatment to wildlife impacted by HCP participants. Providing concrete language to build the necessary avenues for wildlife response will help wildlife agencies follow through on their mandate to protect indigenous wildlife without creating additional work for the agencies.

— HCP participants follow a Downed Wildlife Protocol. The Downed Wildlife Protocol provides significant detail on injured wildlife response in the areas of capture, handling, and points of contact. What is NOT included in the protocol however, is any clear articulation on how participants will support the response work required or ensure its availability. All that is mentioned in the protocol in this area is one line: "non-governmental parties should make prior arrangements, including procedures and payments with the rehabilitation or veterinary care facilities that will be used to treat injured animals". The lack of details and absence of concrete requirements for follow-through in this area opens the door for this weakness to be taken advantage of at the expense of the rehabilitation and veterinary care facilities that are doing the work and who need to find other ways to stay open in order to be available for these purposes.

— By supporting wildlife response organizations via these agreements the benefits may also include:

- Net population benefits as the year-around operations of wildlife rehabilitation programs will treat other indigenous and endemic wildlife patients of the same species of concern adding to the number returned to the wild populations
- Preparedness for emergency response services (i.e. contaminants spill response, disease out breaks) with the trained experienced staff and a fully operational facility from the response organizations supported in part by these agreements.

Requiring entities needing an HCP agreement to also procure a support agreement with a qualified and permitted response and rehabilitation organization would also provide for first response training for the entity's staff, a supplies and equipment list to perform a response, and create procedures to consult on injured wildlife and assist in the transport of injured wildlife to the response organization(s). This support agreement would cover the costs for readiness to respond year-round and for the treatment and medical care of wildlife species covered by the agreement.

The Hawai'i Wildlife Center provides professional, state-of-the-art treatment for native Hawaiian wildlife affected by contamination, disease and injury. HWC staff members have the experience and capability to manage wildlife-related response, including assessment, training, mobilization, supervision, facilities management, wildlife capture, handling, stabilization and transportation. At the Center, staff will perform triage, assessment, stabilization, rehabilitation, husbandry, quarantine, hydration, feeding, cleaning, monitoring, recovery and release into the wild. The Center also provides emergency response training for agency staff, interns, students and volunteers.

HWC has a Memorandum of Agreement between the Center, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Department of Land and Natural Resources. However, while this MOA provides a framework for effective collaboration, it does not ensure that resources are available to keep the Center open and ready to respond to injured wildlife.

We have been open for native wildlife care since September 2012, and have already received nearly 2,000 patients (majority are birds, with some bats) representing over 40 different native species. In order to keep our critical services available, we need a predictable and consistent source of operational funding. SB573/HB 46 will help ensure that permitted, professionally staffed, wildlife response resources are prepared to help native wildlife adversely affected by human activities as well as help satisfy the statutory responsibility of the State.

We are a small nonprofit that provides hospital care and rehabilitation to native birds and bats statewide. The way we operate is very similar to a fire station, where the continuity of our services depends on reliable support to keep everything open and operational. HCP participants that have impacts on native wildlife should contribute keeping response and care available should it be needed. If a fire happens, you don't wait until you see flames to build a fire station.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

**HB-46**

Submitted on: 2/9/2021 10:00:51 AM

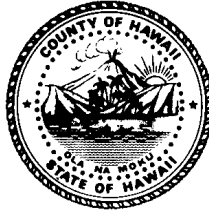
Testimony for WAL on 2/11/2021 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Rae Okawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill as it provides critical support for native wildlife care services and will ensure help is available when a native animal needs it. Mahalo for your consideration.

County of Hawai'i  
Council District 9 -  
North and South Kohala



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**Chair:** Committee on Regenerative  
Agriculture, Water, Energy, and  
Environmental Management

**HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS, III**  
**HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**DISTRICT 9**

25 Aupuni Street, Ste. 1402, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

February 9, 2021

**Committee on Water and Land**

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair

Representative Patrick Pihana Branco, Vice Chair

**Submission via online testimony**

RE: Support of HB 46

Hearing Date/Time: February 11, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

Dear Representatives:

As the Chair of the Committee on Regenerative Agriculture, Water, Energy, and Environmental Management for the Hawai'i County Council, I thank you for the opportunity to submit **testimony in SUPPORT of HB 46.**

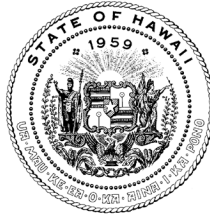
Providing emergency medical and rehabilitation services to native wildlife, affected by activities within the conservation plan areas, are critical in protecting our endangered and native wildlife and its future existence. Therefore, it is imperative that all habitat conservation plans be required to include an agreement for plan participants to enter into and maintain an annual service contract with a stand-by and response wildlife facility, to ensure best treatment practices to our native wildlife and endangered species.

Please feel free to contact me should you need to discuss my position and knowledge of this matter further. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS, III  
Hawai'i County Council, District 9

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF  
HAWAII



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

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of  
SUZANNE D. CASE  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
WATER & LAND

Wednesday, February 11, 2021  
8:30 AM

State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 430

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 46  
RELATING TO WILDLIFE

House Bill 46 proposes to require all habitat conservation plans to include an agreement for plan participants to enter into and maintain an annual service contract with a stand-by and response facility available to provide emergency medical and rehabilitation services to native wildlife affected by activities undertaken within the plan area. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources supports this measure.**

Section 195D-21(2)(C), Hawaii Revised Statutes, requires that each habitat conservation plan shall identify the steps that will be taken to minimize the impact of any incidental take to the maximum extent practicable. A service agreement with a stand-by and response facility capable of providing emergency medical and rehabilitation services could help to fulfill that requirement in the event of injured wildlife, but may also incur costs for renewable energy providers.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

**HB-46**

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 8:19:57 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/11/2021 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support.