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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND**

**Wednesday, February 17, 2021
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1182
RELATING TO THE KOKE'E STATE PARK ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Senate Bill 1182 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.

KŌKE‘E LEASEHOLDERS ASSOCIATION

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TO: The Honorable Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
The Honorable Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Water and Land

DATE: Wednesday, February 17, 2021

TIME: 1:00PM

PLACE: Conference Room 229

From: Chipper Wichman, President
Kōke‘e Leaseholders Association

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 1182 RELATING TO KOKEE ADVISORY COUNCIL

I am writing today in my personal capacity as a resident of Kauai, a former member and Chair of the Kōke‘e State Park Advisory Council, and as the current President of the Kōke‘e Leaseholders Association. I am in support of SB 1182 subject to amendments which I will describe below.

In the justification for SB1182, it states that the Council has fulfilled its mission by completing the Master Plan in 2014 and because it has not met for five years. I take personal exception to both of these two statements and would like to set the record straight.

Act 223 of the Regular Session of 2008 established the Kōke‘e State Park Advisory Council (KSPAC) within the Department of Land and Natural Resources with the mandate to: 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.

I served for two consecutive 3-year terms on the KSPAC – both times nominated by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. I want to bring special attention to the fact that KSPAC has a five-point mandate. While the Master Plan was successfully revised and adopted by the Board of Land and Natural Resources in 2014, the other four points in our mandate remain important and ongoing. The work of the KSPAC is NOT complete, and it has been embraced and supported by a wide segment of our Kauai community. The sole reason that the KSPAC has not met for five years is because the community members who have submitted their names to serve on the Council were never confirmed by the Senate! Through the inaction of the Legislature the KSPAC was effectively killed – not through the inaction of the Council refusing to meet or from the lack of interest in the community members to serve on it. DSP Administrator Curt Cottrell has even told me “the lack of action on nominees to this committee has been a bit bewildering to all of us”.

From a community perspective this has been very frustrating and has left our community – a community that cares deeply about the condition of the natural resources in Kōke‘e State Park and the unique Historic Recreational Residence Community – feeling that the State does not want to work with them!

So why you might ask am I supporting SB1182? I support this bill because I know that our current Division of State Parks leadership in Curt Cottrell and Alan Carpenter both appreciate the value that community brings in supporting our parks and I have worked very successfully with both of them for over 20 years when they held other positions in DSP.

In particular has been our working relationship related to Hā'ena State Park on the north shore of Kauai where they have supported a win-win relationship with the nonprofit organization Hui Maka'āinana o Makana. I was a founding director of the Hui MoM in 1999 and established the Curatorship Agreement between the Hui and DSP that same year. I have seen how well a community group can work with State Parks when both sides want to work together.

It is because of this experience that I support officially killing the KSPAC via SB1182, subject however to the amendment of SB 1182 to include language requiring State Parks to establish an advisory role for a community advisory group that will work with DSP on the remaining four mandates as listed in Act 223 – which includes:

1. advise and assist in the management of the Kōke'e recreation residence leases;
2. enhance community education and cultural awareness of Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks;
3. participate in the preservation and protection of the area's natural and cultural resources; and
4. advise and assist in the implementation of the Master Plan recommendations.

I have been in touch with DSP leadership over the past week and believe that they support this suggested amendment of SB1182. The Kōke'e Leaseholder Association (of which I am the current President) has been around for over 30 years and is deeply committed to working with State Parks on all of the points listed above. Hui O Laka is an even older organization that is equally committed to working with State Parks and currently holds the lease for the Kōke'e Natural History Museum. Perhaps a community advisory group made up of members of KLA and HoL would be an ideal way for this to get a new community advisory group off the ground.

There is no shortage of willing community members and organizations and we would like the 2021 Legislature to honor the intent of Act 223 by requiring DLNR to establish or designate an effective community advisory group and to work with them on the four-point mandate listed above. By NOT having this advisory group legislatively appointed, I believe it will be successful and able to develop a long-term relationship with State Parks.

I will be testifying in person on Wednesday and will be happy to entertain any questions that Committee members might have at that time.

Me ke aloha a me ka mahalo nui,



Chipper Wichman, President
KLA and former KSPAC Chair