

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**

Monday, March 21, 2022

1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

**In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 686
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
WESLEY YOON
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, 2026**

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports Governor's Message 686 nominating Wesley Yoon to the Board of Land and Natural Resources for a term to expire on June 30, 2026.

Wesley "Kaiwi" Yoon brings a wealth of land management background to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board). His experience has been in the purchase and management of land for cultural purposes, with awareness of the strategic need to have those lands generate funds for their own management. This approach will be helpful in guiding an agency with similar needs.

Mr. Yoon is currently the Vice-President of Operations at the Bishop Museum. He previously served as the Architectural Branch Chief for the Department's State Historic Preservation Division, and he worked for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for seven years. Through this work he is well aware of the challenging projects brought before the Board. His experience allows him to bring a strategic perspective of both the business and cultural aspects of land management that the Department is constantly balancing.

Mr. Yoon has served on the Board since 2020. He is nominated to serve as an at-large member of the Board. He brings expertise in Hawaiian cultural practices.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's strong support of Governor's Message 686, nominating Wesley Yoon to a seat on the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

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



**Department of Land and Natural Resources
Hawaii State Aha Moku
State of Hawaii
Post Office Box 621
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809**

Testimony of
Hawaii State Aha Moku

Before the Senate Committee on Water and Land

Friday, March 21, 2022
1:00 P.M.

Support for Governor Message 686, Wesley Yoon
Board of Land and Natural Resources

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer strong support for Governor Message 686, Wesley Yoon. This message is submitted for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources for a term to expire on June 30, 2026.

Participants in the Hawaii State Aha Moku (Aha Moku) supports this submittal.

The Hawaii State Aha Moku works with participants of all of the main Hawaiian Islands – Moku O Keawe (Hawai'i), Moku O Pi'ilani (Maui), Moku O Kanaloa (Kaho'olawe), Nana'i Kaula (Lana'i), Moloka'i Pule O'o (Moloka'i), Moku O Kakuhihewa (O'ahu), Manokalanipo (Kaua'i) and Ka 'Aina O Kawelonakala (Ni'ihau). We strive to bring the voices of the communities of each island, including native Hawaiian generational families of the Ahupua'a encompassed within these islands. Our foundation is based on Mahalo Ke Akua (Trust in and honor God); Mahalo I Ka'Aina (Sustain and support the lands including watersheds and ocean); and, Mahalo Na 'Iwi Hanau O Ka'Aina (Honor and Support the people born of the land).

The Aha Moku is attached administratively to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) via Act 288, SLH 2012. As such, we work closely with the divisions within DLNR on issues of natural and cultural resources. Mostly collaborative and sometimes where we must "agree to disagree", Aha Moku brings the voices of the people forward in issues that impact their cultural practices on natural resources which by law are protected. Because Aha Moku is mandated to bring these issues forward to the Chairperson of the Land Board, and to the Land Board itself, it is critically important that the Land Board is objective, fair and can honestly listen to the people.

We believe that Mr. Yoon fits the principles needed to be a sound member of the Land Board. He has proven to be a morally strong man who can integrate native Hawaiian cultural knowledge with state policy and opens the Land Board to mutual collaboration. We ask that this Committee Advise and Consent to Governor Message 686.

Respectfully yours,

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Hawaii State Aha Moku
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SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

March 21, 2022

1:00 PM

CCR229

Offering **COMMENTS** on

GM683

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Gubernatorial Nominee, AIMEE BARNES, for a term to expire 06-30-2025.

GM686

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Gubernatorial Nominee, WESLEY YOON, for a term to expire 06-30-2026.

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land,

On behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i offers the following **COMMENTS** on the nominees to the Board of Land and Natural Resources ("BLNR").

The Sierra Club appreciates the willingness of the nominated individuals to provide their time and expertise in service to the BLNR's important mission. The Sierra Club does emphasize the critical role of the BLNR in overseeing the management and protection of the lands and resources that provide the foundation of our islands' identity, social fabric, and ways of life. Accordingly, Sierra Club believes that this hearing provides a critical opportunity for the Committee, the nominees, and the general public to reflect on the nominees' knowledge, views, and commitment to make what may be difficult but necessary decisions to uphold their fiduciary and legal obligations under the constitution, statutes, and other laws of the state, with regards to our natural and cultural public trust resources and sites.

To assist in this process of reflection and assessment, the Sierra Club respectfully offers the following questions for the nominees before you today:

- 1) What expertise, knowledge, or skills do you possess that may be relevant to fulfilling the BLNR's fiduciary and legal obligations with respect to the conservation, protection, and use of our public lands and natural and cultural resources and sites?
- 2) Should stream diverters be allowed to dewater entire streams and waste millions of gallons of water per day, due to aging and leaky irrigation and reservoir infrastructure?
- 3) Do you believe it is appropriate to issue long-term leases of ecologically or culturally significant lands and waters before DLNR staff can demonstrate sufficient expertise and capacity to provide consistent and timely oversight over lease terms and conditions?

- 4) What is your position on community-based fisheries management approaches, and should greater weight be given to the testimonies of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practitioners and subsistence community members than outsiders who do not have a daily connection with the resources of their place?
- 5) What steps should the DLNR take to address the recommendations of the 2019 Audit of the Land Division's Special Land and Development Fund, which found a lack of an overarching plan for the Land Division's public land inventory, a lack of staff expertise and capacity to administer industrial and commercial leases, an overreliance on ground leases rather than more lucrative space leases in disposing of revenue-generating lands, and a lack of transparency and accountability, among other deficiencies, leading to significant opportunity costs to the DLNR and its mission?
- 6) Do you believe that the aquarium collection industry should be subject to stricter regulations based on evolving science regarding climate change impacts on our coral reef ecosystem, and the application of the precautionary principle?
- 7) What strategies should the BLNR employ to discourage shoreline hardening and encourage strategic retreat to mitigate the loss of our beaches and coastal areas?

The Sierra Club hopes and strongly believes that these questions will provide a much-needed understanding of the value that the nominees may bring to the BLNR, as it carries out its kuleana concerning matters of critical importance over the next several years.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify.