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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committees on
WATER & LAND
and
LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Tuesday, February 14, 2023
11:15 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1183
RELATING TO STATE PARKS

House Bill 1183 proposes to exempt parking lot operations at state parks and operation of concessions at certain state parks from the bidding requirements for concessions operating on public property. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this measure.**

Cooperative agreements for stewardship and management with private partners, including non-profit organizations, have proven to be an effective management tool to increase quality of experience and resource protection in our state parks. While a number of non-profit partners have long-term leases to provide experiences and value-added services within parks, none of them have yet included assistance with visitor management or parking lot operations, which are defined in Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) 102-2 as a concession, and therefore subject to a competitive bid process. As the State Park System has expanded its parking and entry fee collection to ten parks, with potential for more, a natural outcome is to integrate co-management with affected communities and non-profit partners. This idea was piloted in 2020 at the Hā'ena State Park integrated parking and shuttle reservation system, in the wake of a paradigm-shifting master planning process. However, due to the lack of an existing exemption in HRS Section 102-2, State Parks cannot negotiate a long-term lease or management agreement to our non-profit partner at Hā'ena, Hui Maka'āinana O Makana. They presently manage this critical, highly successful visitor management system via a month-to-month revocable permit.

Particularly notable is the proposed amendment adding a new Section 2(b)(11) which exempts bidding requirements for concessions within state parks which are "environmentally, culturally, historically, or operationally unique and are supported by nonprofit corporations". This is a very specific exemption, and

warranted given the important natural and cultural resources requiring specialized care and management within the Hawai'i State Park system. Hā'ena certainly fits within this definition, and great potential exists for other culturally and environmentally unique parks to benefit from this model, such as Kealahou Bay and Kīholo (Hawai'i) and Ka'ena Point (O'ahu).

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this measure.

HUI MAKĀ'ĀINANA O MAKANA



The Hui Maka'āinana o Makana is a non-profit organization dedicated to perpetuating and teaching the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna (ancestors) through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of natural and cultural resources in within the Hā'ena State Park.

February 13, 2023

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB1183

COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land, and Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and members of the Committee on Labor and Government Operations,

My name is Chipper Wichman and I am a resident of Hā'ena Kaua'i and have been involved in conservation of natural and cultural resources for almost 50 years. I am a founding Director of the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana (1998) and just retired as the President of the National Tropical Botanical Garden after working there since 1976.

I currently serve on the Board of Directors of the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana and am testifying today in my position as the Secretary of the Hui. Our Board is in strong support of HB 1183 as it will allow State Parks to negotiate directly with non-profit organizations like the Hui to manage not only the natural and cultural resources found in numerous State Parks across the pae 'āina (archipelago) but to also assist with visitor management or parking lot operations.

In Hā'ena we have been able to implement true regenerative tourism through our partnership with State Parks and the visitors are excited to know that their money is being used to help take care of our 'āina and our community. Although the Hui has a 22-year successful track-record in partnering with State Parks, and we have been managing the parking, entry and shuttle operations for 2 years under a revocable permit the AG has advised DSP that they can't enter into a long-term lease with the Hui because (HRS) 102-2 defines parking lot operations as a concession which then makes it subject to a competitive bid process.

We ask for your support in passing HB 1183 which will fix this problem and allow DSP to work with their non-profit partners like the Hui to provide holistic management of

parks that are “environmentally, culturally, historically, or operationally unique and are supported by nonprofit corporations”.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chipper Wichman", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Chipper Wichman, Secretary
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

To: Scot Z. Matoyoshi, Chair of House Committee on Labor and Government Operations
Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

For: HB1183

Date of Hearing: 2/14/23

Time: 11:15 am

Room: 309 / is a video conference

Position: in Support

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Maddi Rutan, I am a 7th grade student at Connections Charter School in downtown Hilo. I am writing in support of HB1183. I find that the national parks are magnificent and amazing places of natural beauty, especially here in Hawai'i. But, we have run into a problem where they have been over visited and have had some of their landmarks turn to bad health due to the constant visitation and unknowing impacts left by these visitors. Take Hanauma bay, this is a beach on Oahu that has suffered greatly due to sunscreen pollution and overuse. This is not okay and the problem needs to be solved before the national parks are stuck in a degrading state for the next generations.

With that in mind, I believe the actions stated in HB1183 are going to positively impact the state in natural conservation and finances. I agree with the limited park spaces, advanced reservation (in some cases), and the local shuttle systems that will improve the surrounding environment. This will impact me because I live in this place of wonder and I would not like it to fall into disarray.

I hope you will consider passing this bill for the good of the parks and people.

Mahalo,

Maddi Rutan
Student at Connections PCS