

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
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**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Monday, February 28, 2022
12:30 PM**

State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 308

**In Consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1656, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO TRAILS**

House Bill 1656, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate moneys for the establishment of a permanent full-time equivalent land and access specialist position and a permanent full-time equivalent abstractor position within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department), Division of Forestry and Wildlife Nā Ala Hele program for the protection and expansion of public trail access statewide. **The Department supports this measure and provides the following comments.**

The land and access specialist position will be a vital component of the administrative staff, serving to coordinate planning and environmental and cultural compliance efforts statewide. Currently, the bulk of current funding for the program comes via the Federal Highways Administration's Recreational Trails Program and is used primarily for maintenance. Working with our federal partners, we are using this funding for new recreational trail development and enhancing current recreational opportunities while protecting natural and cultural resources. This new effort requires compliance with state and federal environmental protection laws. This position will fill this role.

The Nā Ala Hele program currently has one (1) full-time abstractor position statewide, whose responsibility is to conduct title research to document historic trails and protect the public trust as it pertains to land ownership relating to such historic trails and roads. The workload is staggering. The addition of a second abstractor position will double the Department's capacity to carry out this critically important resource protection function.

The Department and the community at large recognize the State's current diminished capacity to manage and maintain existing forest recreation resources. We would encourage the Legislature to,

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

as additional funds become available, appropriate funding for additional staff positions for the Nā Ala Hele program to generate enhanced capacity to develop and maintain trails and associated infrastructure, creatively recruit and manage volunteer groups, and address action items identified in the island-based Destination Management Action Plans, developed in coordination with the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, to promote regenerative tourism for the protection of Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources as a means to provide a high quality recreational experience for all users.

In addition to enhanced funding for staffing, we would respectfully request an additional one-time appropriation of \$2,000,000 in operating funds to address an extensive backlog in deferred maintenance on trails and other forest and outdoor recreation resources to include enhanced facilities and support infrastructure in areas impacted by escalating recreational use. Trails across state have seen an unprecedented increase in traffic, driven in part by social media exposure, resulting in trail degradation due to heavy use and minimal maintenance. Staff reductions have hampered the Department's ability to properly maintain recreational facilities and features and the impact to adjacent natural areas. Recent surveys indicate a desire on the part of the public for additional parking, restroom facilities, maintenance of existing trails, and availability of new trails. We respectfully ask that as funding becomes available this committee strongly consider our request to help protect our natural and cultural resources and provide enhanced outdoor recreation opportunities in a way that is respectful of adjacent communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

HB-1656-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 11:56:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
William Stormont	DLNR	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am available for questions to DLNR. Please allow me Zoom access.

HB-1656-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 11:57:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Suzanne D. Case	DLNR	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am available for questions to DLNR. Please allow me Zoom access.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1656, H.D. 1

February 28, 2022
12:30 p.m.
Room 308 and Videoconference

RELATING TO TRAILS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1656, H.D. 1, provides resources to support the Na Ala Hele statewide trail and access program by appropriating an unspecified amount of general funds for FY 23 and establishes a permanent Land and Access Specialist position and a permanent Abstractor position to support the Na Ala Hele program.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

HB-1656-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2022 5:47:20 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The continued loss of access to hiking trails has been a source of sadness and dismay since I first came to Hawaii Island in 1971. The attitude of the State and private landowners seems to be "If you want to hike on the Big Island, you must do so in a way that is both unsafe and illegal." How does Hawaii expect its citizens to care for the aina if they have no access to it? I strongly support HB1656.

HB-1656-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2022 5:51:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Klayton Kubo	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Support

HB-1656-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2022 12:21:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jeremiah Felsen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill because the Nā Ala Hele Program on Kaua‘i has been chronically underfunded for years. There are many trails to care for and not enough people to do it. Unfortunately injuries and lost hikers happen as a result.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Felsen

Owner & Lead Guide Outside Adventures LLC DBA Kaua‘i Hiking Tours