

HB-1656-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2022 1:37:19 PM

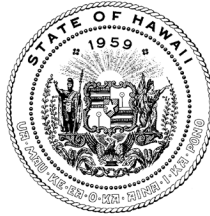
Testimony for WTL on 3/14/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Klayton Kubo	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support

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 14, 2022
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229, Via Videoconference

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 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
FIRST DEPUTY

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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

appropriate funding to close the LNR 804 personnel funding shortfall (\$300K) and restore Nā Ala Hele program positions cut or defunded in previous sessions to generate enhanced capacity to develop and maintain trails and associated infrastructure, 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: 3/13/2022 11:25:34 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/14/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Stormont	Testifying for DLNR	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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



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David Y. Ige
Governor

John De Fries
President and Chief Executive Officer

Statement of
JOHN DE FRIES

Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

March 14, 2022
1:00 p.m.
State Capitol
via videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL NO. 1656 HD1
RELATING TO TRAILS

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee on Water and Land.

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support** of HB1656 HD1, which provides positions and resources to the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Nā Ala Hele program.

Many visitors, and more importantly kama'āina, utilize and enjoy the trails under the stewardship of the Nā Ala Hele program. This measure will address the program's need for staff to help protect and expand public trail access across Hawai'i.

We appreciate the Legislature's consideration of this measure to provide the resources needed by our partners at the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and we appreciate this opportunity to **support** HB1656 HD1. Mahalo.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

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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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1656, H.D. 1

March 14, 2022
1:00 p.m.
Room 229 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.



March 12, 2022

Senator Lorraine Inouye, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Hawaii State Capitol / Committee on Water and Land

Re: HB 1656 HD1 / Letter of Support

Dear Senator Lorraine Inouye, Chair of the Committee on Water and Land, Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Kaua'i Visitors Bureau (KVB), we submit this letter of support for HB 1656 HD1 which appropriates moneys to DLNR the establishment of a permanent full-time equivalent land and access specialist position and a permanent full-time equivalent abstractor position within the Na Ala Hele program for the protection and expansion of public trail access statewide.

The island of Kaua'i has a significant amount of land in State Parks, much of which are popular attractions (lookouts/rivers/hiking trails) used by residents and visitors, such as: Kalalau Trail, Hanakapi'ai Falls, Wailua Falls, Wailua River State Park, Koke'e State Park, Kalalau Lookout, Waimea Canyon, Opaeka'a Falls, Polihale State Park, etc. Our parks are in **desperate** need of maintenance and management from the droves of people using them daily. We need positions that will assess our trails, make recommendations for improvement and more importantly, keep the trails safe for our residents and visitors.

We ask for your support of HB 1656 HD1 to help the Na Ala Hele program and DLNR better manage our parks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan A. Kanoho".

Susan A. Kanoho
Executive Director
Kaua'i Visitors Bureau

HB-1656-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2022 8:05:55 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/14/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have hiked and run trails on O'ahu and Kaua'i, Maui and Hawai'i for the past 50 years. There have been great improvements on many trails, butb what was a serene passage through nature has now become crowded with people who do not respect the trails, damage the landscape and leave rubbish.

I ask that DLNR manage these trails and control the numbers of people using our trails, perhaps charging a fee to cover the cost . I support hb1656 HD1 and ask that this Committee advance it.

Mahalo

Cathy Goeggel

HB-1656-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2022 10:13:24 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/14/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair and Members,

I strongly support HB1656 because it will increase DLNR, Division of Forestry and Wildlife Nā Ala Hele program staff focused on protection and expansion of public trail access statewide. The 2021 Hawaii State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Survey indicated hiking was the most popular land-based outdoor recreation, but despite the increase in hikers and tourists using trails, there has been an increase in trail closures, a continued historic lack of facilities such as parking and restrooms for trails, decreased access to some trails, and deterioration of trails due to lack of maintenance, management, and environmental/cultural education.

We know that historically DLNR is underfunded and understaffed. This has resulted in inadequate protection of our natural and cultural resources, deterioration of trails and parks, lack of adequate facilities, inadequate management, educational needs unmet, and little to no establishment of new parks and trails for the public. DLNR staffing and budget needs have to be of higher priority, or we will continue to see our natural and cultural resources deteriorate, more species lost and endangered, and the recreational needs of the public neglected and unmanaged.

1. a hiker, I have witnessed access problems, closures and deterioration of trails on Oahu over the past decade on Oahu. We have seen popular, beautiful trails such as the Mariner’s Ridge Trail in East Oahu closed, and most recently, it was decided it would be a good idea to permanently remove one of the most spectacular hiking venues in the world here—Haiku Stairs. Instead of maintaining and increasing access to trails, the Honolulu City Council decided to allocate one million dollars of taxpayer monies to permanently eliminate this incredibly unique, popular hiking venue. Maunawili Trail was recently closed because of lack of management, abuse and deterioration of the trail, stream, plants and cultural sites in the area, overuse, and lack of facilities. All of these problems are getting worse, especially with the tremendous increase in tourists in the islands. More and more trails are under threat of being closed.

Access to the trailhead for Haiku Stairs was denied by a State government department, Department of Hawaiian Homelands and by neighbors who complained about disturbances in their neighborhood from hikers. In the case of Mariner's Ridge, neighbors's complaints about hikers parking in their neighborhood resulted in the landowner (Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate, I believe) denying access to the trailhead and closing the trail. All of these situations were fixable problems, there is just never any interest or priority for funding solutions and keeping trails open. HB1656 is a step in the right direction, a positive step toward addressing the neglect of our trails and natural resources and the need for trail expansion. It is the tip of the iceberg as far as needed funding for DLNR.

1. DLNR master plan for a natural, cultural, recreational, and educational resource in my community, Kawainui Marsh, an historically culturally rich area, has never been implemented because there are never funds allocated to implement the plan. The master plan called for restoration of this largest wetland in the state of Hawaii, which has deteriorated to a marsh and is headed toward further deterioration to a swamp. Four species of Native Hawaiian endangered birds exist here in deteriorated habitats and nesting sites, and the lowland wetland forest and ancient fishponds have all but been eliminated except in areas being restored by non-profit Native Hawaiian cultural/environmental organizations. Restoration of some cultural sites has also been accomplished by the work of Native Hawaiian non-profits. The trail systems, bird observation platforms, educational pavilions and facilities planned and part of the master plan for this area have never been built. The public, including school children from the numerous elementary schools, one middle school, and two high schools within walking distance of Kawainui are being denied extensive environmental/cultural education opportunities and outdoor recreational trails.

There was a similar park plan proposed for Haiku Valley that incorporated protection and education about the cultural sites there, the WW II history of the area, the natural resources of the area, and a creation of a park and network of trails including historical Haiku Stairs. These types of projects need to become a priority in our state and get funded, trails need to be expanded, maintained, and managed, facilities such as restrooms, parking and infrastructure outside of neighborhoods need to be provided. HB1656 is a positive start.

Please support this bill.

Beth Anderson

