



# HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

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GOVERNOR

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Testimony of  
**SCOTT J. GLENN, Chief Energy Officer**

before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

Thursday, February 17, 2022  
8:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

**SUPPORT  
HB 1989  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS.**

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports HB 1989, which authorizes the Governor to designate the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to administer or enter into an agreement for the administration of a green jobs youth corps to provide temporary work and training opportunities in the fields of natural resource management, agriculture, or other sustainability-related professions to young adults ages twenty-six and younger; requires the department to partner with an organization that has received accreditation or has at least ten years of experience providing similar programming statewide in the State; and appropriates funds.

HSEO believes that DLNR is well-suited to oversee the corps and to provide training and job experience for the workforce of the future, in the areas noted above. This program will help advance Hawaii's clean energy and decarbonization goals, expand the green workforce, and launch a new generation of clean energy leaders. HSEO is in support of this and other green workforce development efforts, working together toward achieving 100% clean energy by or before 2045.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF  
HAWAII



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  
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LAND  
STATE PARKS

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of  
SUZANNE D. CASE  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
WATER AND LAND

Thursday, February 17, 2022  
8:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 430, Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1989  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

House Bill 1989 proposes to authorize the Governor to designate the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to administer or enter into an agreement for the administration of a green jobs youth corps to provide temporary work and training opportunities in the fields of natural resource management, agriculture, or other sustainability-related professions to young adults ages twenty-six and younger. The bill also proposes to appropriate unspecified funds to the Department. **The Department supports this bill.**

The State of Hawaii's progressive move towards a zero-emissions clean economy by 2045 requires that we actively invest in the community and emerging economic sectors and provide residents with the education and training opportunities they need to make the transition. A job corps program designed specifically to address the State's climate change goals would be beneficial in helping the growing green sector scale up efforts to address climate change and provide diversified training opportunities to a displaced workforce, supporting a resilient local economy.

The Department has been long-time partners with AmeriCorps and Kupu through their mentorship programs which have been successful in getting the youth of Hawaii not only into conservation jobs but into the workforce at large. The Kupu Aina Corps program, funded by the CARES Act and ARPA funding, demonstrated how eager the local workforce is to get back to work and provided new opportunities for many to enter emerging and growing fields of work.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**  
P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

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 WATER & LAND  
ON  
HOUSE BILL NO. 1989

**February 17, 2022**  
**8:30 a.m.**  
**Room 430 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO THE HAWAII YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

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

House Bill No. 1989: authorizes the Governor to designate the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to administer a green jobs youth corps to provide temporary work and training opportunities in the fields of natural resource management, agriculture, or other sustainability-related professions; requires DLNR to partner with a qualified organization; and appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds for FY 23 for DLNR to administer the green jobs youth corps.

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.

## Testimony Regarding SB 2768, Green Job Corps

Submitted by Hawai`i's Thousand Friends

Hawai`i's Thousand Friends has closely followed and supported the evolution of a Green Job Corps over the past three years. Our hope is that this idea continues to evolve and becomes an ongoing part of the State of Hawai`i's discharge of its responsibility for our natural resources. This is not a nice idea but an imperative. Attitudes are changing, but to carry this home we need a broad, deep generation of trained young leaders.

Accordingly, our first comment is what is not in the bill: a financial commitment from the State of Hawai`i. Naturally we favor making use of Federal money, but it's time for the State to start contributing.

Important groundwork has been laid. The fact that KUPU brought a solid base of experience to the prototype project has mattered considerably. KUPU ramped up on short notice, involved a wide range of community projects, and otherwise established sound practices.

The next steps require an evolutionary balancing act. Assigning administration to the Department of Land and Natural is a step in the right direction, given its mandates. Our concerns center around DLNR developing long-term capacity and commitment to run a Green Job Corps and, in turn, the public developing understanding and support.

(1) While experience as contractor counts, the 10-year experience requirement to be a DLNR-contracted party seems overly long. We suggest something considerably shorter.

(2) We have reviewed the web site of the Center for Excellence referenced in the bill. While the Center's criteria are surely helpful, we believe that accreditation as a condition for contracting should not be outsourced to an agency in Washington, D.C. Rather, DLNR should up its commitment by developing that capacity.

As for the age criteria for Corps participation, we agree with 38, virtually the age 40 provision of Act 181.

On the whole, please take our testimony as overwhelmingly positive and in support. The last time we checked, only one per cent of the State budget was going to natural resources. Let Green Job Corps play a real role in changing our priorities to the long-term benefit of our young people and the health and well-being of Hawaii.

Tom Coffman

Board Member, Hawai'i Thousand Friends



Testimony Before The  
Senate Committee on Water and Land  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB 1989**  
February 17, 2022, 8:30PM, Room 430

My name is Kevin Chang and I am the Executive Director of [Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo \(or KUA\)](#). KUA works to empower grassroots rural and Native Hawaiian mālama 'āina groups -fishers, farmers, families- to celebrate their places and pass on their traditions to better Hawai'i and achieve 'āina momona— an abundant, productive ecological system that supports community well-being.

KUA employs a community-driven approach that currently supports a statewide network of 36 mālama 'āina community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together), 40 fishpond projects and practitioners called the Hui Mālama Loko I'a, and a growing group of over 60 Limu practitioners and supporters called the Limu Hui. Our vision of 'āina momona includes pathways to new economic and environmental regenerative opportunities for present and future generations.

**KUA generally supports HB 1989.** This bill would continue to support the Green Job Youth Corps program within the DLNR to help address the unemployment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support economic diversification. It would also appropriate funds for this purpose

Beyond supporting a stop gap in employment for our state the Green Job Youth Corps are important pathway to meeting the greater systemic needs we as a state identified during this pandemic: new workforce training, economic diversification, caring for our environment, and supporting businesses in Hawai'i as they work to make our state more self-sufficient and resilient

A primary function of KUA includes development of an 'auwai, a stream of resources, tools, bridges, relationships, and networks that help to cultivate and take our communities' work to greater levels of collective impact. A core catalyst for the flow in this 'auwai includes increasing the percentage of our economy which helps to manage and better the condition of the natural resources systems that sustain us. Indeed, the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization, with input from KUA and a number of partners (DLNR, Kupu, TNC, KS,OHA etc.) now tracks natural resource workforce development as a key part of a "Green Economy."

We are also supportive for what this opportunity could mean for increased environmental co-management, co-governance and uplifting an ethic of mālama 'āina. Our current state institutions lack in resources but also in institutional ethos and policies that could better bolster citizen stewardship of our home. Key new generation staff members -such as exist within the Division of Aquatic Resources community-based subsistence fishing area and DOCARE Makai Watch programs- that do more work in partnership with communities are the future of environmental stewardship.

A state job corps that can build a conservation workforce for Hawai'i is a necessary pathway toward uplifting the environment which sustains and undergirds the "economy" for our state. It also

further places our island community like others in the Pacific as a leader for environmental leadership and adaptation.

Please pass this bill out of your committee and mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Aloha 'Āina Momona.



## Testimony in Support of HB1989, Relating to the Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps



Aloha Chairs and Members of the Committees,

My name is Carissa Cabrera and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Green Fee initiative in strong support of HB 1989, relating to the Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps. Hawai'i Green Fee is an initiative founded on prioritizing the conservation and sustainability of Hawai'i into the future. Sustaining Hawai'i, including our natural and cultural resources, for future generations is made possible by a proficient and empowered workforce.

HB 1989 would establish another year of funding for the Green Job Youth Corps, allowing Kupu the opportunities to incorporate lessons learned into their second year. The original version of this program helped connect hundreds of residents with impactful jobs designed to positively impact Hawai'i. Additionally, this bill is another way to invest in a sustainable infrastructure for both our economies and local livelihoods.

Hawai'i is the extinction capital of the world, and is uniquely vulnerable to the complex threats of climate change including erosion, sea level rise, ocean acidification, freshwater insecurity and more. Additionally, Hawai'i could greatly benefit from economic diversification and employment opportunities for our residents. The success of the original Conservation Corps program demonstrated a pathway to building a sufficient and resilient workforce to support our economy and environment. For this reason, we support additional funding for the Green Job Youth Corps to conserve our natural resources and provide local community members with meaningful career options.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

*Carissa Cabrera*

**Carissa Cabrera**



**Testimony in Strong Support of H.B. 1989,  
Relating to the Hawai‘i Youth Conservation Corps**

House Committee on Water & Land

Submitted by Kupu CEO John Leong, hearing date February 17, 2022

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Water & Land,

My name is John Leong, and I am the Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Kupu, a statewide youth-focused conservation nonprofit. On behalf of Kupu, I am pleased to testify in **strong support of H.B. 1989, Relating to the Hawai‘i Youth Conservation Corps**, while requesting an amendment to increase the age limit to 38 years-old and under, which would more closely align with the current age range for this program.

As written, this measure would continue funding for the Green Job Youth Corps, a program that provides employment and training opportunities for young adults in conservation, sustainable agriculture, clean energy, and other sustainability-related industries. As the organization that managed the original green job corps program upon which the Green Job Youth Corps is based, and as the organization now partnering with the Department of Land and Natural Resources to administer this program, we have seen firsthand the benefits it is providing to individuals and to the diversification of our economy. We thank the legislature for establishing this program last year, and especially thank Vice Chair Branco for introducing H.B. 1989 this year. The Green Job Youth Corps is an urgently needed addition to Hawai‘i’s strategy to address many of the needs of our state, including workforce development, environmental sustainability, economic diversification, and others.

Kupu was established in 2007, in the early stages of the Great Recession. Today we are a statewide organization, developing youth and young adults through hands-on service training in conservation and natural resource management professions. Since 2007 we have trained over 5,000 youth in conservation, sustainability, and environmental education. Young adults served by Kupu have provided more than 3 million service hours during this time, which included planting over 1 million native plants and removing over 100,000 acres of invasive species. This has created a cumulative \$155+ million in impact for Hawai‘i with a 1:3 cost to benefit ratio. We believe more investment in the green economy - as this bill provides - would enable similar economic benefits to our state, create jobs in related fields, and help diversify our economy.

In the early stages of the pandemic, Kupu saw the economic devastation happening in Hawai‘i and wondered what more we could do to help. We created a new program -- in concept -- that would help unemployed and underemployed people of all ages work in the green economy during the pandemic. This program, called the Kupu ‘Āina Corps, received funding and partnership from the state thanks to the foresight of the legislature and the support of Governor Ige, as provided by Act 9 (SLH 2020). With this program Kupu helped over 350 displaced workers and recent graduates connect with work, training, and the dignity of helping themselves and their communities. We are humbled that our program could serve as an example of what a longer-term program of this nature could achieve.

The ecological, economic, and human benefits of the Kupu ‘Āina Corps were clear. Over 90 percent of our participants completed the program, gaining its full benefits and helping 150 different host sites across the state. Based on a post-program evaluation survey completed by participants, one in three remained employed or were moving on to other employment at the end of the program. Logging over 89,000 work hours, these participants produced an economic benefit estimated at \$6.55 million, based on a formula developed by Columbia University. (This was more than twice the cost of the program.) Additionally, these participants collectively improved over 21,700 acres of land across our state. Community-based conservation corps around the nation have inquired about the program, which has also received national media coverage.

When the legislature passed H.B. 1176 in 2021, signed into law by Governor Ige as Act 181 (SLH 2021), we were excited to see that the progress made in the 2020 Kupu ‘Āina Corps program was going to continue in some form. Late last year, Kupu was selected by DLNR to partner on the continuation of this program. We spent the remaining months of 2021 recruiting and selecting participants. This year we are launching the program in three cohorts, the first of which started last week Monday. While we are in the very early stages of the program, from the recruitment and onboarding alone we have seen tremendous interest from applicants, with well over two-and-a-half applicants for every position available. We also saw significant willingness from nonprofits and for-profits to host and train individuals. Without legislation to continue funding this program, the Green Job Youth Corps will not have funds to operate after this year, due to Act 181 providing funds on a one-year and not biennial basis.

While we strongly support H.B. 1989, we also ask the Committees to consider amending the bill to increase the range for eligible participants to at least 38-years-old. In this year’s program, the Green Job Youth Corps is focused on participants between the ages of 20 and 40-years-old, as was directed in H.B. 1176/Act 181. Unless it is amended, H.B. 1989 would significantly reduce the age range, setting the cap at 26-years-old. While we support the idea of an age range, keeping this program available to a wider range of younger adults will provide more opportunities for

participants to switch careers and make use of the program. Since Hawai'i's median age is 38.5-years-old according to the U.S. Census, we suggest the age cap be set at 38-years-old.

Please pass **H.B. 1989, with an amendment to increase the eligible participant age to at least 38 years old.** Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in strong support of this important bill.

Sincerely,

*John Leong*

John Leong, CEO  
Kupu

**HB-1989**

Submitted on: 2/15/2022 10:46:40 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/17/2022 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ronald Weidenbach	Hawaii Fish Company Inc.	Support	No

Comments:

Hawaii Fish Company Inc. (HFC) strongly supports HB 1989 Relating to the Hawaii Youth Conservation Corps which supports job training and work opportunities in both Conservation and Agriculture. HFC is a current Host Site and was previously so in 2020, and we have found this program to be very beneficial for both participants and as a host site. Many jobs in conservation and modern agriculture require college degrees and tend to attract older youth and those wishing to make a career tract adjustment and retrain to a conservation or agriculture career. As such, the newly added age limitation is a clear detriment and program constraint. The more meaningful consideration should be a passion for conservation and/or agriculture, and this opportunity should remain open to participants in their 30s, as it has to present. With our farmers and ranchers having an average age of 60+ and with many in their 70s, passionate participants in their 20s AND 30s are a welcome youthful addition to our industry and should continue to be able to participate in this great program. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure with the requested amendment to continue to accept participants through their 30s.

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy**  
**Support for HB 1989, RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS.**  
**Committee on Water & Land**  
**February 17, 2022, 8:30 AM**  
**Conference Room 430 via Videoconference**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, and Members of the Committee:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports HB 1989, Relating to the Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps, which authorizes the Department of Land and Natural Resources to administer a green jobs youth corps program.

Hawai'i's natural environment is the engine that drives our state's economy and a natural, recreational, and cultural treasure supporting our island lifestyle and livelihoods. Careful, thoughtful, and intentional conservation, management, and restoration is required to ensure our environment can withstand the increasing impacts of climate change while continuing to fuel our islands' economic engine. TNC is proud of our decades of working in partnership with so many local organizations, agencies, and communities to care for this vital and fragile resource.

Since 2011, TNC has benefitted from the tremendous work of dozens of Kupu interns. These interns provide much needed capacity to help us manage our native forested watersheds and coral reefs. These enthusiastic and committed interns have created positive environmental, cultural, and community impact across the islands while also learning under the mentorship of environmental experts. Through their work, these interns are making a positive difference right now while also paving the way for the next generation of conservationists dedicated to perpetuating our unique island environment and diversifying Hawai'i's economy. This program would be funded and strengthened through HB 1989, which provides the platform and funding for additional Kupu internships and other green jobs across our islands. If the bill is not passed, there will be no continued funding for the program begun under Act 181 last year.

As we work together to create a diversified economy, green jobs can and must play a role. By providing immediate relief and opportunity for local jobs while also paving the way for long-term green jobs, environmental expertise, and local leadership, this legislation is an important step in the right direction, and we urge the committees to pass it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1989.

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*The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i and Palmyra is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 40,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and work in over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties, and communities to protect forests and coral reefs for their ecological values and for the many benefits they provide to people.*

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February 16, 2022



## **Testimony in Support of HB1989 Relating to the Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps**

### **To: Committee on Water & Land**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, and members of the committee,

Re-use Hawai'i is a non-profit organization working to create a long-term solution to Hawaii's waste management challenges by keeping building materials out of the landfill and cultivating the circular economy in Hawai'i.

HB1989 relating to the Hawaii Youth Conservation Corps Program is an important measure that will support workforce development in the sustainability sector. Re-use Hawai'i was a host site for ten participants of the Kupu 'Āina Corps program in late 2020 and recently onboarded another cohort of trainees made possible by the passage of HB1176. We're employing and training individuals with diverse backgrounds and abilities whose jobs were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Training included specific skills in deconstruction, lumber processing, customer service, and administration. Our training programs also include workshops on woodworking and safety.

HB1989 and the continued support of this program will allow Re-use Hawai'i and other green job providers to expand our impact, reduce unemployment, and contribute to a regenerative economy.

We strongly support HB1989 and Re-use Hawai'i is eager to participate again as a host site as we work toward a brighter future for Hawai'i's workforce and industries.

Mahalo nui loa,



Quinn Vittum  
Executive Director  
Re-use Hawai'i

**HB-1989**

Submitted on: 2/15/2022 8:40:50 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/17/2022 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kerstyn Afuso	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Subject: In support of HB1989 Relating to the Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, and Members of the WAL Committee,

**I am in support of HB1989** because I recognize the value that these types of programs add to youth's lives. I am currently in a similar program, the AmeriCorps VISTA program, which places people in various government agencies, non-profits, or for-profit organizations around the nation. In just six months in this position, not only have I made countless connections during our interactions with the community and other colleagues, but I have learned invaluable knowledge that I would not have been able to gain by reading a textbook or watching a video.

Previous to this position, I struggled to find a job in Hawai'i that would provide me with the experience I wanted. But, this position has provided me with ENDLESS opportunities. I can confidently say that after my year-long AmeriCorps VISTA position is done, I will be able to comfortably move on to other positions, either in my same office, or in organizations that I have worked without throughout my time here. Having a green jobs youth corps similar to the style of program I am in would have even more benefits, as it would be focusing on work in natural resource conservation, agriculture, and other sustainability fields. These three fields would benefit from the countless connections that can be made through green jobs youth corps programs like the one proposed in HB1989.

This bill will not only give wonderful career opportunities and open up pathways for our youth of Hawai'i, but it will help to build the foundation of our sustainability and agriculture fields here as well. I therefore fully support HB1989 and its appropriation to create a green jobs youth corps.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Kerstyn Afuso



**HB-1989**

Submitted on: 2/15/2022 9:17:08 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/17/2022 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this measure towards a green jobs youth corps to provide temporary work and training opportunities in the fields of natural resource management, agriculture, or other sustainability related professions to young adults ages twentysix and younger. This is a wonderful opportunity for our youth.