



HB2143
RELATING TO BEACH PARK RESTORATION.
House Committee on Water and Land

February 13, 2024

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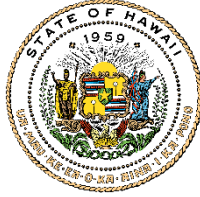
The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB2143, which appropriates funds for a grant-in-aid to the County of Hawai‘i to hire an engineering firm to study, plan, assist, and conduct preliminary design and concept work for a two-phase project to restore the Kahaluu Beach Park in the County of Hawai‘i and conditions the appropriation on the County of Hawai‘i’s contribution of matching funds.

For centuries Kahalu‘u, North Kona has been a place of worship, recreation, and subsistence gathering. This significance and practice continue today. OHA advocates for the protection of our sacred places, nearshore natural and cultural resources, and programs that demonstrates how modern technology and traditional knowledge combined to care for these places. We believe the work that will be supported by this grant-in-aid will further mālama this significant place.

OHA supports the State Legislature in appropriating matching funds to the County of Hawai‘i for Kahalu‘u Beach Park restoration efforts. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
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BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Tuesday, February 13, 2024
10:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2143
RELATING TO BEACH PARK RESTORATION

House Bill 2143 proposes to appropriate funds for a grant-in-aid to the County of Hawai'i to hire an engineering firm to study, plan, assist, and conduct preliminary design and concept work for a two-phase project to restore the Kahalu'u Beach Park in the County of Hawai'i. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill.**

A restoration project at Kahalu'u Beach Park aligns with the following recommendations of the 2022 Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Report Update (Report):

- Recommendation 4: Enable beaches to persist with sea level rise.
- Recommendation 5: Preserve Native Hawaiian culture and communities with sea level rise.
- Recommendation 9: Promote collaboration and accountability for adapting to sea level rise.

Furthermore, the proposed work is responsive to the following priority areas identified in the Report: facilitate interagency coordination for holistic adaptation planning; conserve and adapt Native Hawaiian cultural resources and sites; and address and stop the loss of shoreline access.

The Department seeks to encourage and assist beach restoration efforts throughout the state, and we find that partnerships between State and county agencies are critical in areas with overlapping jurisdictions. The Department appreciates that this effort will be guided by a non-profit that has experience in acting as stewards at Kahalu'u. We believe that this restoration project can serve as a potential template for other communities that are being affected by climate change and sea level rise, and will give the project our full support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor



Maurice C. Messina
Director

Michelle Malia Hiraishi
Deputy Director

County of Hawai`i

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2143

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 10:30 am
Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

Honorable Chair Ichiyama, Honorable Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land, the Hawai`i County Department of Parks and Recreation submits the following in SUPPORT of HB 2143.

This Bill appropriates funds for a grant-in-aid to the County of Hawai`i to hire an engineering firm to study, plan, assist, and conduct preliminary design and concept work for a two-phase project to restore the Kahaluu Beach Park in the County of Hawaii. Conditions the appropriation on the County of Hawaii contribution of matching funds.

The Hawai`i County Department of Parks and Recreation (hereinafter, "DPR") currently manages and has the maintenance responsibility for thirty beach parks in the County of Hawai`i (hereinafter, "COH"). Kahalu`u Beach Park is the most visited beach park in the COH, and hosts upwards of four hundred thousand visitors annually.

Due to its low-lying state, Kahalu`u Beach Park must be frequently closed during high surf events and was the only COH Beach Park on Hawai`i Island that required closure for numerous days to conduct debris clean-up from the recent Tonga tsunami. This opportunity to hire an engineering firm to study, plan, assist, and conduct preliminary design and concept work for a two-phase project to restore Kahaluu Beach Park would help us work toward the restoration of a sacred place for future generations.

For the foregoing reasons, the Hawai`i County Department of Parks and Recreation SUPPORTS the passage of HB 2143. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



RE: HB 2143 Relating to Beach Park Restoration

Description: Appropriates funds for a grant-in-aid to the County of Hawai'i to hire an engineering firm to study, plan, assist, and conduct preliminary design and concept work for a two-phase project to restore the Kahalu'u Beach Park in the County of Hawai'i. Conditions the appropriation on the County of Hawai'i contribution of matching funds.

Tuesday, February 13, 10:30 a.m., Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

Position: **Strongly Support HB 2143**

To: The Honorable Chair Linda Ichiyama, The Honorable Mahina Poepoe Vice-Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land

The Kohala Center (TKC) collaborates with the County of Hawai'i to mālama Kahalu'u Beach and Bay Park, a Wahi Pana (sacred and storied place) in West Hawai'i. Kahalu' u Bay is a premier visitor destination and key Kona economic generator, a traditional community gathering place, and a coral reef spawning habitat. TKC has taken a leadership role in the care of the Bay, offering a unique visitor experience that teaches respect for natural and cultural resources through education, public outreach, and research. We believe that to make wise conservation and development investment decisions, we need current information about the forces affecting the bay's marine structure, how those forces are affecting the terrestrial landscape now, and how they are likely to do so in the future. With good data and a carefully crafted master plan, existing educational and stewardship activities can be most effective while future developments to the park facilities and regulations about park and bay use can maximize the potential for conservation and restoration

We ask your **strong support for HB 2143** to appropriate funds for the restoration of Kahalu'u Beach Park in the County of Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui loa,
Cynthia Punihaole Kennedy
Director Kahalu'u Bay Education Center

HB-2143

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 7:10:00 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/13/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Bishop	Friends of Hanauma Bay	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this bill that will help restore the Kahaluu Bay Beach Park which adjoins Kahaluu Bay - the State of Hawaii's newest Mission Blue Hope Spot. It is a much needed and reasoned first step in restoring this beautiful cultural and ecologically significant part of Hawaii Island's Kona Coast.that is strongly supported by residents and Hawaii County.

Please support this bill!

With Aloha,

Lisa Bishop I President

Friends of Hanauma Bay



To promote and support ocean conservation by raising awareness and appreciation of the marine environment and to serve as a catalyst for multidisciplinary collaboration in ocean-related sustainability efforts.

February 10, 2024
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Brandon Elefante Vice Chair
Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Water and Land
Hearing: Tuesday, February 13, 2024
HB2143 RELATING TO BEACH PARK RESTORATION
Position: **Strongly Support HB2143**

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and the Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing as the president of Dear Ocean and a Mission Blue Hope Spot Champion for Kahalu'u Bay.

On May 26th, 2022, the international marine conservation nonprofit [Mission Blue named Kahalu'u Bay a Hope Spot](#). It is the second designated Hope Spot in the state of Hawai'i, and a wahi pana — a sacred, celebrated, and storied place abundant with cultural and ecological treasures.

You can see the Kahalu'u Bay Hope Spot launch video with Dr. Sylvia Earle [here](#), and the Mission Blue press release for the Hope Spot designation [here](#):

Dr. Sylvia Earle, Founder of Mission Blue, says, "Kahalu'u Bay serves as a model for other smaller bays around the world and shows how they too can harness the deep relationships between people and the environment to protect these cherished places. [the] Bay has become a beacon of hope and a source of inspiration for the community."

Kahalu'u Bay is now receiving international attention and will continue to gather more recognition as it matures into a Mission Blue Hope Spot model for other community stewardship programs worldwide. In fact, in June of 2022, on World Ocean Day, the "[Hope in Hawaii](#)" webinar featuring Hawai'i's two Mission Blue Hope Spots aired with over one thousand individuals across the globe having registered to participate. How we choose to care for this ecologically important bay will have a wide-ranging and long-term impact.



Kahalu‘u Bay is a treasure. The bay’s coral reef is a key spawning ground for fish and coral, and acts as a nursery for juvenile fish and invertebrates including endemic and culturally significant species. The large, shallow, protected reef of Kahalu‘u Bay is directly adjoined to a deeper offshore habitat making it an ideal location for spawning and dispersal to occur.

But, Kahalu‘u Bay has seen profound changes in the past several decades. Overuse and development have severely degraded the reef in the bay, and coral deaths continue even in the absence of large-scale bleaching events. Local stressors include overcrowding and unsustainable tourism, sunscreen pollution, sediment kick-up, coral trampling, coastal inundation, sewage, and polluted groundwater runoff, as illustrated in the brief video [Kahalu‘u Bay | Then and Now](#). These stressors combine with warming waters to create synergistic negative impacts that further inundate the coastline and harm and kill marine life.

Clearly, much work needs to be done— before the damage is irreversible.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF KAHALU‘U BAY IN RECENT YEARS







ONE EXAMPLE OF CAULIFLOWER CORAL DEATH IN KAHALU'U BAY

Rassy
2018



See the hawkfish sheltering in the coral colony named "Rassy"?



Note the beginning of coral decline.

Rassy
2019

Rassy
2022



Rassy is one of many cauliflower corals that have died in Kahalu'u Bay since 2017.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2143 in support of the restoration of Kahalu‘u Bay Beach Park.

Kind Regards,



Christine Zalewski, PhD
President, Dear Ocean

LINKS PROVIDED IN TEXT ABOVE:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/75fa9febcbd94fe08f946f59a1fb2cfe>

<https://www.dearoccean.org/kahaluu-bay-hope-spot-launch-video>

<https://mission-blue.org/2022/05/kahaluu-bay-on-hawaiis-west-coast-recognized-as-a-mission-blue-hope-spot/>

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XstF672fC8s

<https://www.dearoccean.org/then-and-now-kahaluu-bay-video>

Testimony for HB2143

Isaiah's Testimony

My name is Isaiah Herbert. I live in Kailua-Kona and I'm six years old. I strongly support this bill.

The steps on the pavilion are falling apart and the roof on the pavilion is falling in. Kahalu'u Beach Park is falling into the ocean.

Thank you.

Solomon's Testimony

My name is Solomon Herbert, and I support this bill. I am 10 years old and live near Kahalu'u Beach Park. I go there regularly, and I am even learning to surf there.

I believe that Kahalu'u Beach Park is an important gathering place for the community of Kailua-Kona, but it is falling apart. In the central area of the beach park, there is a roped off and rusting pavilion that is pounded by sea spray on a daily basis. This pavilion appears to be dangerous in its current condition and needs to be repaired.

We have included a small collection of photos running from the south to the north end of the beach park showing the current state of Kahalu'u Beach Park. My dad took these photos on Sunday, February 11th, 2024.

Please support this bill for the people of Kailua-Kona and ensure that there is enough funding in it to successfully restore Kahalu'u Beach Park. Thank you.













Kahalu'u Beach Park 1 Eroded steps off Makai side of South Pavilion .jpeg

Kahalu'u Beach Park 2 South Pavilion Roof 1.jpeg

Kahalu'u Beach Park 3 South Pavilion Roof 1.jpeg

Kahalu'u Beach Park 4 Collapsed Central Sea Wall and Condemned Central Pavilion.jpeg

Kahalu'u Beach Park 5 Condemned Central Pavilion.jpeg

Kahalu'u Beach Park 6 Condemned Central Pavilion Roof 1 jpeg

Kahalu'u Beach Park 7 Condemned Central Pavilion Roof 2 .jpeg

Kahalu'u Beach Park 8 Condemned Central Pavilion Roof 3 .jpeg

Kahalu'u Beach Park 9 Collapsing North Bathroom Platform 1.jpeg

Kahalu'u Beach Park 10 Collapsing North Bathroom Platform 2.jpeg

Kahalu'u Beach Park 11 Collapsing North Bathroom Undercut Platform 3.jpeg

HB-2143

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 5:04:25 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/13/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Herring	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I writing to share my strong support of HB 2143 to appropriate funds for a grant-in-aid to the County of Hawai'i to hire an engineering firm to study, plan, assist, and conduct preliminary design and concept work for a two-phase project to restore Kahalu'u Beach Park in the County of Hawaii.

Kahalu'u Beach Park is an incredibly popular park attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Kahalu'u Beach Park is also of great cultural importance as part of the Kahalu'u - Keauhou corridor that included royal residences as well as numerous Heiau and historical fish ponds. Kahalu'u bay itself contains a very extensive yet fragile near shore reef ecosystem. The corals in Kahalu'u Bay help provide fertile breeding grounds for over one hundred species of fish, about 25 percent of which are found only in Hawai'i. The bay is unique in that it not only provides a sheltered area that is ideal for snorkeling but it also has a robust surf break that is ideal for both advanced and beginner surfers. These unique features together with its close proximity to downtown make this one of the most heavily used beach parks in Hawaii.

Unfortunately this heavy usage, together with rising sea levels, increased sea temperatures and pollution from human activity have damaged and continue to negatively impact the park. Many of the facilities in the park are also very old and in urgent need of repair before they are all completely unsafe and unusable, as is already the case for some parts of the park. I therefore, strongly support HB 2143 and urge you to begin the resoration of this incredibly important beach park as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Paul Herring

REBECCA VILLEGAS
Council Member
District 7, Central Kona



PHONE: (808) 323-4267
FAX: (808) 323-4786
EMAIL: Rebecca.villegas@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAII COUNTY COUNCIL

*West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740*

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS COUNCIL MEMBER

HAWAII COUNTY COUNCIL

ON HB 2143 RELATING TO BEACH PARK RESTORATION

House Committee on Water and Land

February 12, 2024

Chairperson Ichiyama and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to SUPPORT HB2143. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Hawaii County Council.

Kahalu'u Bay has historically been regarded as a sacred place to native Hawaiians, adorned with heiau, fishponds, and barrier rock walls that provided for better fishing conditions for hunter-gathers in the area. Because of its historic nature and popularity among visitors, there have been recent efforts by the County of Hawai'i, in partnership with the Kohala Center's Kahalu'u Bay Education Center, to preserve the beach park for future generations through the promotion of reef friendly practices.

Kahalu'u Bay Restoration Working Group, comprised of state and county officials and community leaders, planned for the restoration of the Kahalu'u Beach Park, the Kahalu'u Bay planning, as well as the need for a sea level rise study and coastal engineering input to help guide the planning process.

For these reasons stated above, I urge the House Committee on and Water and Land to support this measure. Should you have any questions, please contact me at, (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Villegas".

Rebecca Villegas
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

