



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/16/2021

**Time:** 08:30 AM

**Location:** 430 Via Videoconference

**Committee:** House Water & Land

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** SB 0508 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**Purpose of Bill:** Requires the Department of Education to establish and administer an ocean safety and stewardship education program for all fourth grade students.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of SB 508, noting that resources will be needed to fully implement the program as envisioned by this measure.

As an island state, the Department recognizes the importance of ocean safety and stewardship education for all of Hawaii's keiki. The Department has recommended and continues to recommend using resources provided by Nā Kama Kai in all of its elementary schools. The Nā Kama Kai resources educate students about the importance of ocean safety and place-based cultural values related to the sea and stewardship.

The Department's school design strategy prioritizes a flexible and adaptive approach, empowering each school to make decisions about specific contexts and partnerships for developing high-quality and relevant learning experiences based on the needs of their students and the local community.

Given the Department's ongoing efforts to promote ocean safety and stewardship education and the availability of the Nā Kama Kai and other resources, the Department respectfully suggests that this measure is not necessary at this time.

Should this bill pass, the Department respectfully requests additional resources to implement and monitor the program adequately. If a program such as Na Kama Kai is selected by the Department, annual costs for color printing, distribution to all schools statewide, and monitoring is estimated to be approximately \$10,000 per year. If the Department contracts other vendors to

produce an ocean safety and place-based cultural values program related to sea and stewardship, the cost is likely to be significantly higher.

Additionally, the Department respectfully requests that an "opt out" provision be included to empower schools to maintain their existing programs and school design or to seek other innovative ways to meet this requirement. The following is recommended language to be added to p. 1, line 15: "The Department may provide an opt-out process for elementary schools that have other comparable programs or conduct water safety at a different grade level."

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 508.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at [www.hawaiipublicschools.org](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org).

**SB-508**

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 9:33:09 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/16/2021 8:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Denver Saxton Coon	Ocean Tourism Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

The Ocean Tourism Coalition supports the intent of SB508 to educate youth on Ocean Safety. Education on the marine environment will provide our keiki with a sense of responsibility and care for our ocean, while also ensuring they are better equipped with the skills needed to interact with this environment safely.