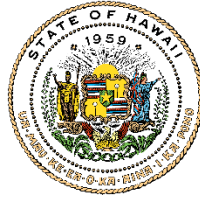


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GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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

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Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House on Committees on  
WATER & LAND  
and  
LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Tuesday, February 14, 2023  
11:15 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 309 Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 203  
RELATING TO THE CIVIL SERVICE

House Bill 203 proposes to amend Section 6E-3(14), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to allow the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to offer more competitive wages for its staff by authorizing SHPD to employ professional and technical staff exempt from civil service laws. **The Department strongly supports this measure.**

House Bill 203 a matter that is essential to the effective and efficient operation of the SHPD. Until this year, SHPD has experiences significant recruitment difficulties. SHPD competes directly with cultural resource consultancies and the federal government for technical personnel. To be competitive with the private sector, SHPD staff need wage increases between twelve and fifty per cent to recruit and retains staff. The Department appreciates the Legislature appropriating personnel funding for the current fiscal year that allows for these wage adjustments. SHPD has only one vacancy in its current staff of 41. This is in large part due to fact the current fiscal year budget allows SHPD to make these wage adjustments, such adjustments are only possible if the positions are only possible because they have been exempt from civil service. If these positions are converted to civil service, the wages would be set by the Department of Human Resources Development.

The Department believes that exempting SHPD's technical professionals from civil service will allow SHPD to recruit more effectively and to retain current staff. Full staffing with qualified personnel is essential to effective and efficient operation of SHPD and the protection of Hawai'i's unique historic properties, and burial sites, as well as the timely review of projects subject to review in Sections 6E-8, 6E-10, and 6E-42, HRS.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this measure.

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
LAURA H.E. KAAKUA  
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MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS



## HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii  
The House of Representatives  
Committee on Water and Land  
Committee on Labor & Government Operations

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association  
February 14, 2023

### H.B. 203– RELATING TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly opposes H.B. 203, which converts the professional and technical staff of the State Historic Preservation Division to be exempt from civil service laws.

The use of exempt employees, which are considered “at will” by the state, is completely contrary to the principles of civil service. Exempt employees do not have the same rights and benefits of civil service employees and that is inherently unfair. We have consistently opposed the creation of more exempt positions in the state government and have advocated for sensible civil service reform.

Instead of allowing more exempt positions, the civil service system must be more flexible and competitive. Converting these positions to an exempt status is a ‘band-aid’ fix to address the underlying recruitment and retention issue of these positions. Instead, the state should look into raising the pricing of the professional and technical staff of the State Historic Preservation Division. By simply raising pricing, it will allow the state to offer a competitive salary along with the robust rights and benefits of a civil service position. The answer to the challenges faced by the state is not the creation of more exempt employees, but substantive reform of the state’s civil service system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on strong opposition of H.B. 203.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director