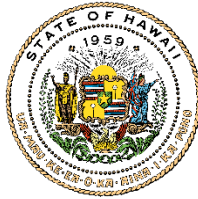


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GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAI'I | 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 Senate Committee on  
WATER AND LAND**

**Friday, March 24, 2023  
1:00 P.M.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**In consideration of  
SENATE RESOLUTION 83  
REQUESTING THE TASK FORCE ON BEACH AND WATER SAFETY TO RESUME  
CONVENING REGULAR MEETINGS AS MANDATED BY LAW AND PROVIDE A  
CURRENT STATUS REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE**

Senate Resolution 83 requests the Task Force on Beach and Water Safety (Task Force) to resume convening regular meetings as mandated by law and provide a current status report to the Legislature. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) does not support this measure as written and offers comments.**

Act 190, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 1996, created a process for the State and the Counties to provide legally adequate warning signs to warn the public of potentially dangerous ocean conditions adjacent to state and county beach parks. At its inception and for a period thereafter, the Task Force met at beach park locations throughout the State and selected optimal locations and the appropriate warning signs that would be deemed adequate to warn of the specific ocean conditions that may occur adjacent the beach.

The Department's Division of State Parks (State Parks) has a total of only 18 parks across the state that are on the shoreline. Of these 18, only 13 have beaches where specific warning signs were recommended by the Task Force due to potentially dangerous reoccurring ocean conditions where the public goes to the park specifically to enter the water. The Department, previously and in consultation with the Task Force, has posted the requisite warning signage at all the State Park beaches and has not added any new State Park beaches to the system for over a decade. There are no current plans to add any new beach parks to the system.

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Conversely, the combined total of county beach parks across the State is 74. Kauai – 17, Oahu – 20, Maui - 18 and Hawaii 18. Additionally, the Counties have Ocean Safety Officers (lifeguards) and the State does not. Due to this, State Parks contracts county professionally trained lifeguards to staff 5 of the 13 State Park beaches that have conditions deemed to not only need warning signage, but lifeguards as well. State Parks currently pays \$5.5 million dollars a year for these critical services.

Clearly, due to the Counties having trained lifeguards and roughly 6 times the amount of public beach parks – they have both the expertise and quantity of beaches to render their staff experts on ocean safety issues.

The measure is correct in that Chapter 13-8, Hawaii Administrative Rules, applies to sign design standards for terrestrial natural hazards. This internal process has been institutionalized by Department staff and rarely new trail or park locations are identified that need warning signage. As with the Act 190 signs, this process is now predominantly sign monitoring and replacement due deleterious sign conditions. The Department is still interested in amending Act 82, SLH 2003, to eliminate the Risk Assessment Working Group, the land based counter part of the Task Force.

The Department recommends that instead of State Parks being tasked to administratively reconvening the Task Force to support the Counties, that the law be amended to have the respective Counties administer the meetings and reporting elements of the Task Force.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.