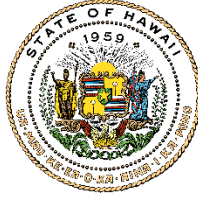


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN KP KANAKAOLE
FIRST DEPUTY

DEAN D. UYENO
ACTING 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
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Friday, February 9, 2024
1:10 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2167
RELATING TO NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

Senate Bill 2167 proposes to appropriate additional operational funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to protect, manage, and restore Hawai'i's natural resources. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact higher department priorities indicated in the Executive Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Supplemental Budget.**

Providing additional funding to the Department will improve protection of Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources. These resources provide our drinking water and sustain all life on our islands, are huge economic assets and prime attractions of our tourism industry, and support the well-being, health, and identity of our communities. A University of Hawai'i study examined the various services provided by O'ahu's Ko'olau forests - including drinking water recharge, flood prevention, water quality, carbon storage, biodiversity, cultural, aesthetic, recreational, and commercial values. These services were calculated to have a net present value of between \$7.4 and \$14 billion. In the Pearl Harbor aquifer, full forest protection (~20,000 acres) saves the water utility \$26 to \$39 million per year (after 50 years) in replacement costs. Coral reefs – the first line of defense to large ocean swells - annually protect \$836 million in averted damages to property and economic activity in Hawai'i. Despite the value of our forests, coastlines, cultural sites, and oceans, Hawai'i invests less than 1% of the total state budget into maintaining these assets.

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

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 3:17:52 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support!

More funding is needed to protect the 'aina and restore, manage and protect natural resources. Funding to protect the 'aina should be our priority in this time of climate warming, dying coral, more intense storms, wildfires, sea level rise, poisoned water and invasive species.

Mahalo! Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)

KINGDOM PATHWAYS



Re: **Testimony SUPPORTING of SB2167**

Aloha Kakou respected committee members,

My name is Carmen Guzman-Simpliciano, and I am a lifelong resident of Wai'anae Moku. I am testifying in **SUPPORT of SB2167**, and express my sentiments regarding climate change in my ahupua'a of Wai'anae.

Kingdom Pathways, our non-profit organization, we deeply understand the importance of safeguarding, overseeing, preserving, and revitalizing resources through various preservation and restoration projects. Our work is guided by the wisdom of our Kupuna who recognized the need for protection but did not anticipate some long-term effects. For instance, the breakwater wall in Pōka'i Bay has led to significant issues like severe sand accumulation, alterations in the topography, shoreline reduction, stagnant water, and contaminated sand.

Engaging our community in clean-up activities across our beaches, valleys, and mountains plays a vital role in preserving our environment. It is equally crucial to protect our cultural sites, such as Kū'ilioloa Heiau, and conserve our native species like ua'u kani by partnering with DOFAW, DOBOR, DAR, DUF. Additionally, we must prioritize the conservation of our coral reefs, maintain water quality, protect our watersheds, and ensure the continuous flow of streams to support green buffers and reforestation initiatives.

Providing funding to DLNR will significantly benefit our Wai'anae moku by necessitating the addition of more DOCARE officers and implementing a night shift to ensure the protection and conservation of our precious resources and conservation areas. These officers play a vital role in supervising ocean activities, safeguarding marine and wildlife, overseeing game and public hunting areas, and maintaining natural reserves like Kaena Point.

Respectfully,

Carmen Guzman-Simpliciano

Director of Kingdom Pathways

Email: kingdompathways.info@gmail.com

Website: www.kingdompathways.info

KP



**Coalition Letter in Support of Funding for Natural Resource Stewardship & Restoration
Care for ‘Āina Now Coalition**

Testimony in Support of SB2167
Senate Committee on Water & Land Hearing
Friday February 9, 2024 @ 1:10pm

Aloha e Hawai‘i State Legislators,

Our coalition of organizations and small businesses listed below are writing in **strong support of SB2167 to generate funding for natural resource protection and restoration**. Previously known as the Hawai‘i Green Fee Coalition, the **Care for ‘Āina Now Coalition** is on a mission to enhance visitor stewardship, conserve our cultural and natural resources, and invest in our ‘āina to keep our community safe.

The health of Hawai‘i’s environment is inextricably linked to the health of our people, communities, and future generations. Our natural and cultural resources provide over \$6 billion in value to our economy each year, yet have been chronically neglected and stewardship of these resources have been underfunded for decades. It’s been estimated that we currently face a conservation funding gap of \$360 million/year. Today, this underinvestment continues to be a liability and risk to public safety. The more time that passes without healing our environment, the more lives, places, and communities are at risk of being harmed.

Our primary focus is adequate, permanent funding for the Department of Land and Natural Resources to support stewardship and restoration of our natural resources. There are simple ways our State can safeguard our ‘āina and people this year, including passing legislation that ensures visitor taxes go back to our environment through the TAT, and allocating funds for wildfire prevention and ecosystem resilience. These will help Hawai‘i chart a new course that can sustain us.

This coalition, which works on the frontlines of natural and cultural resource management across the State, applauds the legislature for continuing to consider these solutions. We urge you to consider the crucial need for sustainable, broad-based investment to meet the immense challenges our environment faces, offset the impact left by nearly 10 million annual visitors, and invest in the long-term health of our communities. Hawai‘i’s natural resources are invaluable to the livelihoods of our local residents and integral drivers of our statewide economy as well as our visitor industry.



Poll results from January 2023 reveal 89% of voters believe we must increase investment in our land, water, wildlife, and natural resources. The following priorities will help our State offset visitor impact: supporting broad funding of our natural and cultural resources, uplifting community groups to implement solutions to offset visitor impacts, and increasing the health and resilience of places frequented by residents and visitors.

These 45 organizations and businesses support taking care of our environment so that Hawai'i can continue to nourish and care for us and future generations

1. Agripelago
2. Blue Planet Foundation
3. Care About Climate
4. Conservation International
5. Delphi Cinema
6. Excurinsure
7. Fish Pono–Save Our Reefs
8. Full Circle Farm
9. FutureSwell
10. Good Food Movement
11. Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED)
12. Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA)
13. Hawai'i Impact Collaborative
14. Hawai'i Land Trust
15. Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition
16. Hawai'i Wildlife Fund
17. Hawai'i Youth Climate Coalition
18. Kailua Beach Adventures
19. Kanu Hawai'i
20. Kingdom Pathways
21. Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (KUA)
22. Kuleana Coral Restoration
23. Kupu
24. Leftover Love Co



25. Mālama Learning Center
26. Mālama Maunaloa
27. Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea
28. National Tropical Botanical Garden
29. Native Ecosystem Services
30. The Nature Conservancy
31. North Shore Community Land Trust
32. Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project
33. Parley for the Oceans
34. Pono Hawai'i Initiative
35. Protea Zero Waste Store
36. Resources Legacy Fund
37. Reuse Hawai'i
38. Surfrider Foundation Hawai'i Chapters
39. Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i
40. Trust for Public Land
41. Wakeful State
42. Wastewater Alternatives & Innovations (WAI)
43. Wild Kids
44. Young Progressives Demanding Action
45. Zero Waste O'ahu
46. Zero Waste Hawai'i Island

Mahalo for your commitment to protecting Hawai'i's priceless natural assets, and please reach out with any questions at aloha@careforaina.org.

Mahalo,
Care for 'Āina Now Team



Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

7192 Kalaniana'ole Hwy
Suite A-143A, #249
Honolulu, HI 96825
Phone: 808/933/9411
Email: hfia@hawaiiiforest.org

Date: 02/08//24

TO: WTL Chair Inouye, WTL Vice Chair Elefante and WTL Committee Members Chang, McKelvey, Fevella

FROM: the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA)

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support for SB2167 Relating to Natural Resource Protection

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Directors and members of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), please support SB2167 Relating to Natural Resource Protection.

The HFIA has been working toward "Healthy and Productive Forests" for Hawaii since 1989, and recognizes the importance of managing our natural resources (including Hawaii's native and planted forests) for various benefits. Adequately managing our various natural resources, landscapes and ecosystems helps to prevent and/or reduce the impact of natural disasters on those very resources, landscapes and ecosystems, as well as on nearby communities.

The HFIA is more than familiar with the ongoing struggle to manage Hawaii's natural resources, in large part due to a lack of funding at private, State and Federal levels. Being that the State holds much of Hawaii's public lands, a need for increased funding is more than obvious in order to manage said lands to a degree that is conducive to reducing the severity and frequency of natural disasters.

It is unfortunate that the devastating 2023 wildfires in Lahaina, Maui is what it took to prompt an influx of interest in land and natural resource management as a tool for wildfire prevention, but while it is still sore on hearts, and fresh in our minds, we should act now in finally increasing funding to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for natural resource management.

We encourage you to support SB2167.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Guy Cellier, President
Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

HFIA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy. HFIA has over 130 members including woodworkers, landowners, sawyers, foundations, foresters, growers, educators, environmentalists, architects, millers, ranchers, and others interested in HFIA's mission and goals.

HFIA Board of Directors

Officers: President Guy Cellier, Vice President Irene Sprecher, Secretary Taylor Coons, Treasurer Wade Lee
Directors: Jeremy Campbell, Aaron Hammer, Nicholas Koch, Michael Sowards, Aileen Yeh

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 3:20:11 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlie Quesnel	Testifying for Surfrider Foundation Maui Chapter	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Hawai‘i is known as the extinction capitol of the world and the threat of hurricanes, fires, and floods is increasing with the climate crisis.
- It is estimated our current conservation funding gap is \$360 million per year.
- Funding for our ‘āina must be a priority this year, the consequences of our underinvestment are a risk to our communities.
- We must take care of the places and ecosystems that care for us, before it is too late.
- Taking care of our environment takes resources, and there are many management plans, State programs and community organizations that can make a larger impact with more investment.

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 5:06:27 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wesley A Ignacio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I see too much non locals living on maui, and my family, my kids, are not living on the island because they can not afford a house or even rent! Please help my family return home and continue to preserve the hawaiian/ local culture.



Statement of:
Todd J. Robertson
Hyperspective
Before the
COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Individual Testimony in **Support of SB2146**

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Todd Robertson and I am submitting written testimony on behalf of myself and my company, Hyperspective in strong **support of SB2146**, which will allocate money from the budget to protect, restore, and manage natural resources and help close our \$360 million annual conservation funding gap. I have been a resident of the State of Hawai'i and the City and County of Honolulu for more than 25 years, and I care deeply about our island community, the well-being of our people, and the 'āina to which we all have the kuleana/responsibility to care for.

Being an island community, completely remote from other places, we face enumerable challenges in the protection of our reefs, our coastal environments, and our communities from multiple threats, as well as all of the endemic species that have existed here far longer than humans. These challenges are exacerbated by climate change which will come with massive financial pitfalls.

Please be a part of protecting our 'āina, helping to restore our ecosystems, and managing our natural resources for a more resilient and sustainable community by passing this bill.

As our leaders you hold the privilege of directly supporting this, doing what is best for our communities, and creating a legacy of making Hawai'i safer and better for our future. Passing this bill will send a strong message to our community that you are committed to that cause. Please help to change the negative moniker "Hawai'i is the extinction capital of the world" to a more positive "Hawai'i leads the world in protecting our resources."

This bill must be passed immediately, as the growing threats and challenges will not wait. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Todd J. Robertson
President/CEO, Hyperspective

HYPERPECTIVE STUDIOS, INC.
643 ILALO STREET
HONOLULU, HI 96813

MAIL TO:
P.O. BOX 893636
MILILANI, HI 96789

HYPERPECTIVE.COM
808.353.3618

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 10:01:49 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Symonds	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Cochran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Anna Symonds and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of HB2406, which would help resource our environment through visitor investment and help close our \$360 million annually conservation funding gap.

We really, really need to protect the beautiful places that make this land the special place that it is. Nature is a dynamic, living system and while it is resilient, we are overloading our land with more than it can handle. We are seeing the painful results of this all over the islands.

Our public lands are in desperate need of care. And in addition, there are numerous areas that are overused by visitors, yet because they are not official parks, have little to no protections. Here on Hawai'i Island where I live, a good example of this is Pololu, and Waipio Valley before the road closure (which is temporary).

We face surmounting and terrifying environmental challenges like wildfires, disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources.

SB2406 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources.

As an island region, our community safety is at risk the more years we go without significant funding toward environmental protection and restoration. Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources.

This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. If passed, HB3406 should help distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State.

I urge the committee to pass measures that would resource our State agencies and community organizations with the funding to protect our 'āina, restore our ecosystems, and manage our natural resources to build resilience and public safety.

There is immense public support for this initiative, and HB2406 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

The time is NOW!!! We have already waited too long and cannot delay any longer.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Anna Symonds

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 10:17:32 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Remy Hirai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aoha, my name is Remy Hirai, I'm a native Hawaiian resident on Oahu, and I support bill SB3167. Hawai'i is known as the extinction capitol of the world and the threat of hurricanes, fires, and floods is increasing with the climate crisis. It's estimated our current conservation funding gap is \$360 million per year. Funding for our 'āina must be a priority this year, the consequences of our underinvestment are a risk to our communities. We must take care of the places and ecosystems that care for us, before it is too late. Taking care of our environment takes resources, and there are many management plans, State programs and community organizations that can make a larger impact with more investment.

Mahalo.

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 10:47:08 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jon Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Hawai‘i is known as the extinction capitol of the world and the threat of hurricanes, fires, and floods is increasing with the climate crisis.
- It’s estimated our current conservation funding gap is \$360 million per year.
- Funding for our ‘āina must be a priority this year, the consequences of our underinvestment are a risk to our communities.
- We must take care of the places and ecosystems that care for us, before it is too late.
- Taking care of our environment takes resources, and there are many management plans, State programs and community organizations that can make a larger impact with more investment.

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 10:48:29 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samantha Mislinski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of SB2167. Science has been sounding the alarm about the risk fires have on Hawai'i for decades. Unfortunately, not enough has been done by the government and private entities to prevent fires. Last fall, we saw the consequences of inaction. Lahaina is gone. People died. People have lost their homes and livelihoods. We lost critical, sensitive environments that will have dire consequences on our economic stability and our own health. We cannot afford another Lahaina. We must act now, and allocate money to prevention and research, and prioritize our most at-risk communities, which will bear the brunt of the fire crises. Droughts and fires will only continue to increase as climate change intensifies. Do the right thing for our communities for today and for the future by voting yes on SB2167.

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 3:26:37 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kalae	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kala'e Lopes. I was born and raised in Waimanalo and have dedicated myself to conservation work and educating our youth about Hawaii's fragile ecosystem. I am a strong proponent of the green fee for tourism. I know this testimony isn't for that, but I desperately hope the legislation reconsiders.

For this bill I want to point out that this island receives billions of dollars from tourism. However, these visitors often damage trails, reefs, and pollute waters, which can be harmful to natural wildlife. Little is done to address these issues, which is concerning. The island's biodiversity, both on land and in the water, is what makes Hawaii so beautiful and appealing to tourists, and it is important to maintain it. Without it, tourism would decrease. As locals, we are here every day and witness the damage caused by tourists, developers, private corporations, and even from the plantation period. A lot of restoration work needs to be done, not just maintenance. I urge the government to allocate a significant budget towards restoration, maintenance, and enforcement to allow our island to heal.

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 3:54:36 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rafia Hasina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this cause

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 10:24:48 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy Miles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am submitting written testimony in **support of SB2167**.

As a conservation professional with over 20 years of experience, I am consistently amazed by the innovation and creative problem-solving of Hawai‘i’s conservation community. However, great shortfalls in funding severely limit what DLNR and local environmental organizations can accomplish. It is estimated that Hawai‘i’s current funding gap is \$360 million per year.

We are in an “all hands on deck” moment Some of Hawai‘i’s best known - and less well known - species face extinction in the coming decade.

We are also in a moment of reckoning. Past underinvestment in the ‘āina has harmed not only native species and ecosystems, but also our communities.

This is why I strongly urge the committee to pass measures that will help resource our State agencies and community organizations with the funding to protect our ‘āina, restore our ecosystems, and manage our natural resources to build resilience and public safety.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Dr. Wendy Miles

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 11:57:17 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimeona Kane	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha nui kākou,

Kimeona Kane of Waimānalo in strong support of this bill as it works towards closing the gaps relating to the care and aloha needed for our Hawai‘i. It is no surprise that we recognize the challenges in our stewardship of place, given some of the financial and resources challenges, however, it goes without saying, that we must do more. We have only one Hawai‘i and we are running on a very fine line towards a future where we lose. It is imperative that the State, County and Federal partners continue to ensure that we are able to preserve the little that we have left of Hawai‘i. As each day passes, I feel like we move farther away from our shared reality, which is to truly aloha ‘āina. Please continue to evolve the funding mechanisms to meet the evolving needs of our native species, ecosystems, resources and everthing in between, AND evolve the way in which DLNR interacts with the communities they serve. There are incredible people across many communities, who are ready to serve ‘āina in collaboration and with support. Lets hui up and serve Hawai‘i well, in the ways our kupuna understood,

HE ALI‘I KA ‘ĀINA, HE KA UWĀ KE KANAKA

The land is chief and we are the servants.

Mahalo nui for your time and support.

Kimeona Kane

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 8:28:33 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeanne Herbert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am a Hawai'i resident and I strongly urge you to pass SB2167. Our natural resource management and protection efforts have been severely underfunded for decades. This is an opportunity to show our collective commitment to increasing funding to DLNR to manage our resources for our community and our visitors.

Mahalo,

Jeanne Herbert

Oahu

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 9:39:51 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Reis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

I am in full support of this bill, but it seems it would be ineffectual without a dollar amount provided for allocation to fund restoration and management of the ‘āina. In 2019 about \$360 million was needed to fill a funding gap for these desperately necessary protection and restoration efforts - in 2024 I can only imagine how much more is needed. As many hundreds of thousands of dollars as can be allocated, I fully support that. Please, before passing this bill, make amendments that clearly state a high dollar allotment for these ‘āina protection measures.

Mahalo,

Alana Reis, Halawa resident, O‘ahu



February 9, 2024

Senate Committee on Water & Land
Chair Senator Inouye
Vice Chair Elefante
Members of the Committee
Via Electronic Transmission

Re: The Imperative of Allocating Adequate Funding to Protect Natural Resources
Support SB 2167, Relating to Natural Resource Protection

Aloha!

Thank you for the opportunity to support SB 2167, Relating to Natural Resource Protection. At its core, our recommendation is to significantly increase funding for natural resource management and restoration. How we protect and manage our natural resources will determine whether our children and future generations inherit a healthy, safe, and beautiful environment. This bill is an important step toward meeting these goals.

Natural resources are the lifeblood of our pae ‘āina, providing us with the essentials for survival and the foundation for Hawai‘i’s economy, our very society. These resources include clean air and water, fertile soil, living coral reefs, stable coastlines and beaches, biodiversity and healthy forests. We commend the legislature, cognizant of the local and global threats to these riches, for declaring Hawai‘i to be the first state in the nation to declare a climate emergency. Protecting and restoring these resources is a moral, economic, and ecological imperative.

Based on the foregoing, we support this bill and strongly advocate for significantly increased funding for DLNR so that Hawai‘i can:

- Remove flammable nonnative plants and restore sites with less flammable native plants.
- Restore coral reefs to help protect our beaches and coastal communities from sea level rise and storm surges, while also protecting the fisheries that draw tourists and sustain local residents.
- Restore watershed forests that protect our water quality and supplies, in addition to reducing the risks of fire.
- Provide grants to local communities to assist them in managing and restoring natural resources, including reducing their fire risks.

The Maui wildfires have now amplified to every resident, and indeed the world, that no region in the world is immune to the impact of this climate crisis. We are a coalition of individuals and organizations committed to supporting better management of the state’s natural resources. We estimate that an additional \$360 million annually is needed to close the current budget shortfall in protecting our islands

against climate threats and the impacts of tourism. At its most basic level, this funding is necessary for wildfire prevention strategies.

Preventing damage to natural resources is often more cost-effective than trying to restore them once they have been degraded. For example, restoring a polluted stream can be far more expensive than preventing pollution in the first place. Wildfire prevention can be significantly more cost-effective than paying for the cost of responding to wildfires and restoring damaged communities and natural resources. Legislators who allocate funding for protection and restoration are, in essence, making a sound long-term investment in their constituents, well-being, and the environment.

We have a moral responsibility to protect the natural resources that sustain life on our islands. Future generations depend on the decisions we make today. Legislators have a unique role in shaping policies that reflect our ethical obligation to safeguard the environment for all living beings.

In conclusion, there are numerous compelling reasons why legislators should approve funding to protect, restore, and manage Hawai'i's magnificent and irreplaceable natural resources. Disaster resilience, climate change mitigation, clean water and air, sustainable agriculture, economic benefits, public health, long-term cost savings, biodiversity conservation, and ethical responsibility all underscore the importance of such investments. By allocating the necessary funds, legislators can secure a brighter and more sustainable future for all. It is a responsibility that cannot be ignored, and the benefits far outweigh the costs.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that our natural resources are at the forefront of policy-leaders' minds and that the state budget reflects these priorities.

Mahalo,

Care for 'Āina Now Coalition

Website: careforainanow.org

Contact: aloha@careforainanow.org

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:30:26 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina Comfort	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Conservation funding is essential for Hawaii. We can see the tragic effects of natural resource mismanagement in the fire in Lahaina, the rapid extinction of native species, the degradation of the coral reefs, and more. It is estimated that there is a \$360 million funding gap to address Hawaii's urgent conservation needs. Please fund conservation in Hawaii!

I am a water quality scientist and oceanographer at UH Manoa, so I see the urgent needs first hand in my work every day.

Mahalo for supporting conservation funding.

Christina Comfort

Pupukea, Oahu, Hawaii

LATE

SB-2167

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 8:06:43 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/9/2024 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kahi Pacarro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The visitor industry is excessively extractive. Although we see a few properties taking small steps, more could be done, while others continue only to see the short-term need for revenue at the expense of the long-term implications of our natural resources.

I support this bill because it will deliver funds to the groups that will continue to restore, enhance, and protect our natural resources. As a group leader that does this work, funding has always been a challenge. The chase and hunt for funding takes away from the work. More work gets done in our environment by making access to funding easier.

Help us do more good work. Pass SB2167.