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

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Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
WATER & LAND

Tuesday, February 7, 2023  
9:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 430

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1371  
RELATING TO THE SAND ISLAND STATE RECREATION AREA

House Bill 1371 proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to prepare a master plan for the Sand Island State Recreation Area that develops the concept of a “people’s park”, and to incorporate a Native Hawaiian arts and cultural center. **The Department supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

The Department appreciates the legislature’s recognition that Sand Island State Recreation Area is an underutilized park with aging infrastructure, facilities and undeveloped sections. In recent years we have applied prior legislative appropriations to target some areas, including sewer system upgrades, redevelopment of the softball field complex and associated facilities, and a large-scale shoreline debris remediation has been initiated. These projects have tackled issues within the developed area of the park, but the undeveloped section holds great potential for expanded facilities and activities as envisioned by this bill. The legislature should be aware that a variety of temporary uses, including support for the city’s adjacent Sand Island wastewater treatment plan upgrades are ongoing as well, and will also enhance and prepare park areas for future improvements.

The Department would like to point out that starting on page 6 line 21 through page 7 line 11, the bill appears to conflate Ke‘ehi Lagoon Beach Park with Sand Island State Recreation Area and suggests that this be clarified in an amended version.

We respectfully suggest that an appropriation in the amount of \$500,000 be inserted for the proposed planning and necessary entitlements.

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

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

LAURA H.E. KAAKUA  
FIRST DEPUTY

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

## HB1371 – Written Testimony

Hawaii Softball Foundation  
Jon Okada – Board Member

Dear State of Hawaii Legislative Branch,

On behalf of the Hawaii Softball Foundation, I would like to give our support of HB1371.

In 2009 the Hawaii Softball Foundation began conversations with DLNR State Park on the opportunity to renovate the existing ball fields inside of the Sand Island State Recreational Area. Over the next 13 years we continued to collaborate with DLNR on the project for 6 girls softball field and the impact it would have to all of Hawaii's residents well beyond just the sport of softball.

In January of 2022 the Hawaii Softball Foundation executed a 10-year lease for 6 softball fields and we are moving full steam ahead. The operations and maintenance of these fields are 100% funded by the Foundation which was part of the negotiations. We are so grateful for everyone in the state who had a hand in this project in some way or another and we take our responsibility to maximize the impact with the opportunity we have been given.

Having a master plan for the entire park would be a great tool to navigate the future of the park. Currently we are working on the following projects. Together these projects create a Hawaii that is what our visitors dream about and what us residents simply call home.

- Softball
  - o Since partially opening over the last 6 months, we have welcomed a host of events at the complex. This spring season we will see one of our local colleges play all their home games here. 2 high schools will play all their home games here also. There will be 6 visiting colleges and 12 various high schools that will play games at the complex. This has been such a blessing to softball, and it does have a trickle-down effect as other parks now have open space to host baseball, soccer, etc. Youth sports is an important piece of a child's life and the more accessible and affordable we make it the better.
- Traffic/Parking
  - o As we draw more than 300 plus people to the area for special event weekends, we continue to work on new protocols to mitigate the congestion and keep it safe.
- Shoreline Cleanups
  - o We are currently working with another nonprofit group to do monthly cleanups in SISRA. Over the next 18 months the shoreline area will be more accessible and usable by the public.
- Homeless
  - o When we first got there in 2010 the situation was not too good. Over the next 12 years it continuously got worse and then in 2019 a bunch of state agencies and outreach groups did an incredible job of helping those in need to find a new path. While the situation still exists today, it is in its best place from a total numbers and criminal behavior perspective.
- 100 Trees
  - o As we continue to remove various invasive species from the landscape, we are working on a project with DLNR and certified arborists to introduce 100 native species around the sports complex.

- Native Garden
  - o We are duplicating a project that DLNR has incorporated in another park. It takes the runoff from outdoor showers to irrigate a native garden with signage to educate park users.
- 100% Sustainable Energy
  - o We use no electricity from SISRA. Over the next few years 100% of the energy used to power the maintenance equipment, scoreboards, audio systems, security systems, and safety lighting will all be generated by the sun.
- Plastic water bottle free
  - o Youth sports is a big user of plastic beverage containers. We have an initiative to be 100% plastic water bottle free withing the next 5 years. Our proximity to the shoreline makes this a great initiative.
- Water management
  - o Although keeping our fields playable requires a lot of water, we are implementing controls that will enable us to reduce our water usage by 10%. If there is R-1 water available for use in the future, we will be able to reduce our potable water usage by 60%.
- Historic preservation
  - o We are constantly reminded of the history of the area and continue to seek more information as they become available. Adjacent to one of our fields is the last remaining piece of a practice firing range. We plan to create one of the most scenic points in the park on top of this berm and include signage to tell the story of this piece of history.
- Cultural preservation
  - o This is one of the most important projects as it tells a story of the past and educates those into the future. As we meet more people and listen to their stories, we are excited at the potential of using our surroundings to tell the story.

Tying everything together in a master plan would help give direction for all user groups and create a more sustainable park that generations will be able to utilize. Also, getting started on a few general but impactful projects sooner than later would help keep the park moving forward and keep the momentum that has already been started.

Thank you everyone in the state for allowing us to do what we are doing and for the continued support of the Sand Island State Recreational Area.

Thank you,

*Jon Okada*

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**HB-1371**

Submitted on: 2/3/2023 10:20:47 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/7/2023 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill.