

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Tuesday, April 4, 2023
10:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1394, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

House Bill 1394, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) Division of Forestry and Wildlife to manage hotspots at trailheads as part of the Nā Ala Hele Trail and Access Program (Program). **The Department strongly supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Department's Executive Budget request.**

The Department acknowledges the Hawai'i Tourism Authority's Destination Management Action Plan initiative, which identified a series of destination "hotspots" across the State that are presenting management challenges to the agencies tasked with managing the hotspot areas. Program staff are currently actively engaged in a strategic planning effort to address the challenges associated with visitor use and have initiated programs and projects statewide to help mitigate the impacts of a rapid rise in outdoor recreation.

The funding proposed by this Act will allow the Department to put personnel and planning efforts in motion to address a number of these hotspots, including trailheads in the Koke'e region of Kaua'i, the Maunawili Falls and Ka'iwa Ridge trails on O'ahu, multiple areas on Maui, Naha Trail on Lāna'i, and Pololū Valley, Waipi'o Valley, and Maunakea on Hawai'i island. The six positions proposed will enable enhanced active management of the Division of Forestry and Wildlife's recreational inventory.

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



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Josh Green, M.D.
Governor

John De Fries
President and Chief Executive Officer

Statement of
JOHN DE FRIES
Hawaii'i Tourism Authority
before the
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Tuesday, April 4, 2023
10:30 a.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL NO. 1394 HD1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

The Hawaii'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments in support of HB1394 HD1, which appropriates funds to the department of land and natural resources for operating costs and personnel to manage certain trailheads as part of the Na Ala Hele trail and access program.

HTA's message to prospective visitors around the world is **Mālama Hawaii'i**: an invitation for them to join kama'āina in caring for our beloved home. Setting that intention and expectation, combined with robust visitor education through all stages of the journey, is our strategy to target and welcome visitors who prioritize the environment and being mindful guests – all key to achieving our goal of a regenerative model of tourism through destination management.

An important component of visitor education where we must continue to build capacity is inperson stewardship of sensitive sites like the trails for which the Department of Land and Natural Resources is responsible. We appreciate the Legislature's consideration of this need, which was articulated by community members across Hawaii'i in the Destination Management Action Plans for each county.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer these comments on the intent of HB1394 HD1, and defer to our colleagues at the Department of Land and Natural Resources on matters related to the implementation of this measure including their recommendations on funding levels provided in testimony. Mahalo.



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SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Tuesday, April 4, 2023 – 10:30am

Hawai'i Bicycling League Supports HB1394 HD1, relating to the Dept. of Land & Natural Resources

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members,

My name is Travis Counsell, and I am the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Bicycling League (HBL). We are a non-profit organization founded in 1975 with the mission of enabling more people to ride bicycles for health, recreation, and transportation. We strive to create communities across our islands that have safe, accessible, and inclusive environments for people to bike, walk, and roll, whether on roads, paths, or trails.

Hawai'i Bicycling League strongly supports HB1394 HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for operating costs and personnel to manage certain trailheads as part of the Na Ala Hele trail and access program.

The Na Ala Hele trail and access program is an extremely important part of the Department of Land & Natural Resources as is currently under-staffed and under-funded to handle the increased demand on our trail systems, by residents and visitors alike. This bill would provide much needed funding to increase staff and operational bandwidth to handle the hot spots that exist within our trail networks.

Hawai'i Bicycling League represents people who ride bicycles across the State of Hawai'i, including those who recreate off-road. Trails are important not only for physical health, but mental health. Access to the outdoors makes Hawai'i an attractive place to live as well as visit. We must prioritize management of these resources.

We strongly urge you to pass this legislation to protect this important program and ultimately create a better managed trail network for all to enjoy. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

Ride Aloha,

Travis L. Counsell
Executive Director
Hawai'i Bicycling League

HB-1394-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2023 4:36:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Klayton Kubo | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Strongly In Support.

HB-1394-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2023 9:15:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| James B Friday | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Inouye and Dela Cruz and Vice-Chairs Elefante and Keith-Agaran,

I am writing to support HB 1394 and support the DLNR's Na Ala Hele program. The state trails are real gems and I enjoy hiking on them a few times a month. The DLNR staff in charge of maintaining the trails are stretched thin, however, and many trails badly need upkeep and maintenance. HB 1394 would allocate much-needed funds to maintain and manage the trail system so that both residents and visitors can enjoy some of the most beautiful places in Hawai'i.

HB-1394-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2023 4:06:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Edwin Petteys | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee:

For many years, the Na Ala Hele program has struggled to manage our state’s trail and access system with insufficient staffing and resources. It is a program that continues to grow both in terms of its geographic importance, but also in its cultural and recreational value to visitors and residents alike. For many, the experiences and opportunities offered by this program represent their “face of Hawaii.”

Lack of support has placed a difficult burden on this important program, forcing it into a triage-like prioritization process to allocate its limited resources and hampering Na Ala Hele’s ability to function at a programmatic level. One of the symptoms of Na Ala Hele’s struggle is the hotspot issue referenced in this Bill. HB1394 is an opportunity to help this vitally important program to gain the staff and resources it needs to move it towards proactive, consistent, and more comprehensive program management.

It is good to see the support that this Bill has received to date, and that it has finally reached your Committee. I ask for your support of HB1394 in allocating the finances needed to allow this program to more properly protect and manage the trail related resources that define Hawaii for so many residents and visitors. Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully, Edwin Petteys, resident of Hawaii Island.

HB-1394-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2023 6:18:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Deborah Chang | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee:

I urge your support of HB1394 HD1. Our state’s Nā Ala Hele program was established in 1988 to manage our statewide trail and access system but has suffered from insufficient staffing and resources for years. One of the consequences of Nā Ala Hele’s insufficient staffing and resources is the hotspot problem that HB1394 HD1 seeks to address.

We kama’āina cherish Hawai’i’s outdoor beauty and while we want to share our special places with others, we now find cherished places and the trails leading to them overrun, overcrowded, and poorly managed. Trails are more heavily used than ever before and appear to be among the most popular visitor attractions. Our state’s trails should be an asset worthy of being shared with visitors, but this will require state commitment and investment into their long-term maintenance and management.

Please equip our state’s trail and access system with the staff and resources it needs to manage the unacceptable, out-of-control hotspots by allocating much-needed funds through HB1394 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Deborah Chang

Pa‘auilo, Hawai’i