



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Thursday, February 27, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Charles "Chip" Fletcher, PhD

Interim Dean

School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology

And

Darren Lerner, PhD

Director, Sea Grant College Program

And

Michael Bruno, PhD

Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### HB 1137 HD1 – RELATING TO RESTORATION OF BEACH LANDS

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) and the Climate Resilience Collaborative (CRC) support House Bill 1137 HD1, which amends the definition of beach restoration to include activities undertaken to maintain and improve eroded beaches and degraded dune systems through the management of sand and native vegetation, placement of sand, and activities undertaken to remove abandoned and remnant materials that pose a risk to public and ecosystem health.

Hawai'i Sea Grant and CRC support this measure because it will enable the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to more effectively maintain and improve beaches and the health of coastal resources and support sustainable climate adaptation statewide. Broadening the definition of beach restoration provides more flexibility to utilize dedicated funds for the best use for beach management and allows for more comprehensive coastal management strategies to be applied statewide. Hawai'i Sea Grant and CRC support the amendments proposed by DLNR to improve this bill.

Hawai'i Sea Grant's mission is to provide integrated research, extension, and education activities that increase understanding and use of ocean and coastal resources of the Hawaiian and Pacific Islands and support the informed personal, policy, and management decisions that are integral to realizing this vision. Hawai'i Sea Grant is part of a national network of 34 university-based programs associated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that promote better understanding, conservation, and use of coastal resources.

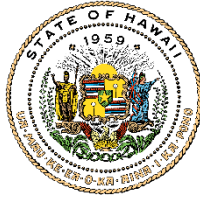
CRC is a multi-investigator research project at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa focused on sea level rise adaptation and climate resilience. CRC is updating coastal models that project the impacts of sea level rise.

The research that goes into identifying Hawai'i's exposure to sea level rise and the historical patterns of coastal erosion have been developed by the University of Hawai'i, School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology. CRC and Hawai'i Sea Grant are available to provide updated sea level rise data and projections and examples of relevant adaptation to the Committee or any lawmaker upon request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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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LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Thursday, Feb 27, 2025  
2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1137, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO RESTORATION OF BEACH LANDS

House Bill 1137, House Draft 1 proposes to amend the definition of “beach restoration” used to include activities undertaken to improve eroded beaches and degraded dune systems through the management of sand and native vegetation, placement of sand, and activities undertaken to remove abandoned and remnant materials that pose a risk to public and ecosystem health. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports the bill.**

The Department administers the beach restoration program for the State via the Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL). The beach fund can be used to provide grants to counties, nongovernmental organizations and the University of Hawai'i for the restoration of beach lands.

Currently “beach restoration” by definition is limited to the placement of sand on a beach from outside sources such as streams, harbors, quarries, and offshore sand sources. In recent years community organizations have expressed an interest in conducting related nature-based activities, such as dune restoration, to promote a naturally resilient shoreline.

The Department supports broadening the types of community-supported activities covered by the definition of “beach restoration.” Including dune restoration, sand pushing, removal of derelict structures in the definition of “beach restoration” will enable OCCL to support a full suite of nature-based activities proven to enhance the public trust, promote resilience, and encourage community engagement.

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



Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Thursday, February 27, 2025 at 2:00 pm  
By

Rick Egged, President  
Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District Association

## HB 1137 HD1 – RELATING TO RESTORATION OF BEACH LANDS

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and honorable members of the committee:

**The Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District Association (WBSIDA) is pleased to provide this testimony in support of HB 1137 HD1**, which amends the definition of beach restoration to include activities undertaken to maintain and improve eroded beaches and degraded dune systems through the management of sand and native vegetation, placement of sand, and activities undertaken to remove abandoned and remnant materials that pose a risk to public and ecosystem health.

The WBSIDA supports this measure because it will empower the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to more efficiently maintain and enhance our beaches, strengthen the health of coastal resources, and promote sustainable climate adaptation efforts across the state. Expanding the definition of beach restoration will provide greater flexibility in utilizing dedicated funds for optimal beach management, allowing for the implementation of more comprehensive coastal management strategies statewide including Waikiki Beach.

Expanding the definition of beach restoration offers significant benefits by allowing the DLNR to address a broader range of coastal challenges. It enables the DLNR to adapt to the changing needs of Hawaii's beaches and shorelines, from mitigating erosion to enhancing natural habitats and addressing the impacts of climate change. With more flexibility in funding and strategy implementation, DLNR can respond more effectively to urgent and evolving coastal concerns, improving the resilience of beaches and protecting vital ecosystems for future generations. This expansion ensures a more holistic approach to coastal management, fostering long-term sustainability for both the environment and local communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



February 26, 2025

House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawai'i State Legislature  
Via Electronic Transmission

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1137, Relating to Restoration of Beach Lands  
Hearing: Thursday, February 27, 2025, 2:00 PM CR 325 Via Videoconference

To: The Honorable Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee

**Surfrider Foundation Hawai'i Region strongly supports House Bill 1137** which amends the definition of beach restoration to reflect the types of actions which would improve beach health.

Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots activist network dedicated to the protection of our oceans, waves, and beaches. Through our Coast & Climate initiative and Climate Action Program we center a 'living shoreline' approach to coastal land management prioritizing actions that maintain and improve degraded dune systems including dune planting. We engage the community in dune restoration events and beach cleanups to improve the health of the beaches, many that our members frequent for recreational activities.

The previous definition of beach restoration is too narrow to effectively encompass necessary management activities. The amended definition would allow the Division of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to more comprehensively manage coastal lands including dune planting and vegetation management. The new definition would also strategically increase coastal management capacity by recognizing the important work being done by community groups that care for public lands as restorative to beach resources and allow for partnership on smaller projects.

HB1137 also expands the definition of beach restoration to include the removal of abandoned remnant materials that pose a risk to coastal ecosystems and public health including expired emergency armoring measures and old WWII structures. Hawai'i's beaches are plagued with discarded temporary erosion measures including geotextile erosion skirts and sand burritos. While emergency permits specify a short time period before they need to be removed, oftentimes on account of sand migration and wave action, these erosion measures become covered and are never removed. The lifespan of many of these geo-textile fabrics are long outlived and they degrade- further polluting the ocean, waves, and beaches. The inclusion of

removal of abandoned remnant materials within beach restoration is a vital step to cleaning up our beaches from materials that pose a public health risk to ocean users and the environment.

In summary, Surfrider Foundation Hawai'i Region strongly supports HB1137 as a common sense amendment to Section 171-151, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Mahalo for your time and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Hanna Lilley  
Hawai'i Regional Manager  
Surfrider Foundation



February 26, 2025

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

**Support of HB 1137, HD1 RELATING TO RESTORATION OF BEACH LANDS (Amends the definition of beach restoration to include activities undertaken to maintain and improve eroded beaches and degraded dune systems through the management of sand and native vegetation, placement of sand, and activities undertaken to remove abandoned and remnant materials that pose a risk to public and ecosystem health. Effective 7/1/3000. [HD1])**

**Thursday, February 27, 2025, 2:00 p.m.**  
**State Capitol, Conference Room 325; Via Videoconference**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers, and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth, housing, and renewable energy, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural, cultural, and agricultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF **supports HB 1137, HD1**, which amends the definition of beach restoration to expand the types of activities the State recognizes as restorative and beneficial to beach lands in response to increasing threats of sea level rise and beach loss.

**LURF's Position.** The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department), county agencies and non-governmental organizations restore beaches and sand dunes across the state. However, we understand that the current definition of "beach restoration" in section 171-151, HRS, is limited to the placement of sand on eroded beaches and does not specifically include other actions that are restorative and beneficial to the public trust shoreline resources, such as sand management, native vegetation management, and removal of abandoned materials from public beaches. This bill will provide the Department with flexibility in maintaining and managing Hawaii's beach resources.

For the above reasons, LURF **supports HB 1137, HD1**, and respectfully urges your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of this matter.

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 5:14:28 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John & Rita Shockley	Free Access Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

The Free Access Coalition SUPPORTS HB1137. Hawaii's coastlines are critical to public access. We need to do all we can to preserve the beaches as we have rising sea levels.

Mahalo for your time.



**Testimony in Support of HB1137  
Relating to Beach Restoration**

Aloha chairs and committee members,

My name is Mylia Pax. I am a resident of Honolulu and a student at UH Mānoa. I support HB1137, which expands the definition of beach restoration to include sand management, native vegetation preservation, and debris removal.

Since moving to Hawai‘i, I’ve come to appreciate how vital the beaches are—not just for recreation but for the environment and local communities. I’ve witnessed erosion eating away at shorelines and seen abandoned debris that threatens both public safety and marine life. Without action, these impacts will only worsen with rising sea levels.

This bill takes a proactive and necessary approach to protecting Hawai‘i’s coastlines. I urge you to pass HB1137, to ensure our beaches remain safe, accessible, and resilient for future generations.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mylia Pax

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 10:27:38 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine Tracy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

As a beach lover, I want to see our shores protected and our ocean preserved for generations to come. The updated definition of beach restoration gives DLNR more flexibility to manage coastal lands, including dune planting and vegetation management. It also recognizes the incredible work of community groups that care for public lands and encourages partnerships for smaller projects. This bill goes even further by allowing the removal of abandoned materials—like old WWII structures and expired erosion measures—that threaten marine life and public health. Too often, these materials get buried and forgotten, breaking down into pollution that harms our beaches and ocean. This bill is a practical step toward keeping our coastlines clean and thriving for future generations.

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 10:28:47 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas and Members of the Judiciary Committee. My wife Deborah and I strongly support this initiative to protect our beach shoreline. Thank you

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 10:38:27 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heather Fatino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting testimony in support of this bill that supports the restoration of our beaches. The beach restoration helps DLNR more effectively manage coastal lands. I fully support this bill as a smart, practical update to Hawaii's coastal management laws.

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 11:39:32 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stuart Coleman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Vice Chair and Committee Members,

*I'm writing in strong support of this bill that supports the restoration of our beaches. The amended definition of beach restoration helps DLNR more effectively manage coastal lands, including dune planting and vegetation management. It also acknowledges the crucial role of community groups in caring for public lands and encourages partnerships for smaller projects. This bill goes a step further by including the removal of abandoned materials that harm coastal ecosystems and public health. Many of these materials get buried and forgotten, slowly breaking down and polluting our beaches and ocean. I fully support this bill as a smart, practical update to Hawaii's coastal management laws. Mahalo for your leadership on this issue.*

*Aloha, Stuart Coleman, Hibiscus Pl., Hon., HI 96815*

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 11:46:44 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
arleen velasco	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

SB1456 makes small changes to the existing restoration policy that can make a big difference on the stability of our coast. It allows the state to use new tools to access and use best practices for protecting our coast lines which are under threat from sea level rise.

A few months ago one home partially collapsed into the ocean and another had to be demolished at Sunset Beach in Oahu. The debris from the collapsed house is still present in the sand and water and poses a hazard for all beachgoers.

At least 10 homes in the area are under direct threat of collapse and anything we can do to prevent another environmental disaster should be tried. Every home under threat along Sunset Beach has a cesspool.

Again, please support this bill.

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 12:44:43 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liz Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

*"I am submitting testimony in strong support of this bill that supports the restoration of our beaches. The amended definition of beach restoration helps DLNR more effectively manage coastal lands, including dune planting and vegetation management. It also acknowledges the crucial role of community groups in caring for public lands and encourages partnerships for smaller projects. This bill goes a step further by including the removal of abandoned materials that harm coastal ecosystems and public health. Many of these materials get buried and forgotten, slowly breaking down and polluting our beaches and ocean. I fully support this bill as a smart, practical update to Hawai'i's coastal management laws."*

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 1:16:38 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Plowman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support!



**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 1:50:29 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Weaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am submitting testimony in strong support of this bill that supports the restoration of our beaches. The amended definition of beach restoration helps DLNR more effectively manage coastal lands, including dune planting and vegetation management. It also acknowledges the crucial role of community groups in caring for public lands and encourages partnerships for smaller projects to mālama ‘āina.

This bill goes a step further by including the removal of abandoned materials that harm coastal ecosystems and public health. Many of these materials get buried and forgotten, slowly breaking down and polluting our beaches and ocean. Our economy heavily relies on tourism, so removing these abandoned materials will ensure that our beaches are safe and healthy for our kama‘āina and our visitors, who bring roughly \$20billion annually or 20-25% of our state's total GDP.

I fully support this bill as a smart, practical update to Hawaii’s coastal management laws.

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 1:52:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erica-Skyler Holokai	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

**Hearing Date: February 27th, 2025****Submitted by: Erica-Skyler Holokai**

Aloha Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erica-Skyler Holokai and I'm a student at UH Manoa and have been a resident of Hawai'i my entire life. I'm here today in support of HB 1137 which expands the definition of beach restoration to include crucial activities such as sand and dune system management, sand placement, and the removal of hazardous materials from coastal areas.

Ever since I was a kid my family and I always went to the same beaches, but due to rising issues, there has been a drastic change in the beaches. The water levels are higher, there's more rocks than sand, or the beach in general looks smaller than it once was.

This bill is an important step toward protecting what we have left. Expanding the definition of beach restoration allows us to be more proactive in preserving our beaches, ensuring they remain places of cultural significance and environmental stability. By including efforts such as native dune vegetation management and the removal of hazardous debris, this bill recognizes that beach restoration is about more than just dumping sand—it's about restoring our ecosystems and ensuring our shorelines can withstand the impacts of climate change. Again I am in support of HB 1137

**Respectfully submitted,  
Erica-Skyler Holokai**

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 3:23:30 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
April Blades	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee,

I am submitting testimony in strong support of this bill that supports the restoration of our beaches. The amended definition of beach restoration helps DLNR more effectively manage coastal lands, including dune planting and vegetation management. It also acknowledges the crucial role of community groups in caring for public lands and encourages partnerships for smaller projects. This bill goes a step further by including the removal of abandoned materials that harm coastal ecosystems and public health. Many of these materials get buried and forgotten, slowly breaking down and polluting our beaches and ocean. I fully support this bill as a smart, practical update to Hawaii's coastal management laws. Thank you for your time and consideration for HB1137.

Sincerely,

April Blades

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 4:17:21 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JONATHAN LOTT	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 8:46:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Dadds, PA-C	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it will maintain the beauty of our beaches, which we all can enjoy, while eliminating the risk of polluting our ocean. As the tides get higher, the developments and structures close to shore, are in danger of sliding into the ocean and causing pollution and endangering sea habitat

**HB-1137-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 9:40:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/27/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Whelan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it will maintain the beauty of our beaches, which we all can enjoy, while eliminating the risk of polluting our ocean. As the tides get higher, the developments and structures close to shore, are in danger of sliding into the ocean and causing pollution and endangering sea habitat