

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
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LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Tuesday, Feb 04, 2025
9:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

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

House Bill 1137 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.



‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAI‘I

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Water & Land
Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at 9:00 a.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 – RELATING TO RESTORATION OF BEACH LANDS

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, 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, 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.

HB-1137

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 3:39:28 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/4/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tiare lawrence	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB 1137

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support HB 1137, which expands the definition of beach restoration to include critical management activities such as dune planting, vegetation management, and the removal of abandoned remnant materials. The previous definition was too narrow to effectively address the diverse needs of coastal restoration, limiting the Division of Land and Natural Resources' (DLNR) ability to manage and restore Hawai'i's beaches comprehensively. By broadening this definition, HB 1137 not only enhances DLNR's coastal management capacity but also recognizes the invaluable work of community groups that care for public shorelines. These partnerships will allow for more effective, localized restoration efforts that contribute to the long-term health and resilience of Hawai'i's coastal ecosystems.

HB 1137 is also essential for tackling the growing problem of abandoned erosion control structures, such as expired emergency armoring measures and deteriorating WWII remnants. Many of these materials, including geotextile erosion skirts and sand burritos, were initially permitted as temporary solutions but have since been buried by shifting sands, forgotten, and left to degrade into marine debris. Their continued presence pollutes our beaches, threatens marine life, and endangers ocean users. Expanding the definition of beach restoration to include their removal is a necessary step toward cleaning up our shorelines and preventing further harm to Hawai'i's coastal environment. Passing HB 1137 is a proactive approach to responsible shoreline management that benefits both the community and the natural resources we depend on. Mahalo for your time and consideration.