

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

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

**Before the House Committee on
WATER & LAND**

**Tuesday, March 25, 2025
9:40 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 411**

**In consideration of
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 191/HOUSE RESOLUTION 185
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
CONVENE A KAILUA BAY ADVISORY WORKING GROUP.**

House Concurrent Resolution 191/House Resolution 185 requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to convene a Kailua Bay Advisory Working Group. **The Department offers the following comments.**

Operation of Kailua-Kona Pier is currently under the Department's Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR). The facility includes a cruise ship port, an offshore mooring area, a boat launch ramp, vessel loading/unloading areas, a vessel washdown, and a comfort station. The number of daily users at Kailua-Kona Pier is typically around 150-250, and this number increases when cruise ship tenders utilize the area as a secure loading and unloading zone. When cruise ship loading/unloading occurs, cruise ship operators hire private security guards.

The Department notes that DOBOR currently collaborates with many Kailua-Kona Pier users for management strategies, including area hotels and businesses. The Department recognized that people have concerns about public safety across the State due to unlawful activities taking place in DOBOR facilities after-hours and subsequently implemented emergency rules in late 2024 to designate hours of operation for small boat harbors and boating facilities. Under these emergency rules, DOBOR was able to establish closure hours for Kailua-Kona Pier from 10:30pm to 4:30am. DOBOR is currently working on implementing a permanent version of the rules authorizing DOBOR facility hours of operation, which would provide an effective enforcement tool and help to deter criminal activity.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

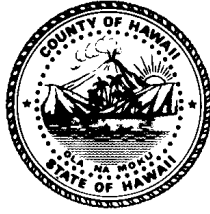
DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
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

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



William V. Brillhante, Jr.
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TO: Rep. Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Rep. Rachele F. Lamosao, Vice Chair
Committee on Water and Land

FROM: C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D., Mayor

DATE: March 24, 2025

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT OF H.C.R. 191** REQUESTING THE
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONVENE A
KAILUA BAY ADVISORY WORKING GROUP.

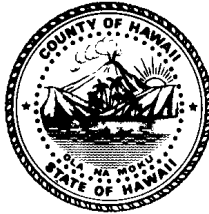
Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support of House Concurrent Resolution 191**, which requests the Department of Land and Natural Resources to convene a Kailua Bay Advisory Working Group.

The Kailua-Kona Wharf is not just a structure; it is a vital part of our island's identity and heritage, reflecting the rich cultural history that has shaped this region for generations. By supporting this measure, we take a critical step toward addressing the long-term challenges and opportunities at the Kailua-Kona pier.

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

Holeka Goro Inaba, Ed.D.
Council Chair, District 8, North Kona



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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
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Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

March 24, 2025

COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair

Representative Rachele F. Lamosao, Vice Chair

RE: **Support for HCR101, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND
AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO CONVENE A KAILUA BAY
ADVISORY WORKING GROUP.**

Hearing: **Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 9:40 a.m.**

Aloha Chair and Vice Chair

On behalf of Council District 8 in North Kona, I am grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HCR191.

Kailua Bay, including the iconic Kailua Pier, is a treasured resource for our West Hawai'i community — rich in cultural significance, history, and economic importance. It serves residents, Native Hawaiian practitioners, local businesses, and visitors alike.

Given the range of challenges facing the area — from infrastructure maintenance to homelessness impacts — bringing stakeholders together through a dedicated advisory working group is a timely and necessary step. Improved coordination will help preserve the bay's cultural integrity, ensure safety, and support responsible use of this important space.

I urge your favorable consideration of this resolution.

Sincerely,

HOLEKA GORO INABA, Ed.D.,
Council District 8, North Kona

HCR-191

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 8:37:50 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/25/2025 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ross Wilson Jr.	Kailua Village Business Improvement District	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kailua Pier is the focal point of HIstoric Kailua Village. An advisory working group would be beneficial in getting key constituencies together with state govenrment officials to collaborate to make the pier work for all uses and shine.

Aloha! My name is Mary Beth Witzel, and I have been a resident of Kailua Kona since 2013. We live in the Pines II subdivision. I started volunteering as a cruise ship greeter for Destination Kona Coast (DKC) in 2013 as we explored our new community. This gave me the opportunity to not only meet like-minded individuals but also to explore the town and West Hawaii in general to become an informed member of the team. I enjoyed being able to assist a diverse set of people on a regular basis who arrive via cruise ship and aren't sure exactly what they want to do. It is a wonderful feeling to add value to their day in Kona.

As the years continued, I became the Pier Coordinator for the Aloha Greeting Program as well as a DKC Board member, since 2017 holding the office of Secretary.

Over time, I have seen changes, mostly positive ones, for the team with better sharing of information so we all give out consistent information and we all have knowledge of some more out-of-the-way locations or know where to find the check-in locations for some of the popular tours. We have frequent "mini-strolls" along Ali'i Drive to check out new businesses and learn where certain popular items might be located and obtained by walking – such as flower leis or malasadas. We sponsor both local musicians and cultural groups (Hula and Hawaiian Storytelling) where the tender boats drop off our guests.

One of the things I have noticed is the difficulty of determining which government entity oversees various negative situations. While we have no enforcement capabilities, nor should we, we want to be helpful team players and report things as soon as possible. This can be quite a task as some rules are not easily enforced under shared responsibilities.

One that comes to mind is the destruction of the restrooms on the pier. Recently, the underground pipes became so clogged due to the activity of a homeless individual, the doors had to be locked making the facilities unusable. Portable Luas didn't last either because of overnight vandalism. The complaints by over ¾ of our guests became an embarrassing situation staining the reputation of our town and county.

We have a number of unhoused people coming onto the pier, sometimes not taking much-needed medication. They can be scary to our visitors who may not be used to this type of situation where they are from. I understand that when individuals are "just there", there is nothing we can do about them hanging out on the pier.

We also had our, Kailua Village Business Improvement District (KVBID) and DKC's, two 20'x30' green tents demolished in a storm in January. Some ships have their own to put up where passengers wait for tours, but it would be better to have our own permanent larger tents again. They would be used by all who enjoy the pier.

I hope to work with appropriate representatives from a wide variety of organizations to help streamline the reporting structure on the pier, to keep it a safe and positive place for local activities, and to make it a true destination in town.

HCR-191

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 1:11:32 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/25/2025 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Shultise	Destination Kona Coast	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a Board Member of Destination Kona Coast, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and I fully support this bill.

Since 1997, Destination Kona Coast has managed visitor greeting programs to warmly welcome guests to Kona. Our 2024 statistics show 220,000 shipboard visitors alone. Our mission is to enhance visitor experiences by educating them about Kona's natural beauty, rich history, vibrant culture, and the spirit of aloha. We strive to ensure that every visitor leaves with a positive and memorable impression of Kona.

Operating from the Kailua-Kona Pier, Destination Kona Coast is directly impacted by decisions and activities related to the pier.

HCR-191

Submitted on: 3/24/2025 5:41:38 PM

Testimony for WAL on 3/25/2025 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Atwood	Kai`Opua Canoe Club	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

My name is Mike Atwood. I am the First Vice President of Kai`Opua Canoe Club. I have been a member of Kai`Opua since 1973 and have been participating in Hawaiian outrigger Koa canoe regattas in Kailua bay since then, until we had to stop in 2023 due to our course damaging coral, I fully support resuming Hawaiian Koa outrigger canoe regattas in Kailua bay now that we have followed the process of establishing a permanent course. Through the years regattas have been held in Kona, the big island community enjoyed and participated in them as spectators, vendors and paddlers. There were regattas held here in Kona in 1933 with the territorial championships. The Kamehameha Day regatta in particular, hosted by Kai`Opua, was an integral part of the Kamehameha day festivities in Kona and was an example of the culture and traditional activities involving the island of Hawaii community. I have been involved, along with Kai`Opua, Kai Ehitu, and Keauhou canoe clubs in bringing back outrigger canoe regattas. I have also been involved with Palani Greenwell, of Kai`Opua, Lindsey Kramer of the DAR, and Jeff and Teri Leicher of Jack's Diving Locker in organizing a group to install a permanent course in Kailua bay that does not harm living coral. We have done underwater surveys and photographs of the terrain and have presented our findings to DLNR and to the Army Corps of engineers. I have a previous commitment and may not be able to be there, but I definitely want to be a part of the advisory group moving forward. Mahalo for your time and consideration. Mike Atwood

HCR-191

Submitted on: 3/22/2025 5:42:00 AM

Testimony for WAL on 3/25/2025 9:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Jewell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of HCR191. This is important for our community. The health and well being of Kailua Pier is critical for our town.

Mahalo

Jean Jewell

Aloha:

My name is Greg Olsen. I am a resident of Kailua Kona and participate as a volunteer Greeter at the Kailua Pier for passengers and crew from the cruise ships. I currently serve as a board member for the Destination Kona Coast organization which runs the Greeter program. I have been a volunteer for close to three years and in that time, I've discovered certain issues which should be addressed, and I believe that HCR191 is a step in the right direction towards addressing the issues.

The Resolution enumerates the issues which we encounter on the pier: homelessness, destruction of public facilities such as the restrooms, lack of a central organization whom we could call when issues arise, and poor/non-existent signage on the pier regarding smoking/vaping/camping. We have tried, as volunteers, to remind passengers there is no smoking on the pier, but we do not have authority to enforce the issue. When we inform passengers about the ban on smoking, they generally comply, but the signs on the pier are not prominently displayed.

I am extremely proud to be a part of Destination Kona Coast and a member of the greeters. We provide a "first contact" presence for passengers disembarking the tenders and provide an Aloha experience – we always smile, give out information as requested by the passengers, and do our best to interface with all the various agencies on the pier. We also provide live music and cultural experiences, such as hula and Hawaiian story telling, for the enjoyment of the passengers, crews, and locals to enjoy. The volunteers love sharing our aloha with our visitors and would love to continue our work on into the future. HCR191 is a step in the right direction to help us continue helping our visitors who provide much-needed revenue for the businesses along Ali'i Drive.

In closing, it is my hope that HCR191 will be adopted and help make the Kailua Pier a wonderful destination for all those who visit Kona. It is a wonderful jumping off place for the cruise ships to explore West Hawaii and all it has to offer. We are privileged to have this historic pier from which so much of Kona's history has grown.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Greg Olsen