

**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**

DIVISION OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
1151 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 325  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**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

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

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

**Monday, March 17, 2025  
1:00 PM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Via Videoconference**

**In consideration of  
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 42  
and  
SENATE RESOLUTION 27**

**URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION  
OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE TO PRIORITIZE THE RESTORATION AND  
PROTECTION OF ADDITIONAL WETLANDS AND ANCHIALINE POOLS**

**The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure and offers comments.**

Hawai'i's wetlands provide critical habitat for many endemic bird and plant species, support subsistence food practices, and protect coral reefs and nearshore fisheries from sediment runoff. Coastal wetlands and anchialine pools also serve as critical first lines of defense for sea level rise and storm surge inundation and for capturing sediment and runoff pollution from rainfall flood events. These ecosystems contribute to climate resilience by acting as natural carbon sinks, reducing coastal erosion, and mitigating the impacts of rising sea levels. While coastal wetlands were once abundant features of Hawai'i's coastlines, over 30% have been lost to development and stream diversion. Wetland protection and restoration will improve degraded ahupua'a, restore green spaces, protect against wildfires, minimize climate impacts, increase community resilience, support the cultivation of healthy traditional food crops, and provide essential habitat for the recovery of threatened and endangered species.

This measure aligns with the Department's mission to protect, manage, and restore wetland habitats in Hawai'i. Although the resolution title points to the Division of Forestry and Wildlife, we believe it is more appropriate to remove reference to the Division as the Division's authority primarily pertains to actions involving native species dependent on wetland habitats rather than broader wetland restoration and protection beyond its jurisdiction. Additionally, we recommend revising the reference to the Division of Agriculture on page 2, line 13, to instead cite the Division of Aquatic Resources within the Department.

The Department recommends that for consistency, the phrase on page 1, lines 6 and 7 should be changed to "State waters" instead of "waters of the State," as "State waters" is the term defined in HRS 342D-1 that includes wetlands in Hawai'i.

Lastly, the responsibility for wetland protection in Kīhei, Maui, is more appropriately designated to the County of Maui rather than the Division of Forestry and Wildlife, as the County holds jurisdiction over wetland protection on Maui.

The Department commits to continuing to seek funding and provide technical assistance to assist and collaborate with other jurisdictional entities in restoring wetland habitats across the state.

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

**SR-27**

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 10:47:44 AM

Testimony for WTL on 3/17/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** SCR42 and SR27!

Wetlands and anchialine pools are both critical to protecting the health of our reefs and oceans.  
Please pass this resolution!

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

# MAUI OCEAN CENTER

*Our Mission: To foster understanding,  
wonder and respect for Hawaii's marine life.*

**LATE**

03/16/25

RE: SCR42

**URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE TO PRIORITIZE THE RESTORATION AND  
PROTECTION OF ADDITIONAL WETLANDS AND ANCHIALINE POOLS.**

**DATE:** Monday, March 17, 2025

**TIME:** 13:00

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante and Members Chang, McKelvey and DeCorte,

I am writing you to express our **STRONG SUPPORT** SCR42.

"Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs." <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/how-do-wetlands-function-and-why-are-they-valuable> . Hawaii has wetlands and coral reefs and they are inextricably connected; mauka to makai. In 2024 State of Hawaii had 57 Brown Water Advisories. <https://eha-cloud.doh.hawaii.gov/cwb/#!/event/list> .In 2020 State of Hawaii had 301 303d Impaired Marine Embayment classifications by EPA. Chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://health.hawaii.gov/cwb/files/2024/09/Hawaii-2020IR-Final.pdf.

Not only does DLNR/DOFAW need to prioritize restoration and protection of wetlands and anchialine pools but State of Hawaii needs to prioritize funding for these efforts. Thank you.

Aloha,



Tapani Vuori



192 Ma'alaea Road Wailuku, Hawai'i 96793 • [mauiocceancenter.com](http://mauiocceancenter.com) • 808.270.7000

**SR-27**

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 9:15:20 PM

Testimony for WTL on 3/17/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tasman Kekai Mattox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support restoration of wetlands. I want to see Hawaii as lush and beautiful as it used to be, if not moreso!