



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR122 HD1/HR118
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
ESTABLISH A COLLABORATIVE WORKING GROUP TO SURVEY, IDENTIFY, AND
MONITOR CULTURALLY SENSITIVE SHORELINES IMPACTED BY EROSION.

Senate Committee on Water & Land
Hawai'i State Capitol

April 11, 2025

1:00 pm

Conference Room 229

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante and members of the Senate Committee on Water & Land:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers **SUPPORT** on HCR122 HD1, which would establish a collaborative working group to survey, identify, and monitor culturally sensitive shorelines impacted by erosion.

OHA supports proactive protections of iwi kūpuna wherever possible, and it is well known that Native Hawaiian iwi kūpuna were historically interred along sandy shoreline areas and are thus increasingly threatened to exposure by coastal erosion. **The working group proposed here will make it possible to ensure that these threatened iwi receive proper attention, protection, and treatment in a responsible manner.** Proactive protections also align with the State's affirmative trust duties to identify and reasonably protect Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights, including protection of iwi kūpuna.¹

OHA has consistently emphasized the need for an interagency process to better manage the impacts of shoreline erosion on iwi kūpuna. We therefore appreciate the amendments in HCR122 HD1 that expand the working group to include a representative from the Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL), whose expertise and jurisdiction over many erosion-prone areas will be essential to the effectiveness of the group's work. OHA specifically recommended this inclusion, and we are pleased to see it reflected in the current draft.

Protection of iwi kūpuna is of the deepest concern to OHA and its beneficiaries. OHA regularly receives communications from beneficiaries concerning iwi that erode out along the shoreline and the difficulties they experience in seeing the matter properly resolved. Given the threat of sea level rise, we only expect this matter to get worse. Proactively identifying culturally sensitive shoreline areas and developing mitigation actions

¹ Haw. Const. Art. XII § 7.

in collaboration with other state and county agencies may help reduce these concerns and provide more appropriate treatment for these iwi.

Mahalo nui for the Committee's consideration of this resolution. OHA respectfully urges the committee to **PASS HCR122 HD1**.