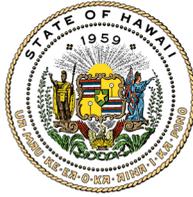


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

**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**

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 House Committee on  
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Tuesday, April 1, 2025  
10:45 AM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE RESOLUTION 191  
and  
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 199  
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.

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 6:44:20 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Moran	Kihei Community Assoc. (KCA)	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members

As the measure states, we can not undo decades of poor, or lack of, planning in South Maui. But as the saying goes, first step to get out of the hole is to stop digging. Residents now are paying the price for past generations gutting the natural environmental. Please pass this measure to help us at least stop the digging.

Mahalo

Mike Moran Kihei for KCA



# Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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March 30, 2025

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HR191 / HCR199: 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**

**TO:** Chair Nicole E. Lowen, Vice Chair Amy A. Perruso, and Members of the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

**DATE:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 **TIME:** 10:45 a.m.

**PLACE:** Conference Room 325 and via videoconference

**FROM:** Environmental Caucus

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

We strongly support HR191 / HCR199, which urges the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Forestry and Wildlife to prioritize the restoration and protection of additional wetlands and anchialine pools. This resolution underscores the critical need to protect Hawaii's unique ecosystems, which play a vital role in sustaining biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and promoting community well-being.

### **Key Reasons for Support:**

1. **Preservation of Biodiversity:** Hawaii's wetlands and anchialine pools are home to diverse and often endangered species, including native plants, birds, and aquatic life. Prioritizing their restoration and protection ensures the survival of these ecosystems and their inhabitants.
2. **Climate Change Mitigation:** Wetlands act as natural carbon sinks and help absorb and store excess carbon dioxide. Additionally, they play a crucial role in flood control and stormwater management, offering protection to coastal communities in the face of climate change impacts.
3. **Anchialine Pool Conservation:** Anchialine pools are unique to Hawaii and highly vulnerable to human activity and environmental changes. Protecting these rare ecosystems preserves their ecological and cultural significance for future generations.

4. **Enhancing Community Well-Being:** Restored wetlands and anchialine pools provide opportunities for environmental education, recreation, and cultural connection, fostering a deeper sense of stewardship among Hawaii's residents.
5. **Supporting State Goals:** This initiative aligns with Hawaii's broader environmental and sustainability goals, including those outlined in the Aloha+ Challenge and the State Climate Change Action Plan, by safeguarding natural resources and promoting resilience.

HR191 / HCR199 reflects Hawaii's commitment to environmental stewardship and the protection of its unique ecosystems. We respectfully urge the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection to pass this resolution to ensure DLNR prioritizes the restoration and protection of additional wetlands and anchialine pools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HR191 / HCR199.

Respectfully submitted,

Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick  
Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus

## Testimony in Support of companions HR191 and HCR199 Protect Wetlands

To: EEP Chair Nicole Lowen and esteemed EEP Committee members VC Amy Peruso, Kirstin Kahaloa, Matthias Kusch, Sean Quinlan Gene Ward  
From: Dr. Joe Ritter  
Date: March 31, 2025  
Re: **Testimony in Support of companions HR191 and HCR199 Protect Wetlands**

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Aloha Chair Lowen and Committee members,

As a concerned long term resident of Kihei, I am asking you to please consider the environmental protection aspect and merits of [HCR199](#) / [HR191](#). Additionally please consider the flood and fire mitigation aspects after viewing the below pictures of our most recent flood.

**Wetlands are critical to protecting not only wildlife, but also life and property.** They provide detention and retention basins reducing flooding in adjacent urban areas. Wetlands also create a protective barrier for fire. In our district better wetland management might have saved the life of the firefighter mentioned below.

I respectfully request your passage of this resolution intended to promote critical and significant wildfire prevention and mitigate future flood damage, effectively an efficient two for one.

**Flooding:** Kīhei (HD 11) has only 2 roads in and out (see Figure 3). It has been hit by 6 major floods causing significant damage and 3 ‘once in a century floods’ in the last 4 years. A fireman died and 1 of the 2 routes into Kīhei currently had no road left further resulting in a potential loss of emergency access and potential loss of life for weeks recently. The January 16, 2024 flood required 5 air rescues. The January 30 2025 flood wiped out our lower road. With the loss of Lahaina revenue, Kīhei is a critical revenue generating source that needs protection. Kihei has some federal infrastructure funds for a new collector road, but we need State help with flood prevention and a Mauka bypass through CIP funding. We are working with the Maui MPO and County to address these collective issues.

**Fire:** On August 8th, the wildfire came within 600 yards of the brand new \$250M Kūlanihāko‘i High School and South Kīhei (including thousands of homes) was evacuated. South Maui was at as high a risk as Lāhainā was, and it is only through firebreak measures and luck that additional disaster was averted. South Maui is a desert and still at risk.

Wildfire and flooding can both be prevented by greening the area surrounding Kīhei. These measures act as a green firebreak, erosion control to prevent mudding and flooding and in conjunction with retention ponds can both reduce flooding and wildfire risk, effectively saving lives and protecting revenue generation.

**Appended below please find pictures attached showing the damage to South Maui.**

Mahalo for both your time and consideration. Dr. Joe Ritter



**Figure:** Map showing only 2 roads in or out of South Maui, shutdown recently for weeks. This road will require major reconstruction and likely replacement / moving mauka.

The following photos are from the last flood storm January 2025:



**Figures:** South Kīhei Road a main economic artery, yet again made **impassable**: One of only 2 ways to access **South Maui** the largest revenue generating area on Maui.



Figure: South Kihei Road damage by canoe club.



Figure: Main Traffic artery South Kihei Road 1/31/25, typical of many floods.

**Testimony in Support of companions HR191 and HCR199 Protect Wetlands  
by Kihei Resident Dr. Joe Ritter**



**Figure:** Housing damaged by 1/25 flood, likely this will be condemned.



**Testimony in Support of companions HR191 and HCR199 Protect Wetlands  
by Kihei Resident Dr. Joe Ritter**



**Figures:** Flooding of Kūlanihāko'i gulch, and cars floating down the road.



**Figures:** Popular tourist beach, a key to Kihei Revenue



**Figures:** Pictures of effect of the 1/25 flood on local beach and TMK 3-9-001-012-0000. Historic David Malo Church property is owned by DLNR.

Mahalo for your time and consideration of the HD11 Request to help South Maui, a primary revenue generator for the state. Please pass this resolution. Thank you,  
Joe

**Testimony in Support of companions HR191 and HCR199 Protect Wetlands**  
by Kihei Resident Dr. Joe Ritter

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 2:00:53 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Audrey Lester	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen and Vice Chair Perruso,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of companions HCR199/ [HR191](#), “Protect Wetlands.”

I urge you to adopt these companion resolutions that prioritize the protection of the State’s wetlands, and anchialine pools, which host delicate ecosystems and endangered species in the State.

I live near the Kulanihako’i gulch and the critical ‘emergency’ maintenance of these wetlands (in 2024-2025) has already prevented at least 30,000 cubic yards of sediment from flowing into the ocean this January alone!! Significant property damage was also averted. However, we need a mechanism for regular maintenance and a long term solution to protect our natural drainage systems from heavy mud floods that only occur once or twice a year but wreak havoc to the ecosystem and the community. This year alone the clean-up cost exceeded \$680K and closed one of our two thoroughfares for over a month. The traffic impact was crippling. DPW worked relentlessly but we need to eliminate or drastically reduce the mud and sediment flooding that comes from upcountry.

Mahalo for your consideration, Audrey Lester

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 12:13:12 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass these resolutions! Wetlands and anchialine pools are critical to coral reef and ocean health!

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition (by Ted Bohlen)

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:09:11 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Probst	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen and Vice Chair Perruso,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of companions [HCR199/ HR191](#), “Protect Wetlands.”

I live in a condo developmet bordering on the Kalunhakoi Gulch inKihei. We purchased in 2008 and have been permanent residents since 2013. On several occasions our ground floor condo has been on the verge of flooding due to heavy rains upcountry. This same flooding has on several occasions closed Kaonoulu St and South Kiheu Road resulting millions of dollars spent to remove debris. The debris includes fecal waste from animals, cesspools, building materials and other refuse.

Maui County finally has taken action and started dredging the gulch from the Piilani Highway to South Kihei Road this year. The most recent storm activity erased their progress and they had to start over. The dredging is almost complete, we hope, but now we have a temporary bridge on South Kihei Road with culverts that cannot handle the volume of water that comes down from upcountry.

I urge you to adopt these companion resolutions that prioritize the protection of the State’s wetlands, and anchialine pools, which host delicate ecosystems and endangered species in the State.

The reclamation of our wetlands is an important task and needs the support of the state and county oofficials in addition to sufficient funds being allocated to accomplish this over the next decade and beyond.

Wetlands are a vital part of Hawai‘i’s ecosystems and are necessary filters that protect our oceans from stream, storm, and urban runoff. Without maintained wetlands, there will be increased damage to aquatic life, coral reefs, water quality, land, businesses, roads, and residences in flooding disasters.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Thomas Probst

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:25:30 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Wagner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Pertaining to HCR 199 and HCR 191

Please protect the critical wetland areas of our town, Kihei, Maui, with this important legislation. We have experienced devastating flooding and damage to our near shore waters and reefs due to lack of enough wetlands to absorb the mauka watershed during extreme weather events. Thank you for caring for the aina.

Mahalo,

Mary Wagner

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 9:27:02 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Wetlands are incredibly important to our ecosystems. We need to preserve them!

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 9:23:41 AM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Dorn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of HCR199/HR191 – "Protect Wetlands"**

Aloha and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of companion resolutions HCR199/HR191, "*Protect Wetlands.*"

I have lived in the Kihei Maui floodplain for over 25 years and have experienced numerous floods firsthand—many of them severe, often cutting off traffic and closing roads for days or even weeks. South Kihei Road has suffered significant damage multiple times, requiring major repairs and even bridge rebuilding, which can take months to complete. These disruptions extend beyond infrastructure: homes and businesses in my neighborhood are frequently impacted by flooding events.

This cycle of destruction continues with each episode of heavy rain. Over the years, the area's watershed and floodplain—once rich with natural wetlands—have been overbuilt, drastically reducing the land's ability to absorb and hold rainwater.

The wetlands that still remain are crucial. They not only help reduce the severity of floods by acting as natural sponges, but they also trap suspended sediments and contaminants before they reach the ocean. Without these vital buffers, silt-laden and polluted floodwaters wash into our marine environment, harming coral reefs and marine life for months after each storm.

In response to these ongoing challenges, I joined the Save the Wetlands Hui in South Maui ([www.savethewetlands.org](http://www.savethewetlands.org)) in 2021. Since then, I have studied our remaining wetlands extensively and come to deeply understand their irreplaceable value—not only for the environment, but for the protection they provide to the entire floodplain community.

I respectfully urge you to adopt these companion resolutions to prioritize the protection of Hawai'i's wetlands and anchialine pools. These ecosystems host endangered species and offer essential services: filtering runoff, buffering floodwaters, and protecting both natural and built environments.

Wetlands are not optional—they are vital. Without them, we face worsening damage to aquatic life, coral reefs, water quality, homes, businesses, and infrastructure with every major storm.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

David Dorn

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 11:51:29 AM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
robin knox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of companion resolutions HCR199/HR191, “*Protect Wetlands.*”

My name is Robin Knox and I am an environmental Scientist certified as a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) in water quality practice area by the Global Board of Environmental Health and Safety Credentialing. I have lived in, and as part of my professional work, studied the watersheds, wetlands, and ocean water quality in and around the Kula Kai (Kihei) Maui floodplain for over 20 years. I have seen the situation progress from floods once a decade to floods several times a year and have seen impacts expand from concerns about ocean water quality and protection of coral reefs to include flooding of properties, damage to infrastructure, and hazard to human life and limb. I have made professional observations of these flood first hand. Many of them severe, often cutting off traffic and closing roads for days or even weeks. South Kihei Road has suffered significant damage multiple times, requiring major repairs and even bridge rebuilding, which can take months to complete. These disruptions extend beyond infrastructure: homes and businesses in my neighborhood are frequently impacted by flooding events.

This cycle of destruction continues with each episode of heavy rain. Over the years, the area's watershed and floodplain—once rich with natural wetlands—have been overbuilt, drastically reducing the land’s ability to absorb and hold rainwater.

The wetlands that still remain are crucial. They not only help reduce the severity of floods by acting as natural sponges, but they also trap suspended sediments and contaminants before they reach the ocean. Without these vital buffers, silt-laden and polluted floodwaters wash into our marine environment, harming coral reefs and marine life for months after each storm.

In response to these ongoing challenges, I joined the Save the Wetlands Hui in South Maui ([www.savethewetlands.org](http://www.savethewetlands.org)) as Chief Scientist in 2021. Since then, I have studied our remaining wetlands extensively and come to deeply understand their irreplaceable value—not only for the environment, but for the protection they provide to the entire floodplain community, and for their role in resilience against impacts of climate change.. Our most recent scientific work was a functional assessment of the wetlands in Kula Kai from Pulehunui to Kalama. Our findings were that these wetlands have a medium to high potential for restoration because the hydrologic connections are still intact. It is imperative that the hydrology be protected from the impacts of further development in the wetlands and floodplain.

I respectfully urge you to adopt these companion resolutions to prioritize the protection of Hawai'i's wetlands and anchialine pools. These ecosystems host endangered species and offer essential services: filtering runoff, buffering floodwaters, and protecting both natural and built environments.

Wetlands are not optional—they are vital. Without them, we face worsening damage to aquatic life, coral reefs, water quality, homes, businesses, and infrastructure with every major storm.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Robin S. Knox, QEP

Kihei, Hawaii

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 12:31:03 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patricia Stillwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to adopt these companion resolutions that prioritize the protection of the State's wetlands, and anchialine pools, which host delicate ecosystems and endangered species in the State.

Wetlands are a vital part of Hawai'i's ecosystems and are necessary filters that protect our oceans from stream, storm, and urban runoff. Without maintained wetlands, there will be increased damage to aquatic life, coral reefs, water quality, land, businesses, roads, and residences in flooding disasters.

Thank you for your help.  
Patricia Stillwell, Kihei

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 8:08:25 PM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
De Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen and Vice Chair Perruso,

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of companions HCR199/HR191, "Protect Wetlands." I beg you to adopt both of these resolutions that prioritize the protection of the State's wetlands. There are financial, health and community impacts when we ignore the responsibility we have as stewards of the land.

Wetlands are a vital part of Hawai'i's ecosystems and are necessary filters that protect our oceans from stream, storm, and urban runoff. Without maintained wetlands, there will be increased damage to aquatic life, coral reefs, water quality, land, businesses, roads, and residences in flooding disasters. This will also will impact our fishery businesses and eventually impact tourism, a key economic driver in our state.

I live in South Maui and I have been personally affected by flooded roads. I have seen the devastation caused by storms to South Kihei road. I have been warned away from areas due to flooding. If there is way for the water to flow, it will flow anyway, taking the land, and property with it, as it tries to make it to the ocean.

We cannot fight nature, but we can prepare for it, and protect ourselves from it, by showing Mother Nature the respect she more than deserves.

Please pass both of these bills.

D. Austin

Kihei, Maui

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 8:00:20 AM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
brandi corpuz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha my name is Brandi Corpuz and I am from the wetlands of Kula Kai. Surrounded by the Waipuilani and Kulanihakoi wetlands I am in a unique position to be able to see what could be the benefit of these precious resources first hand. I am also the executive Director of a 3 island nonprofit who is very concerned about our wetlands on every island. Our wetlands are being destroyed and the State and County need to do better! Our nonprofit has been taking care of a small area on DLNR land that is supposed to be transferred to the county for 15 years.**

**Due to this pending transfer I have been told several times that the DLNR does not have the money or manpower to maintain our beach reserve/wetlands. They also wont give us or other community groups leases or long term permits because of this transfer. This small area of the beach reserve has wetlands, sand dunes, fish ponds and Muliwai/Punawai (fresh/salt brackish water) referred to here as anchialine pools. We have worked on a 4 acre beach reserve that includes these coastal wetlands. I would like to see stronger language to assure that DLNR takes care of their responsibility. Our wetlands, especially our beach wetlands, are vital to our survival.**

- 1. Hawaiian history and culture tells us that these wetland areas were thriving food hubs serving in an ahupua'a system where the waters from uplands were used to feed the plants and fishponds below. These wetlands served to provide life to our muliwai, punawai, ocean, marine life and now are the main cause of destruction of our homes, streets, bridges, businesses and way of life. We can either work with mother nature or we can be destroyed by her.**
- 2. It has now been realized worldwide that wetlands are needed to survive in this world we live in. We have destroyed most of our wetlands in Hawaii and South Maui is no exception. I have witnessed many native birds, plants and marine life become endangered right before my eyes. If we don't protect our last remaining wetlands then the endangered species will become extinct and our ecosystem functions will too. This is true for every island.**
- 3. Maui County Wetlands overlay map "Ordinance 5421" was adopted in 2022 to document and protect all of Maui's last remaining wetlands. However, what good is our wetlands overlay map if we don't have rules that dictate what and how these Maui codes are carried out? The situation is dire!!**

**Please know that as a very active community member of Kula Kai, Kukaniloko and the Executive Director of Rooted Kekahi Me Ka Aina, I have advocated for wetlands protections with state and county government officials, our community and stakeholders and many nonprofits and small business owners and others from around the US. You have the power to protect or destroy our last remaining ecological safe guards. These last remaining wetlands are struggling but can be restored and can be the difference between a thriving ecosystem or total destruction of it.**

**Just a reminder of what is at stake here. In my ahupua'a of Waiohuli Kai, I have personally seen many endangered and threatened species in our small wetland features that are left in this area. I have also recently seen landowners destroy over 20 acres of threatened species habitats with no regard for the wetlands, endangered species or what their actions cause.**

**Here are some of our endangered wetland species who need our wetlands to prevent extinction!**

- 1. 'Alae ke'oke'o- Hawaiian Coot (endemic and endangered)**
- 2. Koloa- Hawaiian duck (endemic and considered the most endangered duck in the world)**
- 3. Ae'o-Hawaiian Stilt (endemic and endangered)**
- 4. Blackburns Spinx Moth-Hawaiian tobacco moth- (endemic and endangered) due to the destruction of habitat. Once was thought to be extinct)**
- 5. 'Ope'ape'a- Hawaiian Hoary Bat (endemic and endangered)**
- 6. Hawaiian Monk Seals- (endemic and endangered)**
- 7. Honu ea- Hawaiian Hawksbill Turtles (indigenous and extremely endangered)**
- 8. Auku'u- Black Crowned Night Heron (indigenous and threatened)**

**There are also many other types of plants and marine life that need our wetlands to survive. Without our wetlands they will disappear as well. Some of these are already threatened due to lack of habitat from over development, pesticides, mud and silt from flooding and diversion of the wai's natural path. Wetland plants include akulekule, Kipukai, Native sedges and many forms of limu such as the limu Wawae'iole. We also need to include the many native fish and sea urchins who need fresh water as well as clean ocean water.**

**We need to protect the mauka wetlands, as well as makai wetlands in order to save all of these Hawaiian endangered species. The dangers are clear and unmistakable. If we dont protect our wetlands right now from Mauka to Makai, then so much of our resources will be lost forever.**

**We must stop land owners and developers from owning the rights to our water, gulches and from diversions and destruction of all the wetlands we have left. We see the cascading effects already and the ecological impacts are known around the world and within our**

**communities. Please put HCR199/HR191 protections into place now before we lose any more of our precious natural resources.**

**Sincerely, Brandi Corpuz**

Aloha House Representatives,

3-31-2025

My name is Vernon Kalanikau from the ahupua'a of Waiakoa in the Moku of Kula (Kai) as known as Kihei, South Maui.

I'm here to provide comments in support of HR 199/HR 191.

It was not too long ago in the 60's and 70's the resources to gather from the fishpond and shoreline was abundant. The fishes would come up to you, the aroma of seaweed filled the air Southside, opae, opihi, wana, etc. was plentiful and the kai was pristine and cleaner than what it is today. When it rains or stormy weather, yes it used to flood but the water always made its way to the ditches along South Kihei Rd. which flowed into the wetlands and the muliwai. The shoreline and ocean was pretty clean from the surface runoff. Not so today!

Today development covers the entire Kula Kai along with "add as you go infrastructure" and hardening of the wetlands and aina, Kula Kai has to endure flooding a few times a year for at least the last 12 years and its only getting worse. With sea level rise and rains from mauka collides in Kula Kai, this community is evidence that the community is being inundated from the springs below, the springs that was built upon. Landscape and concrete foundations are wet. Buildings will start sinking.

All we can do for Kula Kai is to protect the very few pockets of wetlands that are left. Some areas will be benefiting as retention basins for neighboring residents and some larger wetland areas will need attention and support for conservation.

The very large elephant in Kula Kai is mauka, Haleakala. If you know, when it rains mauka and makai is dry, Kula Kai gets flooded not only from the water but the sediment that comes down along with it and it all ends up in the ocean. Lack of wetlands to mitigate the surface runoff. South Kihei Rd. is closed for clean up, businesses are impacted from closures and traffic is pupule. No one in the entire State will come close to what Kula Kai has to endure from flooding. I will emphasize, KULA KAI IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE WHAT OTHER COMMUNITIES SHOULD NOT DO. DON'T BUILD IN THE WETLAND and STAY AWAY FROM THE SHORELINE!!

Ok, to this HR 199/HR 191. Why not prioritize the kuleana? "Āina is Chief, man is servant" No more our resources, man struggles. A simple reminder that's all.

Look globally what is occurring with nature and the honua. We are in the middle of the Pacific and we are all pretty akamai what we see around the corner of our eyes and our na'au. We are not going to solve and fix everything, because no can, damage is done, but we can continue to do what we can in the NOW the best we can.

Mahalo everyone for your continuous dedication to serve Hawai'i Nei.

Vernon Kalanikau



**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:03:51 AM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
barbara steinberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HR199

**HR-191**

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:41:13 AM

Testimony for EEP on 4/1/2025 10:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Holly Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**To: Chair Lowen, House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection**

**Vice Chair Perruso, House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection**

**From: Holly Crawford**

**Date: March 31, 2025**

**Re: Testimony in Support of companions HR191 and HCR199 Protect Wetlands**

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**Aloha Chair Lowen and Vice Chair Perruso,**

**Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of companions [HCR199/HR191](#), “Protect Wetlands.”**

**I urge you to adopt these companion resolutions that prioritize the protection of the State’s wetlands, and anchialine pools, which host delicate ecosystems and endangered species in the State.**

**Wetlands are a vital part of Hawai‘i’s ecosystems and are necessary filters that protect our oceans from stream, storm, and urban runoff. Without maintained wetlands, there will be increased damage to aquatic life, coral reefs, water quality, land, businesses, roads, and residences from floods.**

**Mahalo for your consideration.**