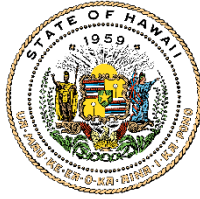


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA ĀINA

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 STATE PARKS  
P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**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 AND LAND**

**Monday, February 10, 2025  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 1517  
RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS**

Senate Bill 1517 proposes to authorize the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to lease public lands for recreational-residential use by public lottery and restrict participation in the public lottery to residents of the county in which the leased land is located. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure and provides the following comments.**

The historic recreational residence community within Koke'e-Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i has been a cherished resource for local families for over a century. The mountain community is modeled on similar communities established on US Forest Service lands in wilderness areas on the mainland, which continues today as a thriving recreational program.

There are approximately 100 recreational residence (cabin) leases in Koke'e-Waimea Canyon State Parks on Kaua'i, and they are unique in Hawai'i – allowing no permanent residence, but instead intended for occasional use not to exceed 180 days of use per year. They were envisioned as a means of allowing families to gather and commune with nature, escape the summer heat, and keep forest roads and amenities open and accessible.

Due to a combination of enabling legislation and past BLNR approvals establishing rent amounts, there presently exists an inequity in annual rents charged for these mountain cabins. The majority (75%) were leased via direct negotiation with existing leaseholders, at appraised values, under Act 223 (2007). Appraised rents for this largest set of cabins ranged from \$5,000 to \$9,500 annually. Sixteen unencumbered cabins were auctioned in 2009, resulting in higher annual rents, up to \$18,000 annually. The most recent auction of just 7 cabins, held in 2024, resulted in winning bids ranging from \$15,500 to \$41,000 yearly, for cabins in severely neglected condition. This amounts to rents ranging from three to ten times their appraised values, and effectively priced them well out of the reach of affordability for most local families. This also resulted in a stark inequity in pricing for access to similar state-owned recreational amenities.

This proposed bill seeks to (1) reward lessees who have been quality stewards of these unique park resources by allowing for current lessees in good standing to be granted new leases, (2) level the playing field in terms of affordability (by setting all rents at appraised value), and (3) allow a fair process for acquiring available cabins when they become available, by offering them via lottery rather than an auction.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



**CHIPPER WICHMAN, KLA PRESIDENT**  
**HĀ'ENA, KAUA'I**

February 10, 2025

**Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS**

**Hearing before the Senate COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

1:00 pm Monday, February 10, 2025

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

I am the President of the Kōke'e Leaseholder Association and for the past five years we have been working closely with State Parks leadership and staff to come up with a system that is fair and equitable for both existing leaseholders and well as for the residents who don't yet have a lease but would like to secure a lease on a cabin up at Kōke'e.

SB 1517 reflects a common vision that both our leaseholder community and State Parks supports. One of the most important changes being made to HRS 171-44 is that it will allow State Parks to award new leases via a lottery instead of an auction. In 2024, State Parks, with the strong support and assistance of KLA, held an auction for 7 dilapidated cabins and the results of that auction proved once and for all that the majority of our local residents will never have a fair chance to get a lease if we continue to use an auction to lease out the cabins. Some of these run-down properties went for annual lease rents of \$30,000 to \$40,000!!!

This bill proposes to restrict participation in the lottery to the residents of the county where the recreational residences exist. This is only fair and again this is consistent with the system that the Territorial government set up – that is that the Kōke'e camp lots (e.g. cabins) would be a resource for the people of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau.

Very importantly, this bill also provides strong incentive for existing and future leaseholders to make the capital investments needed to maintain the integrity of these historic properties. By allowing only lessees in "good standing" to "directly negotiate with the board to extend the lease for an additional term not to exceed twenty years". This is consistent with the U.S. Forest Service model which is what the Hawaii system was modeled after when it was set up in 1918. An added benefit of this language is that by allowing only lessees in "good standing" to be able to renew their leases this bill will provide a VERY strong motivation to lessees to abide by all of the terms of their lease. This language helps retain the good stewards of this historic community and eliminate the bad apples that refuse to follow the rules that we all have agreed to.

While there is much more that I can say, I believe you can tell from what I have put in my testimony how important this legislation is for our community. I strongly encourage you to support SB 1517 and help make the awarding of leases a much more fair and equitable process.

Me ke aloha a ka mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chipper Wichman", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Chipper Wichman, President  
Kōke'e Leaseholder Association

Joanne Acoba  
4571 Maile Road  
Waimea, Kauai, Hawaii 96796

February 7, 2025

**Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.**

**Report Title: Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery**

**TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

**Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair**

**Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair**

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

My name is Joanne (Tanaka) Acoba, I was born and raised in Makaweli, Kauai, now residing in Waimea. I am writing to express my strong support for SB 1517, which seeks to create a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

### **Historical and Cultural Importance**

The cabins at Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon are not just structures; they are a vital part of Kaua'i's cultural and historical heritage. Established as recreational retreats in the early 20th century, these cabins have served generations of families, offering respite from the coastal heat while fostering stewardship of the upland environment. Many of these cabins are over 50 years old and are recognized as contributing structures within a historic district. Preserving access to these cabins ensures that this legacy continues to benefit both current and future generations.

### **Challenges with the Current Lease Process**

The existing lease system has often been criticized for its lack of affordability, accessibility and fairness. The auction-based model disproportionately favors those with financial means, sidelining local families who have maintained these cabins for decades. Moreover, the process does not adequately account for the cultural and historic significance of these properties or the community's deep ties to them.

### **Benefits of SB 1517**

SB 1517 proposes reforms that would address these inequities by introducing a public lottery system for lease acquisition. This approach would:

1. Promote Equity: Ensure that all members of the community have an equal opportunity to secure leases, regardless of financial status.
2. Preserve Cultural Heritage: Encourage local families with long-standing ties to Kōke'e to continue their stewardship of these historic cabins.
3. Foster Community Connection: Strengthen the bond between residents and these cherished public lands, ensuring their sustainable use and preservation for future generations.

**Environmental Stewardship**

The residents of Kōke'e cabins have historically played a crucial role in maintaining the surrounding environment, including combating invasive species and preserving native flora and fauna. By making leases more accessible to local families, HB 1348 supports continued environmental stewardship that benefits all park visitors.

In conclusion, Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks are treasures that belong to all of us. SB 1517 represents a critical step toward ensuring that access to these parks—and their historic recreational cabins—is fair, equitable, and aligned with our shared values of cultural preservation and environmental sustainability.

I respectfully urge you to pass SB 1517 to protect this unique aspect of Kaua'i's heritage while fostering equity in access to public lands.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Joanne Acoba

Kaua'i native, Waimea High School Teacher (retired)

Cell: (808)652-2074

Email: [jojotanaka4@gmail.com](mailto:jojotanaka4@gmail.com)

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 7:24:21 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Ann Alexander Lentz	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Mary Ann Alexander Lentz  
Resident of O‘ahu, Kona District, Moku of Honolulu

February 7, 2025  
For meeting February 10, 2025

**Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.**  
**Report Title: Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery**

**TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND,**

Aloha Chair Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, and members of the committee:

I am writing in **strong support of SB 1517** which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable **process for our community to acquire and extend leases** for the recreational residence cabins in Koke‘e and Waimea Canyon State Parks on Kaua‘i.

Born on Kaua‘i, raised on sugar plantations, then in the cities of Hilo and Honolulu, Koke‘e is where I learned to care for the ‘āina, to appreciate our native forests, and to identify and care for the indigenous species. Tutu taught us to leave the park and our tiny cabin better than we found it. Father taught us the trails, the ridges and valleys, and the stars as well as the water systems while Mother taught us how to grow beautiful flowers, and weave lei po‘o, and make jam. As our grandchildren run in the forest of Pu‘ukapele, building “menehune houses” from twigs, a fifth generation is learning to love, respect, and appreciate Koke‘e. Our cabin, “Punanaiki,” originally a plantation camp house, is truly a recreational residence, a place where we come, away from city life, reconnect with the land, and fully appreciate our island home.

**Please allow us to negotiate to renew our lease based on the value of the land upon which this humble cabin sits. SB 1517 provides an incentive for lessees to continue to invest our own money to care for and improve cabin and property which are now fully owned by the State.** We do more than comply with the lease having completely rebuilt after each hurricane and now spending \$15,000 every three years to control the 60-foot trees surrounding the property. Currently, we are faced with a real dilemma. The lease requires us to have insurance; the insurance company requires that we have a new roof (\$15,000); the trees are due for trimming (\$15,000); and the lease is about to expire. With no assurance that we can negotiate a new lease, do we make this investment?

**The ability to renew our lease when it expires very shortly would give us the incentive to make these improvements and remain in “good standing.”** Additionally, such renewal is consistent with the U.S. Forest Service model which is what the Hawai‘i system was modeled after when it was set up in 1918 and my grandparents helped to establish the community at Koke‘e.

**I fully support all of SB1517 and urge its passing.** Mahalo for your attention.

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:11:45 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

David P Slaski RPh. LMT

Wailua, Kaua'i

February 10, 2025

SB1517

**COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

I strongly support SB 1517. I believe the only fair way to assign a new leaseholder to a Kokee State Park Cabin that is available, is through a lottery system. This will allow a level playing field for any resident of Kauai County Who wishes to obtain a Kokee cabin lease. This should be done at a fair, assessed value of the property only. The 2024 auction of the seven orphan cabins unfortunately allowed a disproportionate advantage to those with the deepest pockets that resulted in yearly leases exceeding \$40,000 per year. This is an unattainable amount for a local Kauai County resident.

I also support lease renewals for current leaseholders who are in good standing with the BDLNR. These leaseholders that are in good standing act as responsible stewards of the land. They take care of not only their properties, but they act as stewards of Kokee State Park as a whole. Thank you for your consideration, your time, and your support of SB1517.

David P Slaski RPh. LMT

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:22:53 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylie E Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

My name is Kylie Wilson and I live on Kaua'i. I spend time in Koke'e on a regular basis and treasure our special place. This bill is very important as it authorizes the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to lease recreational-residence cabins by public lottery and restrict participation in the public lottery to only residents that live in the county in which the leased land is located. This is the most fair and equitable way to do this!!! Please pass this measure.

Kylie Wilson

6435 Makana Rd., Kapaa, HI 96746

Testimony for SB 1517

To:

Committee on Land and Water

Senator Lorraine Inouye, Chair & Senator Brandon Elefante, Vice Chair

FROM: Nick Beck

PO Box 91, Hanalei Kauai 96714

I am writing to strongly request your support of SB 1517

I am a life time resident of Kauai born in Koloa, Kauai. I am a retired educator and have served as a teacher, vice principal, and retired as principal of Hanalei School. I also taught at the Kauai Community College and conducted educational programs for the University of Hawai'i here on Kauai.

I believe that this Bill(SB1517) will make it more fair and equitable for our community to acquire leases and for current leaseholders in good standing to maintain their current leases.

feel that it is important for you to understand the many contributions that current leaseholders make to enhance our State Parks through trails and grounds maintenance, trail signage, road maintenance and very often providing assistance for lost or injured hikers

The terms of this SB1517 are consistent with the U.S. Forest Service model which was a model for our Hawai'i system when it was set up in 1918.

I thank you for your attention and support of SB 1517

Mahalo and Aloha,

Nick Beck

Hanalei Kauai

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.

Report Title: Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery

TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing in **strong support** of SB1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to lease and maintain the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

SB1517 incentivizes lessees to remain in good standing and truly abide by the terms of their lease and be good stewards of the property as it allows for lessees in "good standing" to be able to renew their lease when the lease comes to an end. Lessees who have been good stewards of their cabins and the land, and who are in good standing, will be able to "directly negotiate with the board to extend the lease for an additional term not to exceed twenty years". This is consistent with the U.S. Forest Service model which is what the Hawaii system was modeled after when it was set up in 1918.

The State currently has little ability to enforce the terms of the recreational residence leases due to limited staffing but by allowing only lessees in "good standing" to be able to renew their leases this bill will provide a VERY strong motivation to lessees to abide by all of the terms of their lease. Additionally, SB1517 provides an incentive for lessees to continue to invest our own money to care for and improve these historic properties. Many lessees and their families have been maintaining these cabins for many decades, in some cases were the original builders of the cabins over a century ago and continue to pour sweat and cash into maintenance and improvements we no longer own. By excluding the value of any on-site improvements (made by the lessee during the term of their lease) in determining the fair market value of a lease when it is up for renewal as well as providing leaseholders the right to negotiate to extend at the end of the lease term this bill provides assurance that incentivizes lessees to re-invest in the continued maintenance and upgrades of these properties to ensure this historic community remains.

Thank you for your support of our community and the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important bill.

Aloha,

R. McKibbin Mist

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 2:32:08 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Peter Watts	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

John Peter Watts  
ONLY

BY EMAIL

February 6, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Hawaii State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

HEARING IN HONOLULU on February 10, 2025

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED SENATE BILL 1517, Relating to  
Public Lands

Aloha,

I have been a resident of the island of Kauai for more than forty-five years. My wife is a leaseholder at Koke'e. All three of my children were born here, as were two of my grandchildren.

This bill authorizes the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to lease recreational residence cabins by public lottery and restrict participation in that lottery to residents of the

county in which the leased land is located. This amendment will provide a fair and affordable opportunity for local families like ours going forward.

I respectfully ask for your support in passing the Bill, as is.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the important matter.

Very truly yours.

Peter

1751 Hulu Road, Kap'a, Kauai, Hawaii 96746

makaleha\_arts@yahoo.com

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 3:27:29 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senator Lorraine R. Inouye and Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1348 and its companion bill SB1517, which provide necessary reforms to the leasing process for recreational residence cabins in Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks. This legislation is crucial in ensuring that these historic resources remain accessible to local residents while also fostering responsible stewardship of these properties.

One of the key provisions of this bill is the replacement of the current auction system with a lottery for vacant cabin leases. The 2024 auction process demonstrated that an auction disproportionately benefits those with financial means, pricing out the vast majority of Kauai's local residents. Cabins in severe disrepair saw annual lease rents reach unaffordable levels, making it nearly impossible for multigenerational local families to access these residences. A lottery system will create a fair and equitable means for local residents to obtain leases.

Additionally, I strongly support the requirement that only residents of the county where the recreational cabins are located be eligible to participate in the lease lottery. The intent of these cabins has always been to serve the residents of Kauai and Niihau, and opening the lottery to residents of other counties with larger populations would dilute opportunities for Kauai's local families.

HB1348 and SB1517 also encourages private investment in the maintenance and restoration of these historic cabins by ensuring that lease renewals do not factor in lessee-funded improvements when determining fair market lease rates. This provision provides a much-needed incentive for lessees to continue investing in the upkeep of these state-owned properties.

Further, this legislation promotes responsible stewardship by allowing leaseholders in "good standing" to renew their leases through direct negotiation for an additional term of up to twenty years. This approach mirrors the successful U.S. Forest Service model and ensures that lessees remain committed to maintaining the integrity of the land and cabins. Given the State's limited resources for enforcing lease terms, this renewal incentive is a strong motivator for compliance.

Finally, I support the proposed one-time \$1,200 fee for lease transfers. This fee is a reasonable measure to help cover administrative costs incurred by State Parks staff during the lease transfer process.

HB1348 / SB1517 represent a significant step forward in ensuring that Kauai's recreational residence program remains both fair and sustainable. I urge you to support this bill to protect local access, preserve historic cabins, and foster responsible stewardship of these cherished lands.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

David Phillips

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 4:51:03 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alapai Toulon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lorraine R. Inouye and Vice Chair Brandon J.C. Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1517 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

I strongly support the renewal of leases in good standing with the state. I am from a multi generational Kauai family who was influential in the legislation to turn Kokee into a state park. We are one of the original cabin lease holders in Kokee. To watch generational families be pushed out of these places that mean so much to our families and mo'opuna to high dollar bidders who moved to the islands is heartbreaking.

We invest our own money to keep our cabin in excellent shape and preserve the historic value of the structure. Lease structure should one setup similar to all US Forest Service leases, which focus on the property and don't include improvements of the building. This give owners the motivation to keep up with big projects their places may need.

I please ask for your support in saving the Kokee cabin leases for the families who have loved and maintained these places for generations.

Mahalo

Alapai Toulon



Testimony from Gaylord Wilcox (primary residence in Honolulu) for House Committee on Water and Land hearing on 2/4/25, HB 1348.

I support HB 1348 proposing the State incorporate fair market values for lotteries and negotiation with its recreational residential leases. As a current leaseholder of such a residence in Kokee I am aware that recent methods of assigning leases have often not worked for the betterment of the people of Kauai, resulting in problematic lease assignments, such as pricing out many locals who would make good use of the properties.

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:47:27 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Michelle Alimboyoguen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: February 6, 2025 Linda “Michelle” Alimboyoguen 9917 Waimea Rd Waimea, HI 96796 Re: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 To: Committee On Water & Land Senator Lorraine R, Inouye, Chair Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair Aloha, My name is Michelle Alimboyoguen, Raised in Wailua, Kaua’i, now residing in Waimea. This bill is very important as it authorizes the Board of Land & Natural Resources (BLNR) to lease recreational-residence cabins by public lottery and restrict participation in the public lottery to ONLY residents that live in the county in which the lease land is located. This will continue to Preserve Cultural Heritage as we continue as a community to steward these historical cabins & their surrounding lands, ensuring their sustainability & stability for our future generations of Kaua’i that we treasure. This is the most fair and equitable way to do this!! Please pass this measure!!!! I respectfully urge you to pass SB 1517!! Mahalo, Linda “Michelle” Alimboyoguen Self employed, Zensations Massage Therapy Kauai Native (808) 651-9492 kmjk@hawaii.rr.com

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 7:44:11 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jodie Kona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Jodie Kona

PO Box 617

Hanapepe HI 96716

February 6, 2025

TO:

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Monday, February 10, 2025

TIME: 1:00 PM

PLACE: Conference Room 229 &amp; Videoconference

Aloha, my name is Jodie Kona I am a born and raised local from Kauai. This bill is EXTREMELY important to the locals of Niihau and Kauai as it authorizes the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to lease recreational-residence cabins by public lottery and restrict participation in the public lottery to ONLY residents that live in the county in which the leased land is located. This is the most fair and equitable way to do this! For myself I have grown up on the Westside where we spent majority of our time with families and friends up in kokee and I am fortunate to be a part of kokee. I wish to continue to share this with my family for generations to come. Without this bill, I believe that this will be another Piece of Kauai ripped away from the locals! The seven auctioned cabins that took place 2024 is a prime example. To sit in that room, witness the disbelief, and defeat in local families was the most devastating and

heartbreaking thing to ever witness. An auction will only allow the wealthy transplant local residents to get a cabin. Transplant locals have no ties to kokee and will have no interest in being good stewards of the land. Most cabins have been in generational families that have so much historical knowledge of kokee. This Auction should NOT have happened and should not happen again.

By keeping the appraisals for the lease as reasonable will allow cabin leaseholders to affordability continue caring and up keeping these cabins and if they are in good standing that should allow them to negotiate directly with the state to renew the leases I feel is the best way to go about this. Cabin leaseholders put SO MUCH of their hard-earned money and time investing in these cabin and maintaining the yards and surroundings why take this away from them. This would be a positive incentive to upkeep, maintain and financially be in good standing and in return, your lease will automatically be renewed. The one-time fee to transfer leases is also reasonable.

Kokee defiantly has a piece of my heart. My Grandfather, late Gabriel Silva was one of many young men that were housed at the Koke'e Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC camp) between years 1935 and 1942. Their mission was to plant trees for watershed retention and improve park infrastructure following devastation of a large fire in 1887 and subsequent decades of cattle pasturing and overgrazing by feral goats and cattle. Alaka'i Swamp Trail and Hā'ena-Kalalau Trail and Many remote roads were built to access planting areas that are used today as fire roads in case of wildfire. A satellite camp at Waialae was built and part is still used today. The C.C.C. gave the Territory's Board of Agriculture and Forestry a tremendous boast to accomplish forest management and natural resources conservation objectives on Kaua'i. My grandfather was fortunate to still be one of a few men still living to be recognized for these accomplishments up in kokee. Growing up my grandfather installed his knowledge to his family. Kokee will always hold a deep place in my heart. My hopes are that you have read every single testimony as it holds special meanings to the people of Kauai and Niihau. I thank you for your time. Please do this for the people of Kauai & Niihau.

Mahalo,

Jodie (Silva) Kona

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 8:05:33 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joann Givens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 7, 2025

TO: Committee on Water and Land

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

FR: Joann Givens and Family

My family have enjoyed a cabin in Kokee for over 50 years. Three generations have experienced the special place that is Kokee. We have lovingly maintained the cabin and grounds. We strongly support allowing lessees in good standing to be able to renew their leases. Please pass this measure.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Joann Givens and Family

4232 Puu Pinao Place

Koloa, HI 96756

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 10:33:49 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Baldwin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Committee on Water and Land:

Our family has owned a cabin at Kokee for a long time. We have seen the devastation from auctions on the cabins and the Kauai Island Morale. Allowing us to negotiate directly gives us as lesseess the ability to keep our cabins in good shape. Now, we just wait to see what happens as they continue to deteriorate since you might lose your cabin.

Kokee is very special. The lease holders help maintain the roads. We help tourists when lost or stuck. It is a special community. Our cabin is shared often with friends who grow to love Kokee as much as we do.

I strongly urge you to please support this bill without amendments.

Thank you.

Nancy J. Budd  
1337 Puuopae Road  
Kapa`a, Kaua`i, Hawai`i 96746

February 6, 2025

TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye Chair  
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Hearing Monday February 10, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Subject: **Testimony in Support of SB1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS**

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing to express my strong support of SB1517, which amends HRS 171-44 to provide a fair and equitable process for the granting of recreational residence leases for cabins in Koke`e and Waimea Canyon State Parks.

I have been a resident of Kaua`i since 1979 and have a deep connection to the mountain and to the Koke`e and Waimea Canyon State Parks. Although I am not a leaseholder, I was appointed by the Senate to serve on the Koke`e-Waimea State Parks Advisory Council in 2009. In that capacity I worked for many years with the state and the Kaua`i community to finalize the master plan for Koke`e and Waimea State Parks with the intention that our cherished wilderness, native forests, flora, fauna, and historic buildings be managed and conserved for future generations.

As the term implies, the historic "recreational residence lease" program was designed a century ago to provide an opportunity for the people of Kaua`i and Ni`ihau to experience, on an occasional basis, the mountain wilderness and all that it has to offer. Every year this becomes more important as our community grows and the open space disappears. Consistent with this purpose, this bill limits participation to residents of the county where these recreational residences exist.

This bill also proposes setting rents at appraised value, ensuring that local residents have an opportunity to secure a lease regardless of financial status.

This bill further provides incentives for leaseholders to maintain and improve these historic properties by permitting only leaseholders in good standing to directly negotiate an extension of their lease and by excluding the value of any on-site improvements made by the lessee at the time of lease renewal.

At long last, this bill provides solutions to the very challenging issues built into the current process of lease allocation, giving our community a fair chance to be awarded cabin leases in Koke'e. Please support this bill as drafted.

Mahalo for your kind consideration,

Nancy J. Budd

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 12:11:43 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Palo Lockett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha

My name is Palo Lockett and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB 1517 on behalf of myself and the Cavasso family. Joel Cavasso is a "lessee in good standing" and I am married to his daughter (after many walks in the woods and family weekend work days on the cabin...) We are longtime residents of Kauai and have helped to care for the Cavasso family cabin for several decades.

The recreational residence program in Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks was created 100 years ago by the Territorial government working with the County government as a resource for the people of Kauai and Niihau. It should remain that way. Local families maintain the roads, clear fallen trees, care for the surrounding forest, and maintain the cabins on our own as it should be. This tradition should be nurtured and encouraged by the State. For these reasons, we strongly support Senate Bill 1517.

Mahalo for your consideration.

I remain respectfully yours,

Palo Lockett

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 12:16:27 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Russell McCluskey II	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

**NOTICE OF HEARING**

DATE: Monday, February 10, 2025

TIME: 1:00 PM

PLACE: Conference Room 229 &amp; Videoconference

**Testimony in Support of SB1517**

Aloha, my name is Russell McCluskey II, and I am a lifelong resident of Kauai. I am writing to express my strong support for SB1517, a crucial piece of legislation that proposes to lease recreational-residence cabins through a public lottery.

I fully support the bill's provision to restrict participation in the lottery to residents of the specific county where the leased land is located. I believe this approach ensures fairness and equity by prioritizing local residents and ensuring that opportunities are made available to those who are directly connected to the community.

I urge the committee to pass this important measure, which will benefit Kauai residents and help ensure that recreational cabin leases are managed in a just and accessible manner.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Russell McCluskey II

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 1:10:06 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

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

I am writing in strong support of SB1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

I have been a resident of Kauai for 37 years and have come to know and love the beauty and wonder that is Koke'e. We encourage friends and family to use our cabin to share the Aloha. The cabins are an important part of the cultural heritage of Kauai. They should not be restricted to the very wealthy.

The results of the auction for cabins held last year was devastating for everyone who knows the place. This bill will go a long way to correct the problems in the current statute.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Susan, Lawai, Kauai

February 7, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Water & Land  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii 96813

BY EMAIL ONLY

MEETING IN HONOLULU on February 10, 2025

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED SENATE BILL 1517, Relating to  
Public Lands

Aloha,

I have been a resident of Hawaii for more than sixty years, and a leaseholder at Kōke'e since 1975. I attended the first ever auction of our leases in 1985, where my lease rent increased by eleven times. Fifty-one out of one hundred and eleven cabins changed hands in that bitter and disputed auction – again the first in our now more than one hundred-year-old community.

I did not attend the 2011 auction of sixteen “orphan” cabins that had been abandoned by their former lessees between 2005 and 2011, that the Chair of DLNR noted in her testimony on HB 1348 resulted “in higher annual rents, up to \$18,000 annually”. I was among the leaseholders helping State Parks staff conduct the most recent auction, in April 2024. We were all greatly surprised that it “resulted in winning bids ranging from \$ 15,500 to \$ 41,000 yearly, for cabins in severely neglected condition” and “ranging from three to ten times their appraised values, and effectively priced them well out of the reach of affordability for most local families.”<sup>1</sup>

This bill authorizes the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to lease recreational-residence cabins by public lottery and restrict participation in that lottery to residents of the county in which the leased land is located. This is the most fair and equitable way forward.

I respectfully ask your strong support in passing the Bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter to the Kauai community.

Very truly yours,



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<sup>1</sup> Testimony of Dawn N.S. Chang, Chairperson, DLNR, before the House Committee on Water & Land, 2/4/2025.  
[268 Hua Place, Wailua Mauka, Kapaa, Kauai, Hawaii 96746-9608](#)  
[\(808\) 635-3226](#)

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 10:20:10 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Finberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Patricia Finberg

February 7, 2025

Subject: Testimony In support of SB1517

Committee on Water and Land

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Notice of Hearing

Date: Monday February 10,2025

Time: 1:00 pm

Place: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante,

I am writing in strong support of HB 1348 which amends SB1517 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

**SB1517: Only people who are residents of the same County where the recreational residences are located should be able to participate in the lottery for a cabin lease.**

This is super important for the people of Kauai County as they will be drowned out by a wave of lottery applicants from other counties with much high population numbers.

The recreational residence program in Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks was created 100 years ago by the Territorial government working with the County government as a resource for the people of Kauai and Niihau. It should remain that way

**SB1517: Incentivizes lessees to remain in good standing and truly abide by the terms of their lease and be good stewards of the property as it allows for lessees in "good standing" to be able to renew their lease when the lease comes to an end.**

SB1517: Lessees who have been good stewards of their cabins and the land, and who are in good standing, will be able to "directly negotiate with the board to extend the lease for an additional term not to exceed twenty years". This is consistent with the U.S. Forest Service model which is what the Hawaii system was modeled after when it was set up in 1918.

The State currently has little ability to enforce the terms of the recreational residence leases due to limited staffing but by allowing only lessees in "good standing" to be able to renew their leases this bill will provide a VERY strong motivation to lessees to abide by all of the terms of their lease

Thank you, I urge you to please support SB1517.

Mahalo,

Patricia Finberg

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 11:00:42 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Landon Labrador	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am in full support of a lottery system which puts the tax paying Hawaii residents first. It is common knowledge just how much of our land has been purchased by people residing outside of our state and even our country. This land doesn't go to house residents, rather used as vacation homes, temporary vacation rentals and other uses that do not benefit the tax paying Hawaii resident.

I would however like some sort of vetting process so people that just have a drivers license, Hawaii address as a front cannot also participate in such lottery. 'Residency' shouldn't be able to be established quickly and easily for the sole purpose of obtaining a lease.

The precious few parcels that are available should be preserved for those who live here and can enjoy and share them with others who also live here. They can better monitor and maintain the properties for future generations, lessening the chance that they are left in ruin or beyond repair. Many of the existing structures have been passed down through generations and maintained at no cost to the state. Most/many of these families would continue to do this willingly.

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:49:53 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Parker Croft	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Attention Committee on Water and Land

February 08,2025

Aloha,

This letter is written in support of SB1517 in its entirety. As a resident of Moloa'a, on the island of Kaua'i I support the proposal to give the DLNR the right to hold a lottery that is limited to the residents of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau for cabins in Waimea State Park and Koke'e State Park. The local people are the fabric of this community. By enabling the local people to effectively participate we maintain our community and identity. If the pool is opened to a larger population the community will lose its fabric.

SB1517 encourages the community to maintain the quality of the neighborhood properties with their effort and investment. It incentivizes maintaining the leases in good standing and to abide by the terms of the lease. This further stabilizes the community and keeps the fabric of this historic neighborhood whole and healthy.

Where leases are transferred, the one time fee of \$1,200.00 is a fair and reasonable assessment to cover the administrative costs of making that change. I support this assessment.

This position is based on maintaining fair and equitable access to the resources of Kaua'i by the members of our community. By continuing to keep the multi-generational, economically accessible policies of access to the leases in Waimea and Koke'e State Parks we will be achieving an important goal of genuine support of a healthy community.

Respectfully,

Parker Croft

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:09:07 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Moana Huff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Patricia Moana Kapuni Huff

3427 Nalohia place

Kalaheo Hi 96741

February 08, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.

Report Title: Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery

TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

I am writing in strong support of SB 1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

Thank you for your attention for my support for SB 1517.

Mahalo

Patti Moana Huff

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:11:03 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory B Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

My wife Cecilia and I support this bill. Cecilia's family has had a tent and later a cabin in Halemanu Valley, Kōke'e since the late 1800s. The original lease was lost in an auction about 40 years ago. We would hate to see the same thing happen to our existing cabin.

It's part of our legacy that her parents have passed down to us and now us to our children and grandchildren.

We want to be able to renew our lease as long as we remain in good standing.

Mahalo.

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:32:17 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doug Alexander	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Doug Alexander

5965 Kini Pl

Kapaa, HI 96746

February 10, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS

Report Title: Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery

TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Lorraine R. Inouye and Vice Chair Brandon J.C. Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1517, which in companion with HB 1348, amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for recreational residence cabins in Koke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kauai.

As kama'aina born and raised on Oahu and a longtime visitor to (and now resident of) Kauai, whose family has Kauai roots and has leased a recreational cabin in Koke'e State Park since the

early part of the 20th century, I'm concerned that the process by which State Park Leases for recreational cabins have been granted may become untenable.

I point to the fairly recent public auction in April, 2024 of Leases for seven neglected cabins in Koke'e. The short of it is, the results of that event sent shock through the population of current Koke'e leaseholders, who interpreted the winning bids as establishing the new market for cabins Park-wide ... not only for leaseholders in the renewal process, but for the population of Kauai and Niihau at large in future public lotteries. Our fear was that the State let one of its valued resources go the way of the O'o bird: the enriched experience of Koke'e State Park as a recreational resident, as opposed to a one-day tourist. Kauai County residents, optionally joined in hui by other Hawaii residents, should feel they have a realistic chance of affording that experience at some point in their lives. The market for Koke'e cabin leases must be established with that in mind

Pertaining to the current Koke'e cabin leaseholders, we are doubly concerned that the path to Lease renewals will lead directly to public auction or lottery, without opportunity to negotiate with the State on fair market value. In the case of public auction, denial of this opportunity would be detrimental to many, if not most leaseholders in their ability to financially survive in an open auction competition. In the case of public lottery, opportunity for renewal would be reduced altogether and left to chance. As longtime stewards of the Koke'e leased lands who have given back to the area (voluntarily clearing invasive plants from hiking trails as an example), and as Leasees in good standing with the State regarding maintenance of dwelling structures, we'd hope our track records count for something. The area of Koke'e is peaceful and welcoming to visitors, and the people who recreationally reside there have a domain knowledge of maintaining the surroundings for all.

The two Bills referenced above are written to address the chief concerns we, the current leaseholders of Koke'e cabins, have regarding our Lease renewal. Particularly the opportunity to negotiate with the State on Lease renewals before such Leases are forwarded along to public auction or lottery. As well, for the sake of those bidding on any Leases that do land in the sphere of public auction or lottery, that a standard is set for qualification to register based on Kauai County residency (Kauai and Niihau) only ... protecting County residents from "big money" portfolios of off-island bidders that may artificially inflate market values .

Senators Inouye and Elefante, I trust in your abilities to see this through with objectivity and fairness, recognizing that Bill SB 1517, in companion with HB 1348, is in the best interest of Kauai County with regards to how recreational-residential use of Koke'e State Park lands should be managed.

mahalos for your time,

Doug Alexander

February 8, 2025

Katherin Nalani Hance

Honokaa, County of Hawaii

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517

Hearing to be held February 10, 2025 1 PM

Report Title: Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery

TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1517 which amends HRS 171-44. I support the bill as it is written without any amendments. Allow current lessees in good standing to directly negotiate with the State.

Kokee is a very special place to my family. My Great Grandfather worked hard for his local plantation and community in Mana, Kauai, and his effort was rewarded with a home in Puka Pele, Kokee, upon his retirement. When I was about 6 years old, my parents were lucky enough to find a cabin that was affordable and they leased it. We would come up to Kokee to where my Great Grandmother and Grandparents still visited at their cabin when they could. We lovingly maintained both homes and had many memorable family gatherings over the years. We managed the properties by removing the invasive blackberry, managed the ginger so it wouldn't take over the whole yard, and pulled the Ivy from the Ohia, Koa and Evergreen trees so they would not die.

We lost both cabins when the lease came up for renewal. Out of State people were able to outbid us. We were not able to afford to keep my Great Grandfather's retirement gift, we were just plantation families. They destroyed the historic integrity of the cabin my parents had leased, which had been in exceptional vintage condition, by building a huge structure over it. They no longer maintained the grounds in the condition that we had worked so hard to achieve.

Every time the leases come up in Kokee, I remember losing our family cabin.

With Aloha,

Katherin Nalani Hance

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:20:08 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kellie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kellie K Hines

3975 Hoohana Street

Lihue, HI 96766

February 10, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.

Hearing before the Senate COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1517 which makes it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire and maintain leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kauai.

I thank you for your attention and support of SB 1517.

Mahalo,

Kellie K Hines

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:27:24 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lesah Gail Merritt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB 1517

Committee on Water and Land

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J. Elefante, Vice Chair

Notice of Hearing

Date: Monday Feb. 10, 2025

Time: 1:00 pm

Place: Conference room 229

Dear Senator Inouye and Senator Elefante,

I'm submitting this testimony with a heavy heart. My lifetime in Koke'e, I would never change it for the world! When I moved away from Kauai in my younger years, I had the privilege to experience lifestyles abroad. Learning different cultures, their beliefs and traditions. The different upbringing and challenges life brought to them. Nothing could ever compare to the values my Ohana instilled in us. We learned to love our Aina, protect it, nurture it, carry on their traditions. Koke'e was and still is a huge part of my life and I am honored to share it with my children and grandchildren.

My Uncles built the cabin I am honored to be a part of. I am one of four families that Hui in keeping the cabin alive. We work well together with the upkeep of the cabin and the land it sits on. We grow flowers that can be used in lei or to take to the grave side of our passed Ohana. Holidays are always so beautiful to spend in the cool mountain air. We often help clean trails when fallen trees interrupt the hike or clear out invasive plants that take over the trails. Many of

these invasive plants suck up the water that doesn't make it down the mountain to our lo'i. Our Kaua'i people will malama the aina because it's ours. Outsiders will not have the same intent. Our Pu'u Ka Pele neighbors take care of each other. We look out for each other's properties and communicate issues with all involved. We share concerns and work together to come up with solutions like our Kaua'i people do.

Please approve and pass SB 1517 so our Kaua'i Ohana can continue to enjoy what we love.

Mahalo nui loa,

Lesah Gail Merritt

Store Director Safeway Lihue

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:44:58 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne Jacintho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Bill SB1517 Written Testimony 2/8/25

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Monday, February 10, 2025

TIME: 1:00 PM

PLACE: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Senate Bill SB1517

Testimony Support Of by

Wayne Jacintho

4803 Puuwai Road

Kalaheo, Kauai, Hawaii

Honorable Chair Inouye, Honorable Vice Chair Elefante, Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill SB1517 allowing for renewal/lottery of Kokee vacation cabin leases.

This bill will allow current lessees mostly working-class, to continue their leases at affordable rates, being based on the value of the land. Up until now, any improvements to one's cabin resulted in being punished for those improvements in the form of increased lease rents. The result is no one wanting to put hard-earned money into maintenance or improvements of these old historic cabins. This new law providing simple renewal of leases will result in badly needed repairs and improvements, without fear of increased (and likely unaffordable) rent increases based on building value.

This bill also provides for a lottery for empty/abandoned cabins. The recent auction showed that no working-class person, family, or group could afford a Kokee cabin. Having instead a lottery would at least give working-class Kauaians a chance of a lease. Over the years, a great many cabins have changed hands, many times in some cases. And a good many cabins have been abandoned by their lessees, usually because the reality of keeping/maintaining a cabin on the cold, damp, distant Kokee runs up against the dream.

Finally, a 3rd point, not mentioned directly: the Kokee Cabins by themselves are Historic, yet even more important is the historical community of lessees most of whom are born-and-bred Kauaians. The wealth of knowledge of time, people and place old-time lessees possess and hold can hardly be calculated. Keeping this knowledge which will continue to be passed is reason enough to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to support SB1517

(signed) Wayne Jacintho, Feb 8, 2025

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:03:30 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joanne Murphy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Joanne Murrphy

237 Kipu Place, Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii 96766

(808) 346 - 1201

February 10, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 1348 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.

TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I'm writing to support SB 1517 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

The high bids in the 2024 Koke'e cabin auction plus the cost of the cabin improvements was too much for Kauai families to consider because of struggling to make ends meet. A lottery would give hope to acquire a cabin.

Neighbor islands should be excluded from the lottery because Koke'e is so special. You want people that care for the area and will malama it by making sure people take care of it. I've known a family that has leased it since the beginning and they made improvements to their cabin, trees and the road. Those leaseholders are known to many residents for sharing their cabin's use, so many of us watch out for their cabin.. The residents of Kauai will continue to care for the land because we live here, we are the eyes and ears for DLNR. I know lots of

leaseholders families and friends who donate and volunteer with organizations that also care for Koke'e like Koke'e Resource Conservation Program, Kokua Koke'e, Forest Bird Recovery, Nature Conservatory, Division of Forestry and Wildlife and more.

Please keep the appraisals for the lease affordable so they could upkeep their cabins. Please allow them to negotiate directly with the state to renew the leases. I feel the one-time fee to transfer leases is reasonable.

Thank you so much for allowing me to give a written testimony in support of SB 1517 and I hope you'll support it.

Mahalo,

Joanne Murphy

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:35:04 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorraine Wichman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Anthony and Lorraine Wichman

P O Box 929, Koloa, Kauai, Hawaii 96756

(808) 651-7866

February 10, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.

Hearing before the Senate COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I'm writing to support SB 1517 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

Let me begin by saying that the 2024 Koke'e cabin auction dashed hopes of many residents who genuinely love Koke'e, of ever having a chance to get a cabin lease because of the high bids. A lottery would give hope to acquire a cabin knowing they will need to spend lots of money to make necessary improvements. Families work two jobs to make on Kauai.

Please don't open the lottery to neighbor islands. Many cabins date back 80 – 100 years and have remained in the same families. Those leaseholders are known to many islanders for sharing their cabin use, so many of us watch out for their cabin and the forest. The majority of Kauaians commit to being stewards of the land because we live here, we are the eyes and ears for DLNR. We hunt, donate and volunteer with organizations that also care for Koke'e like Koke'e

Resource Conservation Program, Kokua Koke'e, Forest Bird Recovery, Nature Conservatory, Division of Forestry and Wildlife and more. It's our home we will take care.

In closing please keep the appraisals for the lease reasonable so they could continue caring and upkeep of their cabins and also if they are in good standing please allow them to negotiate directly with the state to renew the leases. The one-time fee to transfer leases is reasonable.

Thank you so much for allowing me to give a written testimony in support of HB 1348 and I hope you'll support it with me for a positive step forward for history and preservation.

Gratefully,  
Tony and Lorraine Wichman

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.

Report Title: Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery

TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I 100% support SB1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable for our community to lease and maintain the recreational residence cabins in Koke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

SB1517 incentivizes lessees to remain in good standing and truly abide by the terms of their lease and be good stewards of the property as it allows for lessees in "good standing" to be able to renew their lease when the lease comes to an end. Lessees who have been good stewards of their cabins and the land, and who are in good standing, will be able to "directly negotiate with the board to extend the lease for an additional term not to exceed twenty years". This is consistent with the U.S. Forest Service model which is what the Hawaii system was modeled after when it was set up in 1918.

Many lessees and their families have been maintaining these cabins for many decades, in some cases they were the original builders of the cabins over a century ago and continue to pour sweat and cash into maintenance and improvements of cabins they no longer own. By excluding the value of any on-site improvements (made by the lessee during the term of their lease) in determining the fair market value of a lease when it is up for renewal as well as providing leaseholders the right to negotiate to extend at the end of the lease term this bill provides assurance that incentivizes lessees to re-invest in the continued maintenance and upgrades of these properties to ensure this historic community remains.

Thank you for your support of our community and the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important bill.

Aloha,

Mark W. Moragne

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 2:46:44 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marty Kuala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB 1517 and and I am hopeful that you will agree that SB 1517 is a fair and equitable solution for the lease holders in Kokee. It is of particular importance that a public lottery be limited to residents of the county of Kauai. Mahalo for your support. Marty Kuala

February 8, 2025

Subject: **Testimony in Support of SB1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.**

Report Title: **Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery**

TO: **COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

**Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,**

I write today in strong support of SB1517, which seeks to amend HRS 171-44 to establish a fair and equitable process that enables long-term leaseholders in Kōkeʻe and Waimea Canyon State Parks to continue leasing and maintaining their recreational residence cabins. This measure aligns with the original intent of the Hawaii system, which was modeled after the U.S. Forest Service's recreational residence program when it was established in 1918.

By allowing lessees in good standing to negotiate lease extensions for up to 20 years, SB1517 creates a win-win scenario for both the State and the community by incentivizing responsible land stewardship, reducing the State's administrative burden, and ensuring the preservation of a historically significant community.

**Key Benefits of SB1517 to the State:**

**1. Preserving Hawaii's Historic and Cultural Heritage**

Many of these cabins have been family-maintained for generations, with some originally built over a century ago. The continued stewardship by existing lessees ensures that these historic properties remain preserved without requiring additional State resources.

**2. Encouraging Private Investment in Public Lands**

Lessees currently invest their own money, time, and labor into maintenance, improvements, capital repairs, including hiring licensed Kauai based businesses for professional services beyond their skill set —contributions that would otherwise fall to the State. The assurance of potential lease renewal prevents these investments from being seen as sunk costs, thereby encouraging ongoing care and improvements at no expense to taxpayers.

**3. Reducing the State's Financial and Administrative Burden**

Due to limited enforcement resources, it is challenging for the State to oversee compliance with lease terms across the parks. By granting lease renewal eligibility only to lessees in good standing, SB1517 creates a self-regulating incentive for lessees to comply with lease requirements, reducing the need for active enforcement.

**4. Aligning with Best Practices in Public Land Management**

This bill mirrors long-standing federal land management practices, such as the U.S. Forest Service's approach, which acknowledges the importance of providing long-term security to

recreational leaseholders who invest in public lands. Maintaining consistency with this model upholds Hawaii's commitment to sustainable land use and responsible governance.

#### **5. Protecting the Integrity of Public Lands**

Unlike a public lottery system, which can result in speculative or short-term interests, allowing long-standing, responsible leaseholders to remain promotes stable, long-term stewardship. These families have demonstrated a vested interest in protecting the land, ensuring its sustainable use for future generations.

SB1517 is a practical and balanced approach that acknowledges the valuable contributions of long-standing leaseholders while safeguarding the interests of the State. It encourages compliance, investment, and responsible stewardship—outcomes that directly benefit both the land and the broader community.

I respectfully urge you to support SB1517 and help preserve this historic community while fostering a cooperative and sustainable future for Hawaii's public lands. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Aloha,

Russell S. Bartmess  
Participating Member, Kōke'e Leaseholders Association  
2737 Apapane St  
Līhu'e, HI 96766

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 5:31:52 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Williamson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Sen. Inouye, Chair, and Sen. Elefante, Vice-Chair,

On behalf of our extended 'ohana, I am testifying in support of SB1517.

We thank you for taking steps to better manage, with greater fairness, the historic Koke`e cabins and upland community.

Our forebears built the cabin during the Great Depression and we are so grateful to have kept it in our family for nearing 100 years... enjoying stay-cations, celebrating holidays, and hosting friends at this refuge through a World War, a pandemic, and decades of dramatic change in between. As generations have moved around — off island or to the continent for education, work, or marrying into families elsewhere — this wahi pana has been our only constant and common "family home" at which we gather, repeat all the old shared stories, and make new memories. Over the years, family members have given back to the area by serving on the Hui o Laka / Koke`e Museum board, maintaining Faye road, and organizing the annual Pedal to the Meadow bicycle race.

- We agree that DLNR should have the ability to make vacant cabins available via lottery, not auction;
- We agree that only residents of Kaua'i County would be able to participate;
- We agree that maintenance by lessees must be incentivized, so that properties do not fall into disrepair when the cost of a new roof, total rewiring/plumbing, septic systems, or other crucial projects is prohibitive; and,
- We agree with 'direct negotiation' for families that abide by lease terms (eg. never renting out, upholding design standards) and are good-faith stewards of cabins and mauka lands.

Mahalo for your consideration of these improvements.

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 5:54:29 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
marau beck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

"My name is Marau Beck and I live on Kauai. This bill is very important as it authorizes the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to lease recreational-residence cabins by public lottery and restrict participation in the public lottery to only residents that live in the county in which the leased land is located. This is the most fair and equitable way to do this!!! Please pass this measure."

Marau Beck po box 371 hanalei Hi 96714

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:34:42 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

SEN . LORRAINE INOUE Chair

SEN. BRONSON ELEFONDE vice chair

Aloha, thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony, I am a lifelong resident of Kauai and have enjoyed the Tranquil beauty of Kokee for many decades. I believe it is important to support this bill for the future generations of Kauai. The recent fiasco of the auction of 7 delapidated homesteads left local families bewildered and frustrated. The only fair way to give locals a chance to grow and respect their aina is by facilitating a lottery system on these cabins. Hopefully this bill will pass with unanimous support. Thanks for your time, respectfully,

David Smith

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:33:25 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealaanuhea Wichman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kealaanuhea Wichman

5146 Emi Rd  
Koloa, Kauai, Hawai'i 96756

February 10, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.

Hearing before the Senate COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I would like to submit in writing in strong support of SB 1517 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Koke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kauai.

I am writing to strongly request your support of SB 1517.

I believe that this Bill SB 1517 will make it more fair and equitable for the families of Kaua'i to acquire leases and for current leaseholders in good standing to maintain their current leases. I feel that it is important for you to understand that my current leaseholders make to enhance our State Parks through trails and grounds maintenance, trail signage, road maintenance and often providing assistance to lost or injured hikers.

I thank you for your attention and support of SB 1517.

Aloha & Mahalo for listening to the voices who love Koke'e

Kealaanuhea Wichman

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:41:42 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie W Minson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Julie W Minson, 195 Sunshine Acres Drive, Eugene OR 97401

February 9, 2025

Subject: Testimony in support of SB1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Loraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING Monday, Feb 10, 2025, 1:00pm; Conference Room 229 &amp; Videoconference

Aloha Senator Inouye and Senator Elefante, and members of the Committee of water and Land,

I am writing in strong support of SB1517 as it amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for the Kaua'i community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Park on the island of Kaua'i.

Kokee and Waimea State Park is a treasured place for the residents of Kauai, and the residents of Kauai should remain the protectors and stewards of the land. My family has been part of the recreational residence program in Kokee since it was established 100 years ago and we continue to care for the land and the historic property for which we hold a lease.

SB1517 incentivizes lessees to continue to invest their own money in the care and upkeep of these historic cabins, even though they are now owned by the State. The lessees of the cabins, who are in good standing of the terms of the lease, should be allowed to continue to do so with

direct negotiation with the board to extend the leases. They are true stewards of Kokee, who have invested time and money in the maintenance of the land, the cabins, the roads, and the trails of Kokee and Waimea State Park for 100 years.

Thank you for reading this testimony. I urge you to support SB1517 to protect the beloved Kokee and Waimea State Parks.

Julie W Minson

Lea Weldon  
P.O. Box 1665  
Hanalei, HI 96714

February 7, 2025

**Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.**  
**Report Title: Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery**

**TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Senator Inouye and Senator Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

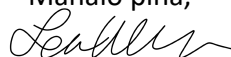
I am writing in strong support of SB 1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

My name is Lea Weldon and I grew up on the north shore of Kaua'i, have worked for Waipā Foundation for the past 20 years, and Halele'a is my home community. Kōke'e is my absolute very favorite place in the world. I have spent so much time up there, as a child, throughout my life, and now as a mother bringing my children to my favorite place multiple times a year. I was so excited a few years ago to hear about the auction that took place this past April. I knew this was my chance to get a cabin and be able to spend even more time in the place I love the most. I strategically put together a hui of friends that I knew were trustworthy, and had good skills to make the potential of reviving a dilapidated cabin into a life long dream come true. I was prepared to do whatever it took to take one of these cabins and turn it into a home away from home. Everything and anything, aside from the one thing that would make it impossible...paying way more than I or anyone I know could afford. The day of the auction came and I was so excited. The first cabin bidding rolled around and within seconds my heart was broken and my dreams shattered. As that first cabin went, I knew they all would be the same. I was in absolute shock and disbelief of the kind of money and people who were there to win most of the bids.

The auction system for the Kōke'e cabin leases need to be restructured so this NEVER happens again. The cabins should be in the hands of long term local Kaua'i families, not people who just moved here with deep pockets. The last thing our Kaua'i community needs is for the people moving here, buying up all the land and houses, and driving up housing costs to get all of our Kōke'e cabins too. If there is a lottery at least local families will have an equal chance to get a cabin.

I see now that it is equally important to keep the cabins in the hands of the lessees who have been good stewards, although it makes my personal chance lower to get a cabin. Most of the cabins are in the hands of local families and this is how it should be.

Mahalo for considering this bill and I strongly urge you to support SB 1517.

Mahalo piha,  
  
Lea Weldon

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:17:45 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Kocher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**John Kocher  
2025**

**Feb.9th,**

**P.O. Box 1013**

**Kalaheo, HI 96741**

**808-639-2178**

**Subject: Testimony in Support of SB1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.  
Report Title: Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery**

**COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair**

**NOTICE OF HEARING  
DATE: Monday, February 10, 2025  
TIME: 1:00 PM  
PLACE: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**Aloha to All this may concern:**

**I am writing in strong support of SB1517 which amends HB1348 to make it a  
more fair and equitable process for our community and our long time families to**

**reacquire leases for our recreational resident cabins in our Koke'e and Waimea State park here on the island of Kauai.**

**Our family has had our home in Halemanu Valley since 1930. I've seen ice boxes on the back porch, Kerosene lanterns, the valley get together and build a dam at a spring to bring water, at no cost to the state, to our nine homes. The first tank was a redwood one. Later in years, we purchased a 3,000 gallon stainless tank from Waimea dairy, set it up and dug 2ft trenches down into the valley so that each house could have PVC pipes instead of the rusting galvanized clogging our water. I've seen electricity come into the valley, the telephone and now we have wifi.**

**The only time we ask the state for help is if a tree so large falls, we need a machine to move it. This last weekend I cut trees off the road so KIUC would be able to come in and re-hook up our Electricity. The state also came in and cut the larger limbs and pushed them out of the way so the road would reopen. The stewards of Halemanu repair the road at no cost to the state.**

**I ask for you to support SB1517 and the lottery for Kauai and Niihau residence only and allow those in good standing with the State to negotiate their next lease.**

**Thank you very much for considering these thoughts.**

**Aloha,**

**Jed Kocher**

**Lot 7, Halemanu Kauai, Hawai'i**

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:56:49 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne W English	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Anne English, PO Box 389, Lawai, HI 96765

**Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS**

**Hearing before the Senate COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

1:00 pm Monday, February 10, 2025

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I am a long-time resident of Kauai (37 years) and truly love the beauty of Kauai and specifically Kokee. I am writing in strong support of SB1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i. We encourage friends and family to use our cabin to share the beauty and serenity of Kokee. The Kokee cabins are a cultural heritage of Kauai and should not only be available to the very wealthy.

The results of the auction for cabins held last year were devastating for everyone who knows and loves Kokee. This bill will go a long way to correct the problems in the current statute.

Thank you for considering this action.

Anne English,

Lawai, Kauai  
(808) 635-7884



**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:04:02 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maureen Hiramoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

My name is Mauree Hiramoto and I live in Kalaheo. I support Bill SB 1517 which is very important as it authorizes the Board of Land and Natural Resources to lease recreational cabins by public lottery and restrict participation in the public lottery to only residents that live in the county in which the lease lands is located. This is the most fair and equitable way to do this. Please pass this measure. Mahalo Nui Loa,

Jimmy and Terrie Johnson  
6540 Kipapa Road  
Kapaa HI 96746

February 9, 2025

**Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS**

**Hearing before the Senate COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

1:00 pm Monday, February 10, 2025

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

**We are writing in strong support of SB1517** which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

Our family has enjoyed the protected beauty of Kokee since 1989 and would like to preserve this area for future generations. **Overall, we want to support HB1348 and companion bill SB 1517 in their entirety as drafted.** We want to support it as it is currently written. We may need to amend the language as it goes along but for now are not asking for the bill to be amended.

**#1. HB1348 give the DLNR the ability to hold a lottery for vacant recreational residence cabins rather than an auction.**

The April 2024 auction of seven long neglected cabins demonstrated once and for all that an auction is not the right mechanism to make cabins available to the residents of Kauai. The auction drove annual lease rent up to the point that 99% of the local residents on Kauai will never be able to afford a recreational residence cabin in Koke'e.

The 2024 auction process resulted in cabins that were totally dilapidated going for annual lease rents in the \$30-\$40K range. This is beyond the reach of multigenerational local residents with regular jobs and families - even if they form a hui to help cover the costs.

The only fair way for local residents to have an opportunity to obtain a lease for a recreational residence in Koke'e is via a lottery system.

**#2. Only people who are residents of the same County where the recreational residences are located should be able to participate in the lottery for a cabin lease.**

This is extremely important for the people of Kauai County as they will be drowned out by a wave of lottery applicants from other counties with much high population numbers.

The recreational residence program in Kōke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks was created 100 years ago by the Territorial government working with the County government as a resource for the people of Kauai and Niihau. It should remain that way.

**#3. HB1348 provides an incentive for lessees to continue to invest their own money to care for and improve these historic properties that are owned by the State.**

By excluding the value of any of on-site improvements (made by the lessee during the term of their lease) in determining the fair market value of a lease when it is up for renewal this bill provides an important incentive for lessees to make the costly improvements like a roof replacement.

**#4. HB1348 incentivizes lessees to remain in good standing and truly abide by the terms of their lease and be good stewards of the property as it allows for lessees in "good standing" to be able to renew their lease when the lease comes to an end.**

Lessees who have been good stewards of their cabins and the land, and who are in good standing, will be able to "directly negotiate with the board to extend the lease for an additional term not to exceed twenty years". This is consistent with the U.S. Forest Service model which is what the Hawaii system was modeled after when it was set up in 1918.

The State currently has little ability to enforce the terms of the recreational residence leases due to limited staffing but by allowing only lessees in "good standing" to be able to renew their leases this bill will provide a VERY strong motivation to lessees to abide by all of the terms of their lease.

**#5. We support the idea of a one-time fee of \$1,200 for any lease which is being transferred to a new lessee.**

This is only fair and helps to compensate State Parks for the work their staff has to do to accommodate this lease transfer.

Mahalo for your consideration, Jimmy and Terrie Johnson

Malissa Silva  
2927 Rosie Bukoski Cr.  
Koloa, HI 96756

February 09, 2025

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.

Hearing before the Senate COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I would like to submit in writing in strong support of SB 1517 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Koke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kauai.

It is important to me that public lands on our island be accessible to our local island residents. The last auction of the available lease properties in Koke'e resulted in lease rates far in excess of the values of the properties. This made leases beyond the ability of almost all local residents of Kauai and Ni'ihau to participate.

I sincerely request that you support SB 1517 to address this inequity to implement a lottery system that makes the leasing process more fair and equitable to the residents of Kauai and Ni'ihau.

Mahalo for your support.

Mahalo Nui Loa,  
Malissa Silva

Elizabeth Lentz-Hill  
583 Kamoku St., #2307  
Honolulu, HI

February 9, 2025

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 1517 Relating to Public Lands

To: Committee on Water and Land  
Senator Inouye, Chair  
Senator Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I write in strong SUPPORT for SB 1517, Relating to Public Lands.

The bill will support keeping leases available for those for whom they were originally intended, as well as encourage lessees to perform needed upkeep and safety measures to cabins.

Mahalo for your consideration, and I encourage you to vote FOR SB 1517.

Elizabeth Lentz-Hill

**LATE**

February 9,, 2025

JoAnne Kaona

PO BOX 1289 Hanalei HI 96714

**Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.**

**Report Title:Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery**

**TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair and Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair and Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair and Committee on Water and Land, my name is JoAnne Kaona and I am writing in strong support of SB 1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

I was born and raised here on Kaua'i. I am a fourth generation native Hawaiian wahine kalo farmer and also work at Waipa Foundation. At Waipa I get to work with keiki from our community and one of my favorite activities is bringing them up to Koke'e. We have worked with DOWFA doing trail maintenance and other malama 'aina projects, but the greatest value is disconnecting the keiki from the technology of today, and creating pilina and a real connection to Koke'e. I remember one keiki saying, "I can't wait to come hike here with my parents and show them all of the work that we did." My hope is to share these beautiful places all around our island with the keiki and inspire them to be the next generation of Aloha 'aina warriors.

Koke'e is a beautiful and special place and it was devastating to be a part of the auction last spring. I was part of a hui with four other local families hoping to lease a Koke'e cabin, but when the auction began it was clear that our budget was nowhere close to where it needed to be. I looked around the room and everyone was outraged and by the end I would describe it as disbelief and sadness, realizing I and many other local Hawaiian families would never be able to afford leasing a cabin. That is why I support this bill SB 1517 to change the process from a ridiculous auction where only the wealthy will be able to lease cabins, to a more fair lottery process giving us locals a chance at a cabin lease.

Mahalo for your time, and again please support SB 1517.

JoAnne Kaona

PO Box 1289

Hanalei Hi 96714

jlkaona@gmail.com

**LATE**

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:20:27 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
michelle rose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Bill SB 1517 Written Testimony 2/8/25

Committee on Water and Land

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Notice of Hearing Monday February 10, 2025

Time: 1:00 pm

Place: Conference Room 229 & Video Conference

Senate Bill SB 1517

Testimony SUPPORT by

Michelle K Rose

4691 Wailapa Road

Kilauea, HI 96754

Honorable Chair , Vice Chair and Members of the Committee

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 1517

This bill will allow current lessees to continue to maintain their leases, while being in good standing

The value of the land shall be assessed, not the ongoing value/repairs/ maintenance of these historic cabins

Many of the cabins have families that have not only paid for the property maintenance, but have also maintained hiking trails, roads and volunteered decades of park service

Mahalo for the opportunity to support this critical Bill

Michelle Rose 2/10/2025

**LATE**

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:06:34 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
PATRICIA CRUZ	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**February 2, 2025**

**Patricia Cruz**

**Puna, Hawaii Island**

**Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517**

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Monday, February 10, 2025

TIME: 1:00 PM

PLACE: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

**Aloha** Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair and Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

**I am writing in support of SB 1517.**

**I am hopeful we can change this process to a lottery versus an auction because this current process has affected my family a couple of times already and caused our family to lose our home up at Kokee State Park. I was born on Kauai and feel so honored to have experienced the beauty and joy this magical place has and the healing quality it gives me every time I'm able to visit. My grandparents and parents both had homes there when I was born and at the end of their lease our home was auctioned off to someone from the mainland that I feel had no interest or respect in preserving Kokee's beauty and culture; they immediately tore down our house and built a house that did not belong. Our family was not able to out bid what they could afford; very very sad. If we're able to move to this**

**new lottery it may help support the current home owners the opportunity to keep it in their families for generations to come,**

**If lotteries are approved and we give the community of Kauai the first opportunity to acquire the leases of those that are not interested or able to or because the current lease is not in good standing; I strongly feel this is the fairest process. Opening it to Hawaii residents after and then to outsiders provides fairness.**

**My sister's husband's family currently still has an amazing home up at Kokee and I am thankful for any opportunity and honor i have to be invited there; as I mentioned, it is a healing place for me and hold it dear to my heart.**

**Thank you for your consideration and appreciate you giving us the opportunity to share our support of HB1348.**

**Mahalo,**

**Patricia Cruz.**

**Leon Gonsalves Jr**

788 Laulea St.

Eleele, HI 96705

**LATE**

**TO :** Senate Committee on Water & Land

Senator Lorraine Inouye, Committee Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Committee Vice Chair

**February 09, 2025**

**Subject:** TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED SB 1517, RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS

Aloha,

I have been a lifelong resident of Kauai, a leaseholder in Kokee and an employee at the PMRF Kokee site for 30+ years.

I am writing this to request your support for Senate Bill 1517 to create a more equitable process for our community to acquire and keep leases of the recreational residence cabins in Kokee.

This bill authorizes the BLNR to lease Recreational-residence cabins by direct negotiation or public lottery and restrict participation to residents of the County in which the leased land is located. It also provides us the opportunity to extend our lease if we remain in good standing. This is a fair and equitable way forward.

I respectfully ask your support in passing this bill, as is.

Mahalo Nui Loa for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Respectfully,

*Leon "Leo" Gonsalves*

**LATE**

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:47:21 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pat gegen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We strongly support SB1517.

Pat Gege & Marghee Maupin

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:06:50 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deena Fontana Moraes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**To Whom it May Concern:**

**I am writing to communicate my unreserved support for proposed HB 1348.**

**As Kama'aina to this beautiful island of Kaua'i, I had the opportunity to spend a great deal of my childhood in Koke'e state park. Our moments together in the mountains as a family instilled in me a profound sense of appreciation for and kuleana to care for our island home. As an adult resident of Kaua'i, parent and principal in the Hawai'i Department of Education, this sense not only persists in all that I do but also has informed the education that I instill in my son and all the students of our school.**

**Most recently, our family participated in the auction that took place last year. Although we were deeply blessed to have been awarded one of the cabins, our benefit has been hard earned through immense time, effort and energy of our entire family pooling our resources together to bring the awarded cabin up to a usable state. It seems only fair that through our service as stewards of the land, that we would have the opportunity to extend the lease beyond the shortened time we were awarded. It also seems fair that we have the opportunity to directly negotiate the terms of the lease to be based on the fair market value of the land.**

**Finally, the lottery system is highly preferable to the auction, which yielded inflated costs that would be inaccessible and unsustainable to most residents of our island; residents who also share the love of the land and the responsibility to continue to care for our home.**

**Thank you for considering this testimony. I truly believe that HB 1348 best serves the interests of our community.**

**Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,**

**Deena Moraes**

**LATE**

**SB-1517**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:10:54 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/10/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bill Fontana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Dear Chairman and Committee Members:**

**I am writing to you all in unequivocal support of Bill HB 1517 regarding Kokee leases. I have been a leasee in Kokee and have spent many wonderful years with my family enjoying the mountain, maintaining my cabin and helping to clear public trails. It has been a great experience as a father and a grandfather to raise a strong family that has served the island in public and private occupations with the experiences they gained in Kokee.**

**I am writing to express that if Bill HB1517 passes, that both state goals to preserve cabins and current lease holder goals will be served.**

**As a leaseholder who was awarded a bid in last years auction, my family and I have invested over \$50K and countless hours of tireless work to bring our Lot 83 cabin from an abandoned termite infested wreck up to usable standards in alignment with historical integrity. With this in mind, it seems only just that we would be able to have the opportunity to extend the abbreviated time we have to enjoy the fruits of this investment. I have personally spoken to many other leaseholders who say that they too would spend large sums on preserving their cabins if they knew that they would have the ability to renegotiate their leases on termination at a fair price determined at a universally applied assessment of value on the land only. I also believe that should a leaseholder choose not to renew his lease, a public lottery of the land to other local residents is highly preferable to the auction that yielded exorbitant costs that were inaccessible to most local people.**

**The current Bill HB 1517 would allow the state to continue to receive rent seamlessly, avoid huge losses in revenues, and preserve cabins from falling into ruin.**

**I thank you for the opportunity to share my opinion. I truly hope that for the well being of our island residents, the states interests and also for my family that HB1517 passes. It is truly in the best interest of all.**

**Sincerely,**

**Bill Fontana**

Malia & Victor Nobrega-Olivera  
Hanapēpē, Kauaʻi

**LATE**

February 10, 2025

SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land:

Our Kauaʻi ʻohana **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** SB 1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokeʻe and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kauaʻi.

Our ʻohana participated in the April 2024 auction of seven long neglected cabins. Many of us sat in shock as we witnessed first hand that an auction is not the right mechanism to make cabins available to the residents of Kauai. The auction drove annual lease rent up to the point that 99% of the local residents on Kauai will never be able to afford a recreational residence cabin in Kokeʻe.

The 2024 auction process resulted in cabins that were totally dilapidated going for annual lease rents in the \$30-\$40K range. This is beyond the reach of multigenerational local residents with regular jobs and families - even if they form a hui to help cover the costs.

The only fair way for local residents to have an opportunity to obtain a lease for a recreational residence in Kokeʻe is via a lottery system.

We support SB 1517!!

Mahalo,  
Malia and Victor Nobrega-Olivera  
malianob@gmail.com

Jeremy Kalawaia Lee  
3592 Maka Ala Street  
Hanapepe, HI 96716

**LATE**

February 10, 2025

**Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 1517 RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS.**

**Report Title: Public Lands; Recreation-residence Use Leases; Public Lottery**

**TO: COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND**

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee on Water and Land,

I am writing in strong support of SB 1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Koke'e and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

As a lifelong resident of Kauai, I am writing in strong support of SB1517 which amends HRS 171-44 to make it a more fair and equitable process for our community to acquire leases for the recreational residence cabins in Kokee and Waimea Canyon State Parks on the island of Kaua'i.

SB1517 gives the DLNR the ability to hold a lottery for vacant recreational residence cabins rather than an auction. This simple change gives the state the ability to get fair value for the lots while making the process fair for the individuals that pre-qualify to participate in the selection to lease a Koke'e lot.

SB1517 provides an incentive for lessees to continue to invest their own money to care for and improve these historic properties that are owned by the State. personal investment in the properties have been the core of

SB1517 incentivizes lessees to remain in good standing and truly abide by the terms of their lease and be good stewards of the property as it allows for lessees in "good standing" to be able to renewal their lease when the lease comes to an end.

I respectfully urge you to pass SB1517 to protect this unique aspect of Kauai's lifestyle while developing equity in how we access public lands.

Mahalo for the time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Jeremy Kalawaia Lee  
[Kalawaia.lee@gmail.com](mailto:Kalawaia.lee@gmail.com)  
808-639-8286