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SYLVIA LUKE
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DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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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 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 565
RELATING TO POLOLU VALLEY MANAGEMENT EFFORTS
ON HAWAII ISLAND

Senate Bill 565 appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) Division of Forestry and Wildlife (Division) for the management of Pololū Valley on Hawai'i Island, including various improvements necessary for conservation and protection. **The Department strongly supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request. The Department also offers the following comments.**

A substantial increase in traffic and visitor use issues threatens to deteriorate the area's ecological, cultural, and historical attributes. The Division received CIP funding to engage a community planning consultant to develop a Pololū Lookout Management Plan to address these challenges. The planning effort engaged a broad array of community members in the North Kohala community. It culminated in a draft plan presented to the broader community via in-person and virtual public meetings. The final draft plan can be viewed at <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/recreation/nah/hawaii/pololu-planning-project/>. This plan is driving the development and completion of an Environmental Assessment. Funding will be crucial in enabling the Department and the Division to implement specific actions called for in this community-driven management plan.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-565

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 4:18:12 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kekoa Kealoha	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kekoaopololu and I am from Kohala on Hawai'i Island. I strongly support SB 565.

I grew up in Niuli'i, a little over a mile up the road from Pololu and i am a lineal descendant of the people from the valley. My Uncle Henry Pupuka, who gave me my name, Kekoaopololu, grew up in Pololu valley. I used to see tourists and uninformed locals visit this sacred space with not a single clue as to the history, vibracy, sanctity, and importance of this wahi pana.

Today, we have a community-based hui that has established a partnership with Na Ala Hele to manage the trailhead and access through a stewardship program that is incredibly successful. This program is a model for sustainable community stewardship that relies on the generational wisdom of residents to inform visitors and locals alike of the respect this place demands. It also places community at the helm when it comes to land management, which preserves community values and reduces the burden on the state and county. This model of community stewardship has been emulated in other areas across the islands with similar success.

What we need at Pololu is an investment that supports efforts already in place. Pololu has been under constant threat of development, and having recently partnered with a private land buyer to manage the area near the lookout, our community is ready to realize a management plan that would make access safer, personal relief more convenient, and education more low-barrier.

I humbly ask you to support this bill to give our community the investment it deserves.

Mahalo,

Kekoaopololu Kealoha

SB-565

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 5:47:24 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The improvements to Pololu Valley lookout area detailed in SB565 are desperately needed. This significant area is way beyond its capacity for tourism. Parking is a big problem. The nearest public restrooms are several miles away in an out-of-the-way park that also has a parking shortage. The State needs to either fund these improvements (preferred) or restrict visitation to the area. The site is overwhelmed.

SB-565

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 4:35:58 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joe Carvalho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support for SB565 to continue the maintenance of Pololu Valley especially for the Stewards, signage, parking and visitors number control.

Mahalo,

Joe Carvalho, Kohala

SB-565

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 10:09:11 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toni Withington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Pololu Valley is under threat from overuse by visitors. The community has been working with DLNR to better direct the flow, but without restrooms, water, electricity, cell service, the place is a safety hazard.

I am a 55-year long resident of Kohala. Once a frequent visitor to Pololu Valley, I no longer go there because of the congestion.

Please support this bill. mahalo