

**STATE OF HAWAII  
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COMMISSION  
POST OFFICE BOX 621  
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The Adjutant General  
Manager, CZM

**Testimony of  
Leah Laramée  
Climate Change Coordinator on behalf of  
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Co-Chair Mary Alice Evans and  
Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang**

**Before the Senate Committee on  
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Thursday, April 3, 2025  
10:01 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

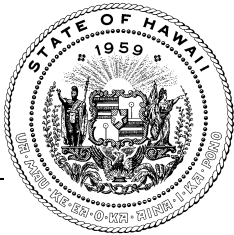
**In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 316, HOUSE DRAFT 1 SENATE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO THE GREEN JOBS YOUTH CORPS.**

House Bill 316 HD1 SD1 makes appropriations to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps program. The Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.

The Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 different departments, committees, and counties. As a member of the US Climate Alliance, a bipartisan coalition of 24 governors representing approximately 60 percent of the U.S. economy and 55 percent of the U.S. population, Hawai'i is participating in the Governors' Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative to grow career pathways in climate and clean energy fields, strengthen workforce diversity, and jointly train 1 million new registered apprentices by 2035 across the Alliance's states and territories.

This initiative will advance a series of collective goals aimed at strengthening and expanding pathways into a wide variety of climate-ready professions critical to building a clean, equitable, and resilient net-zero future. The Initiative's goals include boosting job quality and ensuring climate-ready employment pathways lead to good-paying, high-quality jobs; expanding opportunities for workers from underrepresented and underserved communities; and promoting the use of stackable and portable credentials in climate-ready fields to build transferable skills, support reskilling and upskilling, and strengthen workers' economic mobility. A full list of the Initiative's goals can be found here. This bill is in line with this initiative and will assist in meeting the set targets.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



# HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

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JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR

MARK B. GLICK  
CHIEF ENERGY OFFICER

(808) 451-6648  
energy.hawaii.gov

Testimony of  
**MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Thursday, April 3, 2025  
10:01 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

In SUPPORT of  
**HB 316, HD1, SD1**

**RELATING TO THE GREEN JOBS YOUTH CORPS.**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports HB 316, HD1, SD1, which makes appropriations to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps program. This program is a valuable state investment in training and employing young professionals in Hawai'i's job market in a manner that strengthens the bond between state government and the public.

The Green Jobs Youth Corps funded the first two years of HSEO's Clean Energy Wayfinders Program operated in partnership with the Kupu 'Āina Corps since February 2022. The Wayfinders Program is a collaboration of the Green Jobs Youth Corps Program and HSEO and involves place-training and deployment of Wayfinders Program participants under HSEO's direction on five islands – Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island. The substantive deliverables of Wayfinder Program participants are the provision of actionable, relevant information and support to local residences, businesses, schools, and community organizations on community resilience and independence, funding opportunities, energy savings, energy generation alternatives, and transportation options. The Wayfinders Program participants also support

community-led planning initiatives that form the foundation of Hawai'i's energy transition and education of Hawai'i's future leaders through work with Hawai'i's K-12 schools.

HSEO considers the Wayfinder Program participants as an important human resource component of the agency, providing a consistent physical statewide presence that supports state other agencies in building community dialogue and understanding of the diverse, complex energy ecosystem.

If state funds are not available, the third year of the Wayfinders program would be at risk, since HSEO's option to instead use federal funds cannot be relied upon due to Trump Administration executive orders that broadly prohibit federal grant support of community engagement initiatives such as the Green Jobs Youth Corps program provides.

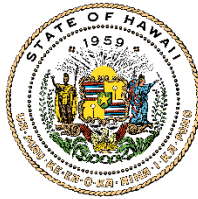
Such a prohibition is confounding given the productivity and effectiveness of the Clean Energy Wayfinders Program. For the third year of the program ending September 2024, HSEO's Clean Energy Wayfinder team engaged more than 2,447 community members and business operators in 80 events; i.e., community workshops, K-12 school presentations, and farmers markets. The Wayfinder participants also recruited 16 small businesses and restaurants through the Hawai'i Green Business Program which recognizes and awards Hawai'i small and large businesses for their conservation and sustainable business practices.

As a youth professional development program, the Clean Energy Wayfinders Program is producing a new generation of clean energy and conservation leaders in Hawai'i and beyond. The Wayfinders who have completed their terms are now employed in positions spanning the fields of education, renewable energy, environmental consulting, state lawmaking, and sustainable agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA**

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**DAWN N.S. CHANG**  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER  
  
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
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**Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on  
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Thursday, April 3, 2025  
10:01 AM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Via Videoconference**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 316, HOUSE DRAFT 1, SENATE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO THE GREEN JOBS YOUTH CORPS**

House Bill 316, House Draft 1, Senate Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps. **The Department strongly supports this measure, provided its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 193 establishes the Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps (HYCC) and authorizes the Department to provide healthful outdoor training and employment for young persons and to advance the conservation, development, and management of natural resources and recreational areas. In 2021, HRS-193-32(4) established the Green Jobs Youth Corps as a subprogram of the HYCC to focus on sustainability across natural resource management, agriculture, or other sustainability-related professions.

The Green Jobs Youth Corps funding previously appropriated by the Legislature has allowed the Department to partner with Kupu, a Hawai'i-based non-profit, to provide roughly 150 workforce or training opportunities annually. This funding provides opportunities for emerging professionals to gain skills in natural resource management, sustainable agriculture, clean energy, and other vital industries in Hawai'i. The program is highly rated by participants during exit surveys, with a recent cohort reporting that over half of survey respondents received a job at the end of their program term.

A final report on the expenditure of \$5M appropriated for this program in 2021 describes over \$16M (\$16,719,471) in economic benefits resulting from program efforts, including roughly 500,000 invasive plants removed, 65,000 native plants planted, and 900 community volunteer events led by participants, engaging over 12,000 volunteers.

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



To: The Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)  
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org  
Date: Thursday, April 3, 2025, 10:01am

**In support of HB316 HD1 SD1**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and WAM Committee members;

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org **supports HB316 HD1 SD1** that would appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps program, a program that provides employment and training opportunities for young adults in conservation, sustainable agriculture, clean energy, and other sustainability-related industries. This serves to employ our youth of Hawaii while building a resilient local economy and a sustainable future.

The Green Jobs Youth Corps is an important part of restoring our economy and environment. This program will help advance Hawaii's clean energy and decarbonization goals, expand the green workforce, and launch a new generation of clean energy leaders. The Green Jobs Youth Corps is a win-win for the environment and a more resilient economy for Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important legislation.

Sherry Pollack  
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

**Thursday, April 3, 2025**

**Testimony in Strong Support of H.B. 316, Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of **H.B. 316, Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps**. If enacted, this bill would provide the funding needed to continue the Green Job Youth Corps, an innovative, critical state workforce development program that invests in Hawai‘i’s young adults while addressing pressing, current challenges facing our communities and environment. In particular, we have seen this program help young adults primarily from low-income households transition into upwardly mobile career pathways, while also serving as a premier employment pipeline for the Department of Land and Natural Resources, helping the department lower its vacancy rate.

Kupu was founded in Hawai‘i in 2007. From humble beginnings, Kupu has grown into Hawai‘i’s largest youth-focused conservation nonprofit with an increasing presence in green job training broadly. Today Kupu manages several programs, which provide youth and young adults with opportunities to learn, serve, and work in ways that restore our environment and uplift their potential. In the last 18 years, Kupu and its participants have done substantial mālama ‘āina (care and protection of land and waters) in Hawai‘i, including the removal of over 151,000 acres of invasive species, planting of over 1.6 million native plants, and training and employment provided to over 6,500 young adults. We are honored to have partnered with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to manage the Green Jobs Youth Corps since its inception in 2022, following the passage of Act 181 (SLH 2021).



Since opening its inaugural cohort in early 2022, the Green Jobs Youth Corps has provided opportunities to over 320 participants to work in paid, professional development-oriented, one-year positions in sustainable agriculture, energy sustainability, and conservation; building their skills or starting their careers in areas that are diversifying our state's economy and improving our resiliency.

Green Job Youth Corps helps young adults better themselves as well as our environment and economy. 44 percent of our participants come from households making \$25,000 or less annually, and roughly two-thirds come from households making \$50,000 or less annually. Participants are able to gain long-term employment after completing their term, often through a promotion at their host site or another Kupu partner. Statistically, nearly three in four participants report that upon exiting the Green Job Youth Corps, they are moving on directly to gainful employment. Many others transition to higher education.

While more than half of the positions made available through the Green Jobs Youth Corps are outside of traditional conservation, we have also seen that the program is an effective career pipeline for DLNR, which has hosted over 70 Green Job Youth Corps participants. At least one in three Green Jobs Youth Corps participants placed at DLNR immediately transferred from GJYC into long-term positions at DLNR. Given that many other GJYC participants described plans to pursue employment with DLNR after their term, we expect that the actual number is even higher.

Another quality of the program is its structure as a state-community partnership, in which DLNR co-manages the Green Jobs Youth Corps with an experienced community partner, which is currently Kupu. Kupu's co-management enables the program to lower the state's cost to administer the program, through the use of non-state funds for the program's purposes. We believe that the efficiency, flexibility, and experience through which this program is managed is especially important in the current federal fiscal and economic climate.

We urge the committee to pass H.B. 316, which would provide the funding needed to continue to operate this important program.

Mahalo nui loa, thank you very much, for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of **H.B. 316**.

E Mālama Pono,

*John T. Leong*

John Leong

CEO and co-founder, Kupu



Testimony Presented to  
Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Thurssday, April 3, 2025, 10:01am  
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference  
by  
Ron Weidenbach, HAAA President

SUBJECT: Testimony in strong support for HB316 HD1 SD1 – Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps

Aloha Senator Dela Cruz, Chair, and Senator Moriwaki, Vice Chair, Committee on Ways and Means

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA), established in 1975 and representing aquaculture industry members statewide, **testifies in strong support of HB 316 HD1 SD1** which appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps Program.

Since its inaugural cohort in early 2022, the Green Jobs Youth Corps has provided opportunities to over 300 participants to work in paid, professional development-oriented, one-year, cost-shared positions with host organizations in sustainable agriculture (including aquaculture and aquaponics), energy sustainability, and conservation. These work experiences have enabled participants to build their skills or start their careers in areas that are diversifying our state's economy and improving our resiliency, while also supporting the continued growth of Hawaii's agriculture industry and increased local food production and food security.

The HAAA strongly supports continued State funding of this important Green Jobs Youth Corps program and respectfully requests your approval of HB 316 HD1 SD1 with the full requested funding.

Mahalo,

Ronald P. Weidenbach,  
HAAA President



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#### OUR MISSION

To support and advance public policies that make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

#### OUR VISION

Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai'i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai'i can thrive.

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**Committee:** Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
**Bill Number:** HB 316 SD1, Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps  
**Hearing Date and Time:** April 3, 2025, 10:01am (Room 211)  
**Re:** Testimony of Holomua Collaborative – Support

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee:

We write in support of HB 316 SD1, Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps. The purpose of HB 316 SD1 is to appropriate funds to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps program.

Holomua Collaborative works to advocate for policies and initiatives that help make Hawai'i affordable for all working families. We are especially interested in fostering cross-sector collaboration and supporting evidence-based policies that have shown or can expect to show a positive return on any taxpayer investment that is made in them. The Green Jobs Youth Corps is a perfect example of all this.

- **Innovation:** The program was created as an innovative way to connect people with good jobs following the unemployment crisis sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the Green Jobs Youth Corps has become a meaningful part of Hawaii's attempt to diversify our economy, keep people working in their communities, and improve our environmental resilience.
- **Cross-sector collaboration:** With initial federal government funding through COVID relief money and subsequent additional funding provided by the state, the Green Jobs Youth Corps has involved over seventy different employers in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. And all these employers are involved in sustainable energy, conservation, or sustainable agriculture.
- **Evidence-based return on investment:** The partnership between these private sector employers and the state and federal government has proved to be a wise investment of government resources. It is estimated that the first \$5 million in government funds invested in this program will produce \$18.4 million in positive socioeconomic impact. We know young adults are unemployed at higher rates than the general population, causing lifelong negative impacts. The Green Jobs Youth Corps has successfully employed and trained over 300 young people. Half of the participants hail from the neighbor islands, about two-thirds live in households making less than \$50,000 per year, and almost half are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

This is the type of innovative, collaborative, evidence-based and place-based program that can serve as a model for the state and we are proud to support it.

Sincerely,

Joshua Wisch  
President & Executive Director



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Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB316.**

The Green Jobs Youth Corps supported by HB316 is an invaluable initiative that not only addresses environmental and economic concerns but also paves the way for a sustainable future for Hawaii. By continuing to fund the Department of Land and Natural Resources with the necessary appropriations, this bill ensures that our youth are equipped with the skills and experiences necessary to contribute meaningfully to eco-friendly industries. This program is vital in fostering a new generation that appreciates and understands the significance of sustainable practices, thereby strengthening the resilience of our communities. Moreover, such programs play an integral role in driving Hawaii towards a diversified economy that includes environmentally conscious employment opportunities.

Of particular significance, nearly half of the host sites for the 2024-2025 Green Jobs Youth Corps Program focus on agriculture and food systems, encompassing farms, food hubs, and agricultural support organizations. This focus will bolster our local food security efforts and empower young individuals to engage with Hawaii's agricultural landscape. Investing in our youth through initiatives like the Green Jobs Youth Corps is crucial for the continuity and advancement of Hawaii's agricultural sector and overall environmental stewardship.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



April 2, 2025

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB316 HD1 SD1**: Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

We write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB316 HD1 SD1 which would appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps Program.

Kupu connects youth and young adults with opportunities to discover their potential and create a better future for their community, their environment, and themselves. We are proud to be one of the community partners that host Kupu programs, such as the Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps: Summer Program (HYCC), the A'o 'Āina Professional Development Program, and the Hawai'i Youth Sustainability Challenge program. The Green Jobs Youth Corps funding, allocated by the Legislature, is helping to shape the next generation of environmental stewards by providing emerging professionals with hands-on experience in natural resource management, sustainable agriculture, clean energy, and other crucial industries in Hawai'i. By investing in the growth of these future leaders, we are fostering a workforce dedicated to preserving and protecting our island's natural resources for generations to come.

*Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea (MPW) is a grassroots, community non-profit that actively works to care for, educate about, and protect our fragile, near-shore marine ecosystems. Our mission is "working to replenish and sustain the natural and cultural resources of the Pūpūkea and Waimea ahupua'a for present and future generations through active community stewardship, education, and partnerships.*

We **STRONGLY SUPPORT HB316 HD1 SD1**.  
Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Jenny Yagodich

Director of Educational Programs &  
Makai Watch Coordinator

Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea  
Post Office Box 188  
Hale'iwa, HI 96712

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## **SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**APRIL 3, 2025**

### **HB 316, HD1, SD1, RELATING TO THE GREEN JOBS YOUTH CORPS**

#### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

Coalition Earth **supports** HB 316, HD1, SD1, relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps, which makes appropriations to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps program.

According to a report produced by the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission, global sea levels could rise more than three feet by 2100, with more recent projections showing this occurring as early as 2060. In turn, over the next 30 to 70 years, approximately 6,500 structures and 19,800 people statewide will be exposed to chronic flooding. Additionally, an estimated \$19 billion in economic loss would result from chronic flooding of land and structures located in exposure areas. Finally, approximately 38 miles of coastal roads and 550 cultural sites would be chronically flooded, on top of the 13 miles of beaches that have already been lost on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Maui to erosion fronting shoreline armoring.

As we work to reduce carbon emissions and stave off the worst consequences of climate change, we must begin preparing for the adverse impact of sea level rise on our shores. We are now quantifying the speed at which we must act. We cannot continue to develop the 25,800-acre statewide sea level rise exposure area—one-third of which is designated for urban use—without risking massive structural damage and, potentially, great loss of life.

Just two years ago, we witnessed the impact of the climate emergency on our shores. On August 8, 2023, wildfires swept across Maui and killed at least 100 people, making it one of the nation's deadliest natural disasters. The spread of the fires has been attributed to climate change conditions, such as unusually dry landscapes and the confluence of a strong high-pressure system to the north and Hurricane Dora to the south. The wildfires destroyed over 2,200 structures, including numerous residential buildings, historic landmarks, and school facilities. In September

2023, a report from the United States Department of Commerce estimated the total economic damage of the wildfires to be roughly \$5.5 billion. Investing in renewable energy generation could not be more urgent, given the growing threat of climate catastrophes to our island home.

Therefore, **our state should take steps to accelerate our transition to a clean energy economy and continue our fight against climate change, including by continuing to invest in green jobs training for future generations.** In 2020, the legislature passed Act 9, which used COVID-19 relief funds to establish a workforce and training program that included a short-term green jobs program in partnership with the nonprofit organization Kupu. Act 181 of 2021 designated the Department of Land and Natural Resources as the administrator of the program.

The development of green job skills is essential to diversifying our economy and preserving our environment in the era of anthropogenic climate change. Green skills include technical knowledge, expertise, and abilities that enable the effective use of green technologies, management of conservation programs, and deployment of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. They draw on a range of knowledge, values, and attitudes to facilitate environmentally sustainable decision-making at work and in life. Although green competencies are relevant for people of all ages, they are of greater importance for younger people, who can contribute to the ecological transition over a longer period of time.

According to the International Labor Organization, 100 million jobs can be created globally through the transition to sustainable energy sources and a circular economy scenario. However, some existing jobs are expected to become obsolete, and the benefits of the transition are unlikely to be distributed geographically or demographically unless young people are provided with the necessary training and support systems.

*Coalition Earth is a nongovernmental organization that works to preserve the well-being of people and our planet. We champion policies that advance climate resilience, clean energy, public health, and economic fairness for working families. Contact us at [info@coalitionearth.org](mailto:info@coalitionearth.org).*



Before the Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Thursday, April 3, 2025 at 10:01 a.m.

Testimony in Support of HB 316 HD1 SD1: Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support and provide comments on House Bill 316 HD1 SD1.

Hawai'i Energy works to empower island families and businesses on behalf of the Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to make smart energy choices to reduce energy consumption, save money, and pursue a 100% clean energy future. Energy efficiency – the energy we do not use – is the cheapest option to help us achieve our 100% clean energy goal by eliminating waste and being more efficient.

The bill provides necessary funding to ensure the Green Jobs Youth Corps is able to continue its promising efforts for the next two fiscal years. In its short existence already, the Green Jobs Youth Corps has provided more than 320 participants opportunities to work in paid, professional development-oriented, one-year positions in the areas of conservation, sustainable agriculture, and sustainable energy. As Hawai'i pursues a 100% clean energy future, we are going to need programs like the Green Jobs Youth Corps to help grow our sustainability-focused workforce.

Hawai'i Energy has had the privilege of working closely with the Kupu 'Āina Corps program, which provided eight positions to help launch the initial year of the Hawaii State Energy Office Clean Energy Wayfinder program in 2022. The Clean Energy Wayfinders share information and opportunities for energy conservation, energy efficiency and clean energy adoption with Hawai'i's schools, community organizations, and households — especially those in low- to moderate-income (LMI), asset-limited, income-constrained, employed (ALICE), and under-resourced communities — to help increase energy conservation and efficiencies, lower monthly energy utility bills, increase access to clean transportation and renewable energy resources, and promote green career training and employment opportunities.

We look forward to supporting efforts to expand the Green Jobs Youth Corps program and programs like it throughout the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 316 HD1 SD1.

Sincerely,  
Caroline Carl  
Executive Director  
Hawai'i Energy



**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy  
Supporting HB316 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps.  
Committee on Ways and Means  
April 3, 2025 at 10:01 am  
Conference Room 211 and via Videoconference**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Nature Conservancy, Hawai'i and Palmyra (TNC) strongly supports HB316 HD1 SD1, which would make appropriations to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to continue the Green Jobs Youth Corps program.

Hawaii's natural environment is the engine that drives our state's economy and a natural, recreational, and cultural treasure supporting our island lifestyle and livelihoods. Careful, thoughtful, and intentional conservation, management, and restoration is critical for our environment to withstand the increasing impacts of climate change while continuing to protect our islands' economic engine. TNC is proud of our decades of working in partnership with so many local organizations, agencies, and communities to care for this vital and fragile resource.

The Green Job Youth Corps, based on a 2020 displaced worker training and employment program, is making a meaningful impact on Hawaii's environment and economy. The program is an excellent example of a partnership between the state, the community, and employers. While this government program was originally established in response to the Covid-19 unemployment crisis, TNC has benefitted from the tremendous work of dozens of Kupu interns since 2011.

These interns provide much-needed capacity to help us manage our native forested watersheds and coral reefs. These enthusiastic and committed interns have created positive environmental, cultural, and community impact across the islands while also learning under the mentorship of environmental experts. Through their work, these interns are making a positive difference right now while also paving the way for the next generation of conservationists dedicated to perpetuating our unique island environment and diversifying Hawai'i's economy.

As we work together to create a diversified economy, green jobs can and must play a role. We need programs like the Green Job Youth Corps to build our workforce and grow sustainability-focused industries throughout our state. By providing opportunities for local jobs while also paving the way for long-term green jobs, environmental expertise, and local leadership, this legislation is a key step in the right direction.

**Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 316 HD1 SD1.**

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*Guided by science, TNC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 40,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and have supported over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands.*

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**LATE**

**Date:** 04/02/25

**TO:** WAM Chair Dela Cruz and WAM Committee Members

**FROM:** Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA)

**SUBJECT:** In Support of HB316 HD1 SD1 Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and WAM Committee Members,

On behalf of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA) Directors and members, please support HB316 HD1 SD1 Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps.

HFIA directors and partners have personally experienced the value and benefit that young people who have gained knowledge and skill via programs similar to the Green Jobs Youth Corps (such as Kupu's various programs or UH Hilo's Pacific Internship Program for Exploring Sciences) add to small organizations in the natural resources sector.

These young professionals contribute to HFIA's operations daily and we have benefited from having several Kupu members at our site, Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland Forest, over the years. We believe that similar benefits would come from working closely with a young adult placed by the Green Jobs Youth Corps. Numerous other state, federal, and private natural resource management teams will benefit from the state continuing to fund the Green Jobs Youth Corps. Meanwhile, young adults will gain valuable knowledge, skills and experience needed to ready themselves for a competitive career field.

Additionally, funding the Green Jobs Youth Corps encourages the diversification of Hawaii's economy by growing the Green Jobs sector.

For these reasons, we hope that you will support HB316 HD1 SD1.

Mahalo,

*Guy Cellier*

Guy Cellier, President

Hawaii Forest Industry Association

*HFIA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy. HFIA has over 130 members including woodworkers, landowners, sawyers, foundations, foresters, growers, educators, environmentalists, architects, millers, ranchers, and others interested in HFIA's mission and goals.*

**HFIA Board of Directors**

Officers: President Guy Cellier, Vice President Irene Sprecher, Secretary Taylor Coons, Treasurer Wade Lee  
Directors: Jeremy Campbell, Doug Gordon, Nicholas Koch, Michael Sowards, Aileen Yeh

**HB-316-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 1:59:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill that will benefit young people trying to learn new skills and get work experience while helping farmers and conservation programs.

**HB-316-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 1:59:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill that will benefit young people trying to learn new skills and get work experience while helping farmers and conservation programs.

**HB-316-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:13:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tom Coffman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Just a brief note to observe the importance of continuity in funding crucial environment initiatives, of which Green Job Corps is a leading example. Do not be distracted/ \opo. Tom Coffman

**HB-316-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 2:37:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Leimomi Riley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Leimomi Riley. I am a Hawaiian mother, musician, Tutu, harpist, writer, born and living on the East side of Hawai'i Island.

I thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB316, related to the Green Job Youth Corps.

I was born in Hilo 1956, and I have seen many changes throughout the years. Plantations closed, resorts opened. Tourism became a major provider of employment to many of the people of Hawai'i. I raised my children on the Big Island, and I worked at many jobs as a single mother in order to provide for my family, sometimes working at four different part time jobs at a time, and I am aware that it is a struggle for many families to provide for their households in Hawai'i. The Green Job Youth Corps, which has been administered by DLNR with partnership from KUPU, is fighting to give the next generation a future where they can support their family, like I did, while also improving our environment and community, and protect us from wildfire and climate disasters.

We need to support green jobs and programs like KUPU to help address unemployment impacts and to support businesses which are edifying to the natural resources of Hawai'i, and which are not dependent upon tourism. Especially now, we need to invest in our workers and in the kinds of jobs that make our islands more self-sufficient. I have personally seen KUPU change lives through this program, and I hope you will keep this program alive.

I appreciate your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Mahalo & Aloha!

Respectfully, Diane Leimomi Riley

**HB-316-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 3:05:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

My name is Douglas Callison & I am a construction worker by trade, specializing in Plastering, testifying in strong support of HB316.

I was born & raised in California but I've lived on the Big Island of Hawaii since 1990. Over these past 30 years, I worked on many projects, homes, & resorts. The recessions of 1993 & 2008 closed down many projects, and then there was a huge decline in construction employment. In March 2020, due to Covid-19, construction declined again! When tourism declines, construction declines. In my opinion, it would be wise to create Industries in Hawaii which are not dependent upon construction or tourism.

Thanks to KUPU, I was able to work at the Hakalau Sanctuary under the supervision of Susan Cordell PhD ( Director & Research Ecologist and Director of the Forest Service Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, Pacific Southwest Research Station) and Dr. Patrick Hart ( Professor of the Department of Biology with the University of Hawaii in Hilo) in KUPU. Before the opportunity with KUPU, I had bills to pay, but no one was hiring. KUPU gave me a chance to work hard in return for a paycheck. This opportunity provided me with income, a sense of purpose, and hope for the future!

I am very pleased with the renovative and restorative work that I was able to do for them. My supervisors are wonderful people who worked closely with me, and they were very supportive and appreciative of my work, and I learned alot about conservation from them in this program, and I feel that we need to create businesses which protect the land of Hawaii.

I feel strongly that green jobs and programs like KUPU are very valuable, especially in a time like this, when people are struggling. While I am no longer participating in this program, I still think that the Green Job Youth Corps needs to continue for the Next Generation. Participating in the KUPU 'AINA CORPS helped me and my family when we needed help, and it gave me training and experience I could use in any field. I know that many people learned skills from participating in Kupu's green jobs program that they will put to use in their careers.

Please keep this program going so that others can have the chance that I had! Thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

Please pass this bill!

Sincerely,

Douglas Callison



**HB-316-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 5:00:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

This is a very worthy program. Please pass HB316

**HB-316-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 9:34:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvonne Yoro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

CHAIR DONOVAN DELA CRUZ

VICE CHAIR SHARON MORIWAKI

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

4/3/2025

**I STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB316 HD1 SD1 Relating to the Green Jobs Youth Corps Program.

The state needs to establish permanence around youth corps programs, such as these, as we build toward a more diversified economy. I was a participant from 2015 to 2016, where I received guidance and training directly from those with decades of experience conserving our natural resources. My year-long participation led to my pursuit of a permanent position in the environmental sector and actualized my aspirations to stay and live in Hawai‘i. Each year this program receives funding is another year participants contribute to protecting our native ecosystems, further establishing the foundation for functional watersheds and environments we all depend on.

Our State’s climate change, economic, and self-sufficiency goals will not be met without establishing this workforce job corps as an annually funded program. This program would ensure the State focuses on fostering transitions to cleaner sources of energy, caring for and conserving our natural resources, and growing industries and sectors that help keep our local residents in Hawai‘i.

Please pass HB316 HD1 SD1.

Mahalo,

Yvonne

808-352-5137