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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

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LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
**DAWN N.S. CHANG**  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
FINANCE

Monday, February 24, 2025  
2:00 PM

Via Videoconference, State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of  
**HOUSE BILL 86, HOUSE DRAFT 1**  
**RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

House Bill 86, House Draft 1, proposes to appropriate moneys to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent Makai Watch Coordinator position. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

The Makai Watch Coordinator works with existing and prospective Makai Watch communities throughout the state to train and inform them on rules and regulations relating to marine activities. Additionally, the Makai Watch Coordinator trains these communities on how to document and report violations as well as acting as a liaison between communities and the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE). The Makai Watch Coordinator is a very important position within DOCARE as the Makai Watch Program expands DOCARE's enforcement footprint and gives communities an opportunity to engage with the Department concerning their valued ocean resources.

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



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 86 HD1**  
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES.  
House Committee on Finance  
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 24, 2025

2:00 PM

Room 308

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Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in **SUPPORT of HB86 SD1** which appropriates moneys to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) for the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent Makai Watch Coordinator position. Funding a full-time coordinator is a smart investment to ensure the continued success of the Makai Watch program which not only recognizes and empowers community co-management of resources but also saves DLNR money by having citizens serve as the eyes and ears of the department.

**OHA recognizes the value and importance of community-based stewardship and management which, in practice, is aligned with Native Hawaiian traditional and customary resource management practices.** The Makai Watch program is a collaborative, statewide program that engages citizens and non-profits in the management of marine resources by promoting compliance with rules and community-based education and monitoring of resources. The Makai Watch program engages people who are directly impacted or live closest to natural and cultural resources and are thus in the best position to assist in understanding the overall landscape. This is a modern reflection of the ahupua'a management practices led by konohiki (caretakers) and aha councils (place-based subject matter experts).

In funding this position, the Makai Watch program can commit to facilitating community engagement and leveraging government resources to protect the natural and cultural resources. Furthermore, with recent Federal cutbacks, it is critical that our State ensures and protects our resources where the federal agencies will be unable to do so.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** and ask that this Committee **pass and fund HB86 SD1.**



February 21, 2025

To: Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and the House Committee on Finance

Re: **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB86 HD1**: Relating to The Department of Land and Natural Resources

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and the House Committee on Finance,

We write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB86 HD1** which will appropriate moneys to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for the establishment of one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent Statewide Makai Watch Coordinator position. We are proud to have been the first State of Hawai'i Makai Watch program on O'ahu.

The Hawai'i Makai Watch Program is a collaborative, statewide initiative where communities become directly involved with the Department of Land and Natural Resources's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DLNR/DOCARE) in the management and protection of nearshore marine resources through promoting education and compliance to rules and regulations. Created in the early 2000's, the Makai Watch approach is based on the idea that people who utilize, serve, and live closest to our natural and cultural resources are in the best position to help protect them. There are currently over 20 Makai Watch communities across the state collectively contributing to ensuring nearshore marine abundance now, and for future generations.

Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea (MPW), the organization that stewards the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District, became O'ahu's first Makai Watch community in 2005. In partnership with DLNR/DOCARE, and in collaboration with the Statewide Makai Watch Coordinator, MPW has trained hundreds of volunteers who have conducted thousands of educational interventions and effectively reported hundreds of in-progress violations. This collaborative approach has resulted in an increase of awareness about the rules and regulations protecting our marine resources and a decrease in both intentional and unintentional poaching. This has a direct, positive impact on the nearshore marine environment.

Mahalo for your **SUPPORT** of **HB86 HD1** to establish a full-time, permanent Statewide Makai Watch Coordinator position.

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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**HB-86-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 10:19:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Blake McNaughton	Makahaloa Fishing Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kākou,

I writing to express support of HB86. As president of Makahaloa Fishing Association, I am continually witnessing the degradation of our shorelines. Our shorelines are critical to the survival of Hawai‘i and it’s people. This is what the Makai Watch addresses and has proven despite dedicated funding by the State. Is our lawai‘a way of life not important enough to dedicate coordinating funding?!? Makahaloa Fishing Association represents over 140 ‘ohana from Hilo Palikū on the Island of Hawai‘i. Our members feed their ‘ohana from the streams, oceans, and forests of North Hilo but this relationship is being threatened by a variety of major issues including a lack of dedicated State funding to continued community stewardship. To that end our Association has been fighting to protect our rural way of life in the face of rising seas, over tourism, and restricted access. These funds could be put to good use by communities across the State. Please vote to support this bill.

Mahalo for considering this testimony

Blake McNaughton

Makahaloa Fishing Association



Testimony Before The  
House Committee on Finance (FIN)  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB86 HD1**

February 24, 2025, 2:00 p.m., Room 308 & Via Videoconference

We are Olan Leimomi Fisher and Kevin Chang, Kua'āina Advocate and Executive Director, respectively, testifying on behalf of [Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo \(or KUA\)](#). "Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo" stands for "grassroots growing through shared responsibility," and our acronym "KUA" means "backbone." **Our mission is to connect and empower communities to improve their quality of life through the collective care for their biocultural (natural and cultural) heritage, serving as a "backbone organization" that supports creative and community-driven solutions to problems stemming from environmental degradation.** Hawai'i's biocultural resources continue to be negatively impacted by political, economic, and social changes, and the increasing dangers of climate change make fostering and empowering resilient communities acutely critical.

Currently KUA supports three major networks of: (1) over 40 mālama 'āina (caring for our 'āina or "that which feeds") community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together); (2) over 60 loko i'a (fishpond aquaculture systems unique to Hawai'i) and wai 'ōpae (anchialine pool systems) sites in varying stages of restoration and development, with numerous caretakers, stakeholders, and volunteers known as the Hui Mālama Loko I'a ("caretakers of fishponds"); and (3) the Limu Hui made up of over 50 loea (traditional experts) and practitioners in all things "limu" or locally-grown "seaweed." **Our shared vision is to once again experience what our kūpuna (ancestors) referred to as 'ĀINA MOMONA – abundant and healthy ecological systems that sustain our community resilience and well-being.**

**KUA supports HB86 HD1 as an incremental step towards 'āina momona.**

This bill would appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to secure state funding for the full-time permanent Makai Watch Coordinator position.

The state's [Makai Watch Program](#) was formed in the early 2000s as a collaborative statewide program where community members and groups can partner with DLNR's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE), Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), and Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR) to help monitor, educate, and promote our state nearshore fishery laws and rules. The program has grown significantly since its inception, now involving collaborations with 21 different communities on five of the main Hawaiian Islands. **For over twenty years now, the Makai Watch Program has served to better enable DOCARE, DAR, and DOBOR to more effectively manage the state's nearshore fisheries, which has proven to be far too great a task for one state agency alone to effectively manage without strong community support and partnerships.**

KUA was surprised to learn that funding for the state's Makai Watch Program, including the main Coordinator position and two new island-based positions, has to-date received no dedicated state funding, supported only by various grants and federal funding. **Individual community groups also need to apply for their own grant funding to participate in this program – a big barrier to effectively gaining more community support and stability to continue participation.** Indeed, it is a wonder that this program has continued to grow considering this lack of funding – but we envision *how much more it could grow* with dedicated state funding. The main Coordinator position was funded in 2019 as part of DOCARE's budget, Program I.D. LNR405/HA, HB2 CD1, Page 646 (2019). Unfortunately, after it was funded, the COVID-19 pandemic began and then a state hiring freeze. Eventually the funding and position lapsed.

**Many of the communities in our KUA networks are part of the Makai Watch Program, which serves as a great example of successful community partnerships with the state, building trust and relationships, while also better enabling awareness of and compliance with established state rules.** Many others we talked to were unaware that the state provided no dedicated funding for this program, especially given its widespread recognition, support, and community participation. With the current political climate of federal funding in a constant flux, it is evermore important to ensure our state is caring for its own regardless. Establishing state funding for the main Coordinator position for our well-established Makai Watch Program is a good and reasonable place to start.

The communities we work with are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources that they have cared for and depended on for generations since time immemorial. **We believe our environment, the foundation of our very existence, is about long-term investment and a vision of 'āina momona.** To get there it requires taking the steps necessary for greater self-sufficiency, development of a pipeline of new and more innovative career pathways, mindsets, relationships, and resources for mālama 'āina efforts. Passing this bill out of your committee supports reaching our goal to once again realize the abundant and thriving ecological balance in Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support. Please **PASS** HB86 HD1.

**Aloha 'Āina Momona no Nā Kau ā Kau.**

# Hawai'i Ocean Legislative Task Force



February 24, 2025

House Committee on Finance  
Hawai'i State Legislature

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 86 HD1, Relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

The Ocean Legislative Task Force strongly supports HB86 HD1, relating to the Department of Land and Natural Resources, which takes an important step toward strengthening the Makai Watch program and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Hawai'i's nearshore marine resources. As a coalition of over 100 individuals from diverse organizations and communities, we recognize the critical role Makai Watch plays in promoting collaborative stewardship, enhancing coastal resilience, and protecting vital marine ecosystems.

Establishing a permanent Makai Watch Coordinator position within the Department of Land and Natural Resources would provide a valuable foundation for streamlining program efforts. By ensuring that this position remains actively engaged with community stakeholders and agency partners, there will be greater access to resources and support necessary to manage nearshore marine areas effectively. This initiative will also foster stronger partnerships, reinforcing the shared responsibility of caring for Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources.

This serves as more than a community-driven initiative; it is a model of co-management that bridges traditional knowledge with modern conservation strategies. Investing in the program not only strengthens marine resource management but also builds capacity for future generations to continue this stewardship. This measure represents an opportunity to expand public engagement in resource protection while empowering local communities with the tools and collaboration needed to sustain these efforts over time.

We deeply appreciate this committee's commitment to advancing solutions that empower communities while protecting Hawai'i's ocean resources. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the passage of this bill.

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

*The Ocean Legislative Task Force advocates for measures that promote funding for natural resource protection and restoration, ocean resources, coral reefs, subsistence fishing, and coastal resilience, and other priorities.*

**HB-86-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:08:58 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ted Bohlen	Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

**HB-86-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 9:00:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marc Sanders	Hana Business Council	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha -

I am writing to encourage you to secure state funding for the full-time permanent Makai Watch Coordinator position.

For over twenty years now, the Makai Watch Program has served to better enable DOCARE, DAR, and DOBOR to manage the state's nearshore fisheries more effectively. Unfortunately, the state's Makai Watch Program, including the main Coordinator position and two new island-based positions, has to-date received no dedicated state funding, supported only by various grants and federal funding.

Kipahulu and Kaenae in East Maui are working to become part of the Makai Watch Program, which serves as a great example of successful community partnerships with the state. Please help these communities become part of this critical program by providing state funding via HB86 HD1.

Mahalo,

Marc Sanders, Vice-President

Hana Business Council



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Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Hawaii 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 HB86.**

By facilitating increased community involvement and collaboration, this position will play an integral role in promoting the sustainable management of our natural resources. A full-time coordinator will provide the necessary leadership and organization to enhance the program's effectiveness, ensuring that conservation actions are not only initiated but sustained over the long term.

The Hawaii Farmers Union recognizes the interconnectedness of land and sea, understanding that healthy marine ecosystems are crucial for agricultural prosperity. Coastal degradation and declining fish populations can adversely impact traditional farming practices and jeopardize the livelihoods of those who depend on nature's balance. By supporting HB86, we are advocating for a system that nurtures Hawaii's environmental integrity and economic resilience.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawaii Farmers Union

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy  
Supporting HB862, Relating to Makai Watch State Funding**

**House Committee on Finance  
February 24, 2025, 2:00 pm  
House conference room 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

February 23, 2025

Aloha mai e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

The Nature Conservancy's Hawai'i and Palmyra Chapter, **strongly supports** HB86 HD1 as a vehicle to support the state's Makai Watch Program, a valuable collaborative effort that has proven its worth for over twenty years.

Now, more than ever, the Makai Watch Program needs dedicated state funding to continue to increase partnerships, empower communities, and better protect our nearshore resources.

We currently work with eight makai watch communities on Maui and Hawaii Island, communities that need increase support from DLNR and funding to continue to be the eyes and ears of their places. These important makai communities and places include those experiencing high numbers of visitors.

Please Support DLNR and Hawai'i communities and **PASS** HB86 HD1!

Me ke aloha,  
Emily J Fielding  
Director, Hawai'i Marine Program

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*The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i and Palmyra 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 work in over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties, and communities to protect forests and coral reefs for their ecological values and for the many benefits they provide to people.*

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P.O. Box 1662  
Honolulu, HI 96806

*Mālama Learning Center is a non-profit organization based in West Oahu. Our mission is to inspire communities to care for Hawai'i by perpetuating conservation, culture, and sustainability through education.*

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 86 HD1

### House Committee on Finance

Hearing Date: February 24, 2025 at 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

Aloha Kākou. My name is Pauline Sato and I serve as the Executive Director of the Mālama Learning Center, a private, non-profit environmental education organization serving schools and communities in West O'ahu. I am submitting written testimony in strong support of HB 86 HD1, which would appropriate moneys to the Department of Land and Natural Resource (DLNR) for the establishment of one full-time equivalent permanent Makai Watch Coordinator position.

Makai Watch is a cost-effective partnership between DLNR and volunteer community organizations and individuals to educate people about proper behavior with regard to natural and cultural resources protection in and around our state waters. While community members contribute significantly, a dedicated statewide DLNR Makai Watch Coordinator is essential to ensure best practices are followed and maximize the program's effectiveness.

I am born and raised in Hawai'i and have dedicated my career to conservation because I love our lands and waters to no end. Sadly, I see how our government has been consistently underinvesting in our 'āina. Particularly in this time of severe federal government funding reductions, we must do what we can locally to protect the resources that our communities need to live sustainably.

I urge your committee to pass HB 86 HD1 and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pauline Sato", written in a cursive style.

**HB-86-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:19:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
john carty	save honolua coalition	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Our Makai Watch at Honolua has improved grately since we have had Chanel Brown. We are doing work on State land that the State can't. We atleast need to have someone at the State to coordinate with.

**HB-86-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 3:54:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
joseph simpliciano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Program would work great as long as there is more DOCARE officers, what that means is we still need more officers especially when they are undermanned in areas with the highest activity like Wai'anae. If this makai watch coordinator is to succeed there needs to also be funding for DOCARE. I am afraid that a makai watch position will happen but when Waianae asks for help the answer we will get is we don't have anyone... Our community had asked our elected officials in the past for funding for the last two academies and received four officers in return, These four officers are "Hammahs" and we need more like them in Wai'anae because we are still understaffed (mauka to makai) and with the idea of having a makai watch coordinator to know first hand, what goes on in each on every island such a coordinator can help to direct enforcement/departments better regulate our natural and cultural resources.

FROM THE DESK OF  
**MARY ANN K. PAHUKOA**

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 86**  
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 21, 2025

As a woman of East Maui and part of a family of subsistence fishers, I strongly support HB86. Our way of life depends on the health of our nearshore fisheries, which our kūpuna have cared for and relied upon for generations. However, in our rural community, enforcement of fishing laws and resource protections is severely lacking. With limited DOCARE officers assigned to vast areas, illegal harvesting and unsustainable practices often go unchecked, threatening the resources our families depend on.

The Makai Watch Program has been a vital tool in bridging this enforcement gap by empowering local communities to monitor and educate others about conservation laws. However, without dedicated state funding, the program struggles to maintain stability, forcing individual communities to seek their own funding just to participate. A full-time Coordinator would provide consistent support, training, and guidance for rural communities like East Maui, ensuring we have the resources needed to protect our fisheries.

Establishing state funding for this position is a necessary step toward self-sufficiency and sustainable resource management. It would strengthen enforcement, build trust between the state and local communities, and help preserve our subsistence lawai'a traditions for future generations.

I appreciate the significance of community-based stewardship and have witnessed first hand positive impacts to monitoring efforts, which aligns with Native Hawaiian traditional and customary resource management practices. The Makai Watch program fosters statewide collaboration, engaging local community members and nonprofits in marine resource management through education, monitoring, and promoting compliance with conservation rules.

Please PASS HB86 to support our Makai resources, and rural communities committed to mālama 'āina.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support.

Me Ke Aloha 'Āina 'Oi'a'i'o,



**MARY ANN K. PAHUKOA**

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Aloha e Chair Representative Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the Committee on Finance,

Mahalo for hearing this measure. I support HB86.

HB86 Relating to DLNR, appropriates the needed moneys to establish 1.0 FTE permanent Makai Watch Coordinator position. This position is the key interface between stewarding communities (comprised of community volunteers) and DOCARE.

In these unprecedented times where so many conservation positions are being cut, our communities and in this case, community volunteers that support Makai Watch activities, need this (1) Makai Watch Coordinator to facilitate community efforts with DOCARE.

We have been working with State temporary-position Coordinator for a long time. Our nearshore and marine resources deserve permanence support with this position.

Please pass HB86.

Mahalo,  
U'ilani Naipo  
Miloli'i Community Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA)

**HB-86-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:41:35 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
STANLEY RUIDAS	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*Aloha mai e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,*

*I am Stanley Ruidas, from the Island of Lanai. I'm a member of the Makai Watch Program and it has helped protect our resources here.*

*I strongly support HB86 HD1 as vehicle to support the state's Makai Watch Program, a valuable collaborative effort that has proven its worth for over twenty years and now, more than ever, needs dedicated state funding to continue to increase partnerships, empower communities, and better protect our nearshore resources.*

*Please PASS HB86 HD1!*

*Me ke aloha,*

*STANLEY RUIDAS*

**HB-86-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:53:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amber Datta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha:

I am writing as a resident of Hawai'i in support of this bill. This position is critical for ensuring enforcement of marine resource rules in the long-term. The Makai Watch Coordinator maintains relationships between communities, DOCARE, and DAR that are critical for fair, community-led efforts to ensure that all community members respect the places and marine resources that feed our families and make Hawai'i a beautiful place to call home.

Mahalo,

Amber Datta