

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

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1019
RELATING TO THE OCEAN RECREATION SPECIAL FUND

Senate Bill 1019 proposes to authorize the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund to be used for planning, development, designing, or implementation of beach restoration projects, including the awarding of grants to nonprofit organizations for beach and nearshore environmental cleanup.

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) acknowledges the intent of this measure and offers the following comments.

The Department's Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL) administers the State's Beach Restoration Program and the Beach Restoration Special Fund, established under [HRS §171-156](#), which can be used to support the planning, designing, development, and implementation of beach restoration projects. The Department is actively seeking to expand the definition of "beach restoration" to allow for additional uses of the Beach Restoration Special Fund, including dune restoration, sand pushing, and the removal of derelict structures. These efforts are reflected in Senate Bill 1456 and House Bill 1137.

While the Department supports beach restoration and cleanup efforts, expanding the Ocean Stewardship Fund to include beach restoration would create unnecessary overlap between existing funding mechanisms. The Ocean Stewardship Special Fund was originally established by [Act 46 \(SLH 2021\)](#) to provide a sustainable source of funding for the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of the State's marine resources to help address "a broad range of anthropogenic impacts on coral reef health, including coral bleaching, vessel groundings, anchoring and mooring, diving activities, poaching, land-based and water-based pollutant discharges, and other direct and indirect uses of the State's coral reefs." This fund is

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CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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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

administered by the Department's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), which is the primary Division responsible for managing the State's marine resources, including marine species and habitats and activities that impact them.

DAR is not the primary agency responsible for planning, designing, developing, or implementing beach restoration projects. Nor does DAR coordinate or provide funding for beach cleanups. DAR does, however, fund marine debris removal projects through the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund, as these types of projects fall within the existing authorized uses of the Fund. DAR has prepared the [Aloha i ke Kai – Hawai'i Ocean Stewardship Fee Program 2024 Annual Report](#), which provides an update on the status of the program and outlines current and proposed uses of the Fund. Projects include operating a statewide day-use mooring buoy program, community stewardship projects, coral reef restoration, improving coastal water quality, education and outreach, marine invasive species management, commercial operator stewardship projects, and marine debris prevention, response, and mitigation.

The Department notes that large scale beach restoration projects cost tens of millions of dollars and have required both public-private partnerships and Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funds. These are beyond the financing capacity of the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund. Adding beach restoration and beach cleanups to the authorized uses of the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund would divert limited funds away from these other projects that have a closer nexus to the source of revenues.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



**TESTIMONY OF THE OCEAN TOURISM COALITION IN OPPOSITION TO
SB1019.**

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land:

My name is Denver Coon. I am the president of the Ocean Tourism Coalition (“OTC”). OTC represents hundreds of locally owned ocean tourism businesses statewide, many being family businesses. We appreciate the efforts to protect Hawai‘i’s marine environment and recognize the intent behind SB1019. However, at this time, we respectfully oppose this measure.

The Ocean Stewardship Special Fund was created to support vital marine conservation efforts, including the day-use mooring program—a critical initiative to prevent anchor damage to coral reefs. Despite marine operators already paying the \$1 per passenger fee, the mooring program remains underfunded and under-implemented. The intended benefits have not yet been realized, yet SB 1019 seeks to expand the fund’s use to beach restoration and nearshore cleanup efforts before fulfilling its original purpose.

Hawai‘i’s marine tourism industry fully supports environmental stewardship, but diverting funds before delivering on one of the fund’s original commitments undermines trust. The industry agreed to this fee based on specific assurances—namely, the installation and maintenance of mooring infrastructure to protect our reefs and marine habitats. Expanding the fund’s scope without first meeting these obligations raises concerns about accountability.

We urge the Legislature to:

- Assess the current balance of the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund.
- Provide a transparent report detailing how much has been collected and where funds have been allocated.
- Demonstrate measurable progress on the day-use mooring program before expanding the fund’s scope.

Until the effective implementation of the mooring program, we respectfully request that the committee defer SB1019 and come back to this idea at future session.

Sincerely,

Denver S. Coon

President, Ocean Tourism Coalition

SB-1019

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 9:26:03 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ben Walin	Testifying for Maui Trailer Boat Club Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. Strongly support this bill. We need more oppotunities for local nonprofits to continue their work maintaining our precious shoreline.

Senate Committee- Water and Land

Chair Inouye

Vice Chair Elefante

DATE: February 10th, 2025

TIME: 1:00pm

PLACE: Conference Room 229

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF SB1019

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the committee.

The Maui Hotel and Lodging Association **oppose** SB1019. We believe this bill should have clear guidelines for fund allocation. Commercial operators support the stewardship fund, particularly regarding the funding of a day-use-mooring program and want to make sure those activities remain the priority. It is our opinion that the more activities the fund is expected to support the more likely it is that the State asks for the fee to be increased.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

John Pele

Executive Director- Maui Hotel and Lodging Association

808-658-5114

john.pele@mauihla.org

SB-1019

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:31:29 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zachary LaPrade	Testifying for Calypso Charters	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Zachary LaPrade

Calypso Charters

Before the Senate Committee on Water and Land

February 10, 2025 | 1:00 PM | Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Re: Opposition to SB 1019 – Relating to the Ocean Recreation Special Fund

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Zachary LaPrade, and I am the owner of **Calypso Charters**. I appreciate the Legislature’s continued efforts to support Hawai’i’s marine environment and the intent behind SB 1019. However, I respectfully oppose this measure at this time.

The **Ocean Stewardship Special Fund** was established to, among other things, support the **day-use mooring program**, which remains **underfunded and under-implemented** despite marine operators already paying the \$1 per passenger fee. The **intended benefits** of this program have **not yet materialized**, yet this bill seeks to **expand the fund’s use to beach restoration and nearshore cleanup efforts** before fulfilling its original purpose.

We fully support environmental stewardship, but it is **too soon** to divert funds away from the mooring program. The marine tourism industry agreed to this fee based on **specific promises**—namely, **the installation and maintenance of mooring infrastructure to protect reefs and marine habitats**. Expanding the fund’s scope without first delivering on these commitments undermines the trust of the businesses and visitors who have been paying into it.

We worked hard to secure support for the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund for the **Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR)**, and now we are receiving calls from stakeholders asking **why we supported giving them this money** when the promised benefits have not been realized. This misalignment between expectation and execution further erodes confidence in the fund’s management.

Before considering an expansion of authorized uses, we urge the Legislature to:

1. **Assess the current balance of the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund.**

2. **Provide a transparent report on how much has been collected and where it has been spent.**
3. **Demonstrate measurable progress on the day-use mooring program.**

Until there is clear accountability and implementation of the mooring infrastructure that this fund was created to support, we respectfully request that this committee **defer SB 1019**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Zachary LaPrade
Calypso Charters

TESTIMONY Regarding SB1019

TESTIMONY is in SUPPORT of SB1019 Concerning Ocean Recreation Special Fund
"WITH" Recommendations

LATE

Aloha and good afternoon, Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Philippe Le Blanc, and for over a decade, I've been involved in commercial ocean recreation operations in Maui. I am writing in support of SB1019, which addresses the expansion of the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund, with a few recommendations.

I fully support using this fund for projects like beach restoration and environmental cleanups. These efforts are important to maintaining Hawaii's natural beauty and protecting our environment. However, before any new projects are prioritized, I believe it's essential to fulfill one of the original commitments tied to this fund—the development and maintenance of the state day-use mooring program.

When this initiative was introduced, commercial operators like myself backed it under the understanding that a significant portion of the funding would be allocated to day-use moorings in approved state locations. These moorings help protect coral reefs by reducing the need for anchoring and promoting sustainable ocean use. If we expand the fund's scope without securing adequate resources for this purpose, we risk diluting its effectiveness and leaving key projects underfunded.

That's why I am requesting that SB1019 include clear language ensuring that the day-use mooring program remains a priority before additional projects, such as beach restoration, are funded. Without this clarification, the disbursement of funds could become too broad, making it difficult for management agencies to maintain focus on critical objectives.

By prioritizing the day-use mooring program, we can protect sensitive marine ecosystems while still supporting other valuable initiatives like beach restoration. This balance is essential to ensuring that the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund achieves its intended long-term impact.

I appreciate your consideration of this testimony and urge you to incorporate these recommendations into SB1019.

Mahalo, Philippe Le Blanc
(808) 344-5887

LATE

SB-1019

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:58:26 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimeona Kane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Kimeona Kane of Waimānalo in support of this bill as it offers community organizations and non profits the funding opportunity to expand into the solutions relating to the care of our shorelines. The shoreline is such an important place and it is often left idle in between jurisdiction issues. Communities are already doing incredible work and I think it is a great step to open funding to them to support and fill the gaps.

Mahalo nui,

Kimeona Kane

LATE

SB-1019

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:02:21 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kendrick Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice-Chair Elefante, and Committee Members:

I respectfully submit this testimony in my personal capacity to express support for SB 1019 relating to the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund.

SB 1019 will enable the authorization and disbursement of Ocean Stewardship Special Fund monies to directly support the work of non-profit organizations. In areas like the Kaiwi Coastline and Maunalua Bay, multiple conservation nonprofit organizations (Livable Maunalua Hui, 808 Cleanups, Friends of Hanuma Bay, Sierra Club Oahu Group, etc.) actively steward our shorelines through regular volunteer workdays and educational programs. These nonprofit programs are already advancing the same goals consistent with the purposes of the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund. Accordingly, our coastline communities will benefit by expanding the scope of the Ocean Stewardship Special Fund to facilitate potential grant disbursements to these nonprofit organizations.

Based on the foregoing, I kindly ask that this committee approves SB 1019 for further deliberation. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Kendrick S. Chang