

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

Wednesday, February 5, 2025  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 1083  
RELATING TO PORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Senate Bill 1083 proposes to make an appropriation to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to conduct maintenance dredging at state small boat harbors, boat launch ramp facilities, and waterways. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

Currently, the Department must obtain funding for dredging through the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget, which can delay the start of dredging work because such funding would only be available once the budget is passed around July of each year. The resulting shoaling and additional accumulation of material in the meantime often ends up increasing dredging costs, interfering with vessel navigation, and hinders launching and retrieving of vessels at small boat harbors, channels, ramps, and other state boating facilities and waterways. If routine dredging is not done, the Department anticipates costs increasing approximately 40% to 60% above initial estimates due to further accumulation of sediment and debris.

The Department estimates that the average cost of routine maintenance dredging is between \$3 million to \$5 million for one project and has identified the following facilities that would benefit most from regular maintenance dredging: Māla, Mā'alaea, Lāhainā, Kīkīaola, Waika'ea, Kawaihae, Wailoa, Poho'iki, and Maunaloa Bay. Therefore, the Department recommends an appropriation of \$5 million in General Funds added to the base budget of the Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR) to allow DOBOR to conduct proactive maintenance dredging.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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  
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ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS



## COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

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

### NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, February 5, 2025  
TIME: 1:00 PM  
PLACE: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

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## **TESTIMONY OF THE OCEAN TOURISM COALITION IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB1083.**

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. OTC is in strong support of SB1083, which appropriates funds for maintenance dredging at small boat harbors, boat launch ramp facilities, and other state waterways. This bill is essential to ensuring Hawaii’s ports and waterways remain safe, navigable, and operational for ocean tourism businesses, recreational boaters, and the broader community.

### **Ensuring Safe and Navigable Waterways**

Proactive dredging is essential to maintaining open, functional waterways that serve both commercial and recreational users. SB1083 establishes a clear process for addressing these concerns before they become crises.

### **Reducing Economic Disruptions for Ocean Tourism Businesses**

Hawaii’s ocean tourism industry, made up of small boat tour operators, charter companies, and diving excursions, relies on safe and accessible harbors. When dredging is delayed, businesses face trip cancellations, increased maintenance costs, and revenue losses, all of which impact the local economy. By securing dedicated funding for maintenance dredging, SB1083 ensures that commercial tour operators can continue providing services that support jobs and local businesses.

### **Creating a Predictable and Efficient Funding Process**

The current method of waiting until dredging is critically necessary before allocating funds leads to delays, higher costs, and inconsistent maintenance schedules. This bill ensures that the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) proactively plans for dredging by including it in its annual budget requests. A structured approach

will prevent harbors from deteriorating to the point of emergency intervention, allowing for more cost-effective, routine maintenance.

### **Protecting Public Access to Marine Resources**

Many Hawaii residents rely on small boat harbors and launch ramps for fishing and other forms of ocean recreation. However, harbors that are silted in or poorly maintained reduce public access to state waters. By funding regular dredging, SB1083 safeguards public ocean access and ensures that harbors remain available to all users, not just commercial operators.

### **Conclusion**

Hawaii's small boat harbors and waterways are critical infrastructure that support public safety, commercial operations, and recreational use. SB1083 provides a necessary and overdue solution by establishing a structured, proactive approach to maintenance dredging. Ensuring that harbors remain safe, accessible, and economically viable is essential to the continued success of Hawaii's maritime industries and local communities.

We urge the committee to pass SB1083 to strengthen the long-term management of our state's boating infrastructure and protect ocean access for all.

Sincerely,



Denver S. Coon  
President, Ocean Tourism Coalition



February 3, 2025

Committee on Water and Land  
Senator Lorraine Inouye, Chair, Senator Brandon Elefante, Vice Chair  
Date: February 5, 2025  
Time: 1pm

Regarding: SB 1083 Relating to Port Infrastructure

### SUPPORT

HFACT is a not-for-profit, IRS 501c(5) organization, that advocates for small boat commercial, non-commercial, and recreational fishermen throughout Hawaii. HFACT board members sit on a number of federal fisheries management and endangered species advisory committees as well as state marine and coastal zone advisory committees; and HFACT is thoroughly familiar with and participates in ocean and marine resource management in Hawaii and the central Pacific.

We strongly believe that appropriations be approved to maintain the dredging of the waterways that provide access to the harbors and boat ramps throughout the State. We have held meetings that addressed the desperation of the fishing community to have their waterways dredged and allowing them to go fishing in order to survive. The lack of dredging has caused thousands of dollars in boat damage, loss of livelihoods, and the ability to feed families and communities. The passion we have witnessed at these meetings reveals the desperation they are feeling. One of the saddest stories is of a fisherman that ended up passing away before he had a chance to go fishing again, due to his inability to navigate through, because of the need for dredging. The process that DOBOR has to contend with, because of the burdensome permit process, could be avoided, if a maintenance plan were in place, and funds to do the projects were readily available.

HFACT thanks the chair, vice-chair, and committee members for this opportunity to provide comment and to assist in providing food to the people of Hawaii and to assist in the conservation of Hawaii's natural resources.

Sincerely and Aloha,

Edwin Watamura  
Executive Director.  
watafishing @ gmail.com

***Hawai'i Fishermen's Alliance for Conservation and Tradition, Inc.***  
***2015 Leiloke Drive, Honolulu, HI.96822***



**SB-1083**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:08:35 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/5/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB1083  
RELATING TO MAINTENANCE DREDGING  
Senate Committee on Water and Land (WTL)  
Hearing Date: February 5, 2025, at 1:00 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Honorable Members of the Committee:**

My name is **Zachary LaPrade**, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of **Calypso Charters** in **strong support** of **SB1083**, which provides funding for **maintenance dredging at state small boat harbors, boat launch ramps, and waterways**.

As a business operating in Hawaii’s boating industry, we rely on **safe and accessible harbors and launch facilities** to serve our customers and operate effectively. However, **dredging in Hawaii has been inconsistent and unpredictable**, both in terms of **when it will happen and how it will be funded**. This uncertainty creates **hazards for vessels, disrupts business operations, and reduces accessibility for recreational and subsistence users**.

**Why SB1083 is Necessary**

1. **Eliminates the uncertainty around dredging schedules** – Instead of waiting until conditions are critical, this bill ensures a **structured, proactive approach** to harbor maintenance.
2. **Addresses chronic funding issues** – Securing dredging funds has always been a challenge. SB1083 creates a **reliable funding mechanism**, preventing emergency shutdowns that negatively impact businesses and ocean access.
3. **Supports economic activity and safety** – Sediment buildup can **damage vessels, block harbor access, and create unsafe conditions for operators and passengers**. Keeping our waterways clear is essential for **Hawaii’s economy, tourism, and local boaters**.

By requiring DLNR to **include maintenance dredging in future budget requests**, this bill moves Hawaii toward a **more predictable and sustainable** harbor maintenance plan. It will **reduce emergency costs, improve safety, and keep boating facilities open for all users**.

For these reasons, **I respectfully urge you to pass SB1083** to ensure our harbors remain functional, safe, and accessible.

**Mahalo for your time and consideration.**

Sincerely,  
**Zachary LaPrade**  
**Calypso Charters**



**LATE**

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Aloha mai,

We are from OHCR (Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association) and are a Nonprofit organization that oversees outrigger canoe paddling on O'ahu. As stewards of Hawai'i's state sport, OHCR represents over 6,000 active paddlers and supports paddling events that bring together even more paddlers and spectators each year, celebrating a sport deeply rooted in Hawaiian culture and identity.

We thank you for the ability to submit testimony to something that affects all paddlers from Hawai'i and across the world.

Ke'ehi Lagoon is suffering from sediment buildup, debris accumulation and decreased water depth which has created significant challenges:

**Safety Hazard:** Reduced water depth increases the risk of grounding canoes and injury to paddlers.

**Event Limitations:** The buildup prevents OHCR from hosting large-scale sanctioned races effectively.

**Environmental concerns:** Sediment and debris impacts water quality and marine life

**Access issues:** Community paddlers, club and schools have fewer safe and accessible areas for training and recreation.

The solution for this would be the dredging and maintenance of Ke'ehi Lagoon to:

- \* Restore water depth and safety for paddlers and all lagoon users.
- \* Allow OHCR to host sanctioned events that foster community engagement and economic benefit.
- \* Support youth, adult and kupuna programs that perpetuate Hawai'i's cultural traditions.
- \* Improve overall water quality and ecological balance and health.

Our Stakeholders and supporters are:

- \* O'ahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association (OHCRA) and Na 'Ohana o Na Hui Wa'a
- \* Canoe clubs from across the State of Hawai'i that participate in the State Championship races (over 10,000 paddlers)
- \* Youth programs (Na Opio) and schools that promote paddling (OIA/ILH)

We kindly ask that you support and prioritize funding and resources for the dredging of Ke'ehi Lagoon.

Mahalo Piha,

Rhonda Burk  
Advocacy Chair, OHCRA  
Ph# (808)392-0048  
Rhonda@ohcra.com

Ikaika Rogerson  
Advocacy Co-Chair, OHCRA  
Ikaika@ohcra.com

**SB-1083**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 5:44:59 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/5/2025 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure.

This is needed annually, as to avoid the delayed dredging such as that which affected East Hawaii. Hilo **and** Puna fishermen were unable to launch. Puna awaits dredging at Pohoiki.