

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

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Monday, Feb 10, 2025
1:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1456
RELATING TO RESTORATION OF BEACH LANDS

Senate Bill 1456 proposes to amend the definition of “beach restoration” in used in laws governing the Board of Land and Natural Resources’ powers to engage in beach restoration to include activities undertaken to improve eroded beaches and degraded dune systems through the management of sand and native vegetation, placement of sand, and activities undertaken to remove abandoned and remnant materials that pose a risk to public and ecosystem health. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports the bill.**

The Department administers the beach restoration program for the state via the Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL). The beach fund can be used to provide grants to counties, nongovernmental organizations and the University of Hawai‘i for the restoration of beach lands.

Currently “beach restoration” by definition is limited to the placement of sand on a beach from outside sources such as streams, harbors, quarries, and offshore sand sources. In recent years community organizations have expressed an interest in conducting related nature-based activities, such as dune restoration, to promote a naturally resilient shoreline.

The Department supports broadening the types of community-supported activities covered by the definition of “beach restoration.” Including dune restoration, sand pushing, removal of derelict structures in the definition of “beach restoration” will enable OCCL to support a full suite of nature-based activities proven to enhance the public trust, promote resilience, and encourage community engagement.

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



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Monday, February 10, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

By

Charles "Chip" Fletcher, PhD

Interim Dean

School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology

And

Darren Lerner, PhD

Director, Sea Grant College Program

And

Michael Bruno, PhD

Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 1456 – RELATING TO RESTORATION OF BEACH LANDS

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

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) and the Climate Resilience Collaborative (CRC) support Senate Bill 1456, which amends the definition of beach restoration to include activities undertaken to maintain and improve eroded beaches and degraded dune systems through the management of sand and native vegetation, placement of sand, and activities undertaken to remove abandoned and remnant materials that pose a risk to public and ecosystem health.

Hawai'i Sea Grant and CRC support this measure because it will enable the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to more effectively maintain and improve beaches and the health of coastal resources and support sustainable climate adaptation statewide. Broadening the definition of beach restoration provides more flexibility to utilize dedicated funds for the best use for beach management and allows for more comprehensive coastal management strategies to be applied statewide. Hawai'i Sea Grant and CRC support the amendments proposed by DLNR to improve this bill.

Hawai'i Sea Grant's mission is to provide integrated research, extension, and education activities that increase understanding and use of ocean and coastal resources of the Hawaiian and Pacific Islands and support the informed personal, policy, and management decisions that are integral to realizing this vision. Hawai'i Sea Grant is part of a national network of 34 university-based programs associated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that promote better understanding, conservation, and use of coastal resources.

CRC is a multi-investigator research project at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa focused on sea level rise adaptation and climate resilience. CRC is updating coastal models that project the impacts of sea level rise.

The research that goes into identifying Hawai'i's exposure to sea level rise and the historical patterns of coastal erosion have been developed by the University of Hawai'i, School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology. CRC and Hawai'i Sea Grant are available to provide updated sea level rise data and projections and examples of relevant adaptation to the Committee or any lawmaker upon request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



February 7, 2025

Senate Committee on Water and Land
Hawai'i State Legislature
Via Electronic Transmission

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 1456, Relating to Restoration of Beach Lands
Hearing: Monday, February 10, 2025, 1:00 PM CR 229 & Videoconference

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

Surfrider Foundation Hawai'i Region strongly supports Senate Bill 1456 which amends the definition of beach restoration to reflect the types of actions which would improve beach health.

Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots activist network dedicated to the protection of our oceans, waves, and beaches. Through our Coast & Climate initiative and Climate Action Program we center a 'living shoreline' approach to coastal land management prioritizing actions that maintain and improve degraded dune systems including dune planting. We engage the community in dune restoration events and beach cleanups to improve the health of the beaches, many that our members frequent for recreational activities.

The previous definition of beach restoration is too narrow to effectively encompass necessary management activities. The amended definition would allow the Division of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to more comprehensively manage coastal lands including dune planting and vegetation management. The new definition would also strategically increase coastal management capacity by recognizing the important work being done by community groups that care for public lands as restorative to beach resources and allow for partnership on smaller projects.

SB1456 also expands the definition of beach restoration to include the removal of abandoned remnant materials that pose a risk to coastal ecosystems and public health including expired emergency armoring measures and old WWII structures. Hawai'i's beaches are plagued with discarded temporary erosion measures including geotextile erosion skirts and sand burritos. While emergency permits specify a short time period before they need to be removed, oftentimes on account of sand migration and wave action, these erosion measures become covered and are never removed. The lifespan of many of these geo-textile fabrics are long outlived and they degrade- further polluting the ocean, waves, and beaches. The inclusion of

removal of abandoned remnant materials within beach restoration is a vital step to cleaning up our beaches from materials that pose a public health risk to ocean users and the environment.

In summary, Surfrider Foundation Hawai'i Region strongly supports SB1456 as a common sense amendment to Section 171-151, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Mahalo for your time and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Hanna Lilley
Hawai'i Regional Manager
Surfrider Foundation



Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water & Land
Tuesday, February 10, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

By

Rick Egged, President
Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District Association

SB 1456 – RELATING TO RESTORATION OF BEACH LANDS

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

The Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District Association (WBSIDA) is pleased to provide this testimony in support of SB 1146, which amends the definition of beach restoration to include activities undertaken to maintain and improve eroded beaches and degraded dune systems through the management of sand and native vegetation, placement of sand, and activities undertaken to remove abandoned and remnant materials that pose a risk to public and ecosystem health.

The WBSIDA supports this measure because it will empower the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to more efficiently maintain and enhance our beaches, strengthen the health of coastal resources, and promote sustainable climate adaptation efforts across the state. Expanding the definition of beach restoration will provide greater flexibility in utilizing dedicated funds for optimal beach management, allowing for the implementation of more comprehensive coastal management strategies statewide including Waikiki Beach.

Expanding the definition of beach restoration offers significant benefits by allowing the DLNR to address a broader range of coastal challenges. It enables the DLNR to adapt to the changing needs of Hawaii's beaches and shorelines, from mitigating erosion to enhancing natural habitats and addressing the impacts of climate change. With more flexibility in funding and strategy implementation, DLNR can respond more effectively to urgent and evolving coastal concerns, improving the resilience of beaches and protecting vital ecosystems for future generations. This expansion ensures a more holistic approach to coastal management, fostering long-term sustainability for both the environment and local communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.