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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
and
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Thursday, Feb 13, 2025

1:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1639
RELATING TO HAWAII BEACH DAY

Senate Bill 1639 proposes to designate August 30 each year as "Hawai'i Beach Day," in order to promote awareness about the ecological, cultural, and recreational significance of Hawaii's beaches. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) offers the following comments on the bill.**

The bill requires that the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), in collaboration with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), organize and support events such as:

- Statewide beach cleanups and restoration projects,
- Educational campaigns on marine conservation and beach stewardship,
- Cultural demonstrations and workshops reflecting Native Hawaiian traditions, and
- Public art and educational exhibits emphasizing the beauty and importance of beaches.

Organizing a statewide festival of this size would require substantial funding and a significant amount of staff time. While Senate Bill 1639 proposes allocating funds from the General Fund, it does not specify an amount.

The Department has no prior experience managing events of this scale and cannot accurately estimate the funds needed to make Hawai'i Beach Day a success. DLNR respectfully requests a commitment to ongoing funding and a clearer definition of the roles and responsibilities of both HTA and DLNR in order to support this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



TESTIMONY OF
DANIEL NĀHO'OPI'I
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
SENATE COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Thursday, February 13, 2025
1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 229

In consideration of
SB 1639
RELATING TO HAWAII BEACH DAY

Aloha Chairs Lee and DeCoite, Vice Chairs Inouye and Wakai, and Members of the Committees,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) offers comments on SB1639, establishing Hawai'i Beach Day. It also requires HTA, in collaboration with DLNR, to organize and support events and activities to celebrate and observe Hawai'i Beach Day and appropriate funds.

We concur with Legislature's findings that beaches play a vital role in the lives of residents and visitors. HTA contracts services with community organizations to develop projects and events like beach cleanups and ocean/beach awareness. Additionally, many community and nonprofit organizations already host similar events. We believe that we should and can support these organizations through our Destination Stewardships particularly our Community Enrichment and Kahu 'Āina programs. We look forward to continuing to work with DLNR on projects such as these.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our comments.

SB-1639

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:01:45 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/13/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members of the Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Government Operations,

I am testifying in opposition to SB1639.

I agree with the intent of this bill but the focus on Hawaii's beaches takes away from its intent of raising awareness about environmental stewardship and the highlight of ecological and cultural significance of Hawaii's environment. We should be promoting a regenerative form of tourism, beneficial to our entire ecosystem, and this bill goes against that.

Hawaii's tourism industry has been extractive since its inception. Visitors currently come to Hawaii to sip Maitais in the sand and soak up the sun. They come with the desire to relax, get away from life, and have an exotic experience that they can tell their family and friends about. A Hawaii Beach Day, even if it includes celebrating cultural value, continues to promote this.

A Hawaii Environment and Culture Day would be better suited for this. This would accomplish the intent of this bill, but not be focused solely on beaches. Promoting public awareness on preserving Hawaii's environment and cultural sites would include beaches, forests, and streams, as well as the cultural significance and importance of sites. It would encourage beach cleanups as well as lo'i (taro patch) workdays, invasive species removal and hiking trail maintenance projects, and more. This would highlight true sustainable tourism practices.

Please consider these changes in order to accomplish the intent of this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Keoni Shizuma, from Kaneohe, Oahu

LATE

SB-1639

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 9:45:24 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/13/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'd support this SB1639, but I think it should be monthly and not just one day annually! DLNR seems to have difficulty just keeping our beaches and other places clean and culturally appropriate such as Mauna Ala. Our beaches do need protecting and cleaned up regularly by volunteers and othe nonprofits, but to have DLNR setup a celebration annually, would they really know how? Wouldn't Parks & Recreation under the counties be better prepared or perhaps Office of Hawaiian Affairs, or another program. And calling it Beach Day, sounds too casual like any other day for a local! And Beach Cleanup day sounds like too much work! Just some comments!