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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
WATER AND LAND
And
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Friday, February 7, 2025
1:16 PM
State Capitol Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 18
RELATING TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Senate Bill 18 proposes to appropriate funds to initiate the development of a comprehensive statewide inventory of historic properties and burial sites. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

Chapter 6E, HRS, provides the framework for a comprehensive statewide historic preservation program (program) in Hawai'i. Section 6E-3, HRS, identifies that within the program the Department will develop a statewide survey and inventory to identify and document historic properties, aviation artifacts, and burial sites, including those owned by the State and the counties.

Although the State Historic Preservation Division (Division) maintains an inventory of historic sites within the state, it is limited in scope and relies almost entirely on the supporting data provided by agencies and project sponsors submitted as part of the project review processes established by Sections 6E-8, 6E-10, 6E-42, HRS, and under federal law. As a result, the Division's inventory is incomplete; resulting in challenges for the Division to assess with great confidence the location and condition of Hawaii's historic resources.

The proposed bill appropriates a blank level of funding for archaeological survey, burial sites inventory, and inventory of historic buildings to the Department to undertake the surveys necessary to develop a comprehensive statewide survey of historic properties, archaeological sites, and burial sites. A

comprehensive inventory of this kind would provide information essential to identifying, documenting, and preserving iwi kūpuna, as well as historic and cultural resources and is essential to meeting the goals of Section 6E-3, HRS.

A comprehensive, proactively developed inventory would be a valuable tool for:

- Identifying and preserving iwi kūpuna, historic, and cultural resources.
- Providing project planners with accurate information early in the development process to avoid impacts to historic sites rather than discovering them during construction.
- Facilitating permitting and regulatory reviews by allowing projects to be sited and designed with historic preservation in mind.
- Determining areas with low, moderate, or high potential for encountering cultural resources, guiding which projects require Division review.

While this measure does not specify the level of funding, the Department believes that \$1,500,000 per year would be sufficient to initiate the multi-year effort necessary to complete the statewide survey, to be divided equally for: an archaeological surface survey(s) for at least one local community or neighborhood; an inventory of historic buildings for at least one local community or neighborhood; and one sensitivity survey for the collection of burial site data in at least one local community or neighborhood. The Department acknowledges this measure appropriates general funds to be deposited in the Hawai'i Historic Preservation Special Fund where they will remain available until completely expended for the purposes of this bill.

The Department also notes that the Division will have to contract all work necessary to carry out the inventory effort as it does not have the in-house capacity to create a comprehensive inventory. However, we believe the investment in developing a comprehensive inventory now will facilitate project reviews and development in the long run.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



HISTORIC HAWAI'I FOUNDATION

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TO: Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair
Committee on Water and Land (WTL)

FROM: Kiersten Faulkner, Executive Director
Historic Hawai'i Foundation

Committee: Friday, February 7, 2025
1:16 p.m.
Via Video Conference and Conference Room 229

RE: **SB 18, Relating to Historic Preservation**

On behalf of Historic Hawai'i Foundation (HHF), I am writing in **support for SB 18**. The bill appropriates an unspecified amount of funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for the Historic Preservation Division to inventory historic properties and burial sites in the State, collect data on burial site locations, and conduct an archaeological surface survey.

Historic property inventories and surveys are a crucial step in the historic preservation process. The context studies and inventories provide research, evaluation and examples of patterns, themes and trends in which a building, structure, site, object or district is understood. The contexts provide information on meaning and provide the necessary background to understand why a given resource may be historically significant. The inventories then provide information on specific properties and features that convey that significance and are important to the cultural heritage of the community and the public.

The State's current inventory and historic property surveys are ad hoc rather than deliberative or methodical. Additions to the State Inventory of Historic Properties are often the result of supporting data provided when another agency or applicant submits a project proposal to SHPD. The resulting inventory is therefore piecemeal and incomplete in terms of identification of the individual properties and features. It also lacks information that would allow for a more robust understanding of the historic context in which individual sites and properties may be understood.

A comprehensive inventory should also include thematic context studies that would identify and explain historic themes and patterns as well as describe the types of properties associated with that context. The inventories should include descriptions of the physical characteristics and the locations where the properties are found. Contexts are required components of nominations to the Hawai'i and National Registers of Historic Places. The contexts summarize the themes to which the resources relate, explain how

the properties illustrate that theme and compare the nominated resource to other resources associated with the theme.

On a pragmatic level, a thorough and credible inventory would facilitate appropriate project review by providing the necessary information about the presence of significant historic properties so that projects may be sited and designed in a way to avoid, minimize and mitigate effects on those properties.

Therefore, Historic Hawai'i Foundation supports the measure to provide resources for the development of inventories of historic buildings and structures, archaeological properties and burial sites.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.