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STATE OF HAWAII
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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS

Monday, April 1, 2019
10:20 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 28/SENATE RESOLUTION 20
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO
MANAGE THE WAI'ANAIE KAI FOREST AND RESTORE WATER FLOW IN
WAI'ANAIE STREAMS FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN TRADITIONAL AND
CUSTOMARY PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WAI'ANAIE KAI
WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 28/Senate Resolution 20 urges the Department of Land and Natural Resources to manage the Waianae Kai Forest and restore water flow in Waianae streams for native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices and implementation of the Waianae Kai Wildfire Preparedness Plan. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports these measures.**

The Department's Division of Forestry and Wildlife is the land manager of the Waianae Kai Forest Reserve, a 2,161 acre forest reserve located on leeward Oahu. The Forest Reserve is a part of the greater 5,960 acre Waianae Kai Watershed, a priority watershed for the Board of Water Supply, and is home to more than 52 state and federal endangered species. The Forest Reserve has been impacted by numerous fires throughout the years, the most recent being the fire of August 2018, which burned more than 5,000 acres across Waianae Kai, Makaha, and Keauu valleys. Being the adjacent neighbor to Kaala Farms, Inc., the Department supports the awarding of the grant-in-aid and the creation of the Waianae Kai Wildfire Preparedness Plan.

Key points that the Department supports in the plan are: (1) Improvements to security through construction of a security office or gate; (2) Construction of a tank, pond, or reservoir to provide water for firefighting helicopters; (3) Installation of fire hydrants and pressurized water lines at strategic locations in the upper valley; (4) Creation and maintenance of fire breaks at strategic

locations; (5) Installation of a sprinkler system to irrigate vegetative fire breaks; (6) Fuel load reduction; and (7) Public education and preparedness training.

Implementing the plan will help the Department protect the native, cultural, and water resources for the benefit of the greater Waianae coast community. In addition, it will enhance support for numerous Waianae Mountains Watershed Partnership projects that are already ongoing in the Waianae Kai Watershed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these measures.



SCR28/SR20

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO MANAGE THE
WAI'ANAIE KAI FOREST AND RESTORE WATER FLOW IN WAI'ANAIE STREAMS FOR
NATIVE HAWAIIAN TRADITIONAL AND CUSTOMARY PRACTICES AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WAI'ANAIE KAI WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS PLAN.
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

April 1, 2019

10:20 a.m.

Room 211

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers the following **COMMENTS** on SCR28/SR20, which encourages efforts to more proactively protect our water supply and uphold the public trust in water in the Wai'anaie watershed.

Water has been recognized as a public trust resource in our islands since time immemorial, and our constitution, State Water Code, and case law accordingly reaffirm the importance of protecting and carefully administering our limited water supply for the public benefit. Unfortunately, in many regions throughout Hawai'i, the public trust in water has been neglected for generations, as stream diversions and private wells allowed sugar and pineapple plantations to increasingly monopolize our water resources for their private, commercial gain; this monopolization of our water supply has had and continues to have profound and deleterious effects on our environment as well as Native Hawaiian communities and cultural lifestyles otherwise protected under the public trust. While recent developments have been encouraging, the public trust purposes of water, including Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, continue to be neglected in a majority of areas impacted by historical diversions and other water infrastructure.

OHA accordingly appreciates the intent of this resolution to ensure more proactive efforts to recognize and uphold the public trust in the Wai'anaie watershed, including with regards to the public trust purpose of supporting Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. OHA also appreciates this resolution's call to proactively protect and enhance the Wai'anaie watershed's water security and climate resiliency, through native forest restoration efforts and mauka-to-makai land management practices consistent with traditional Native Hawaiian approaches to land tenure. OHA defers to the Commission on Water Resource Management and the Department of Land and Natural Resources with regards to the hydrologic characteristics and best means of enhancing the water resources of the Wai'anaie watershed, as may be described in this resolution.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SR-20

Submitted on: 3/29/2019 1:37:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2019 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lu Ann Faborito	Individual	Support	No

Comments: