

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson**

COMMENTS

**Before the House Committee on
WATER, LAND & OCEAN RESOURCES**

**Friday, February 5, 2010
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2019
RELATING TO PARKS**

House Bill 2019 proposes that on January 1, 2011, the Governor may transfer Mauna Kea and Hapuna Beach State Recreational Areas to the County of Hawaii (County). Although it would have been more constructive for the County to approach the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) and/or the Governor on the transfer in lieu of this bill, the Department nonetheless welcomes the opportunity to discuss this topic with the County. The Department would note that it is already authorized by statute to make such park transfers.

William P. Kenoi
Mayor



William T. Takaba
Managing Director

Walter K.M. Lau
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

SUPPORT

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February 5, 2010

Honorable Ken Ito, Chair
And Members of the Committee on
Water, Land and Ocean Resources
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 325
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Aloha, Representative Ito and Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in strong support of House Bill 2019, which would authorize the Governor of the State of Hawai'i to transfer to the County of Hawai'i the Mauna Kea and Hapuna Beach State Recreational Areas.

Both the State and Counties are struggling to balance our budgets in these challenging economic times, and we have all been forced to make difficult choices. It is no secret that funding shortages and competing needs have dictated that maintenance and installation of infrastructure at some state recreational facilities have been deferred. The state Department of Land and Natural Resources acknowledged as much when it announced the Recreational Renaissance Plan B. According to DLNR, "Due to decades of neglect and underfunding, Hawai'i's outdoor recreational facilities have fallen into disrepair."

In some cases, recreational facilities have been neglected to the point that these parks are now open to the public in name only. They are no longer welcoming to residents or visitors because they lack the properly maintained camp sites, restrooms, parking and other amenities that people need and expect when they seek ocean and other outdoor recreational experiences.

The public does not understand why this is happening, and does not care whether it is the State or the County that is responsible. The public desires and deserves decent, properly developed and well-maintained recreational facilities. This is especially important in today's difficult economy, when growing numbers of people seek outdoor recreational opportunities as a low-cost pastime that is available to all.

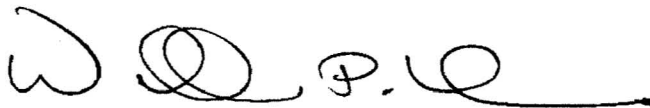
Mauna Kea and Hapuna State Recreational Areas have the potential to be public treasures, places that can be accessed and enjoyed by far more people than visit those sites today. With the proper public investment, these are places that can offer unparalleled recreational experiences. The condition of these facilities today suggests the State is not in a position to make that investment.

The County of Hawai'i faces its own budget and fiscal challenges, but development and maintenance of parks is a core County service. Given the economic contraction that continues to confront the State and Counties, we believe it would be a better deployment of public resources to transfer both recreation areas to the County, which is willing to assume responsibility for operations, maintenance and improvements.

We believe this shift in responsibility will result in improvements in the condition of both Mauna Kea and Hapuna; increased utilization of both recreation areas; and greater public satisfaction with these important public facilities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. P. Kenoi', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

William P. Kenoi
MAYOR