

MAR 11 2016

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS FOR STEWARDSHIP AND
PRESERVATION OF WAIPI'O VALLEY.

1 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that Waipi'o Valley, located
2 on Hawai'i Island, is an area with great cultural, historical,
3 genealogical, and agricultural significance; and
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5 WHEREAS, Waipi'o Valley is a revered wahi pana, or sacred
6 place, and has served as a cultural and demographic center for
7 the Native Hawaiian culture for many centuries, housing precious
8 resources including multiple heiau, an extensive taro lo'i and
9 auwai system, fishponds, burial sites, ocean culture, and
10 incomparable scenic beauty; and
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12 WHEREAS, the Task Force to Preserve Waipi'o Valley, formed
13 pursuant to House Resolution No. 277, Regular Session of 1990,
14 found a need to protect and preserve the cultural, aesthetic,
15 and agricultural integrity of Waipi'o Valley and identified
16 several concerns including:
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- 18 (1) Health and safety issues arising from a lack of public
19 facilities and substandard infrastructure aggravated
20 by unregulated access into the valley;
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- 22 (2) Demographic changes on Hawai'i Island and in the
23 Hāmākua region impacting the natural and cultural
24 resources of the valley; and
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- 26 (3) Environmental concerns related to stream management
27 and flood control to preserve and protect life and
28 property; and



1 WHEREAS, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Department of
2 Urban and Regional Planning compiled community planning and
3 ahupua'a management reports in 1999 and 2000 and offered possible
4 solutions to many of the issues identified; and
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6 WHEREAS, the Waipi'o Valley Stakeholders Alliance (WVSA) was
7 formed in July 2015, and includes representation from the Waipi'o
8 Taro Farmers Association, Waipi'o Community Circle, and Hā Ola O
9 Waipi'o Valley, their voices representing the many perspectives
10 of the Waipi'o community; and
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12 WHEREAS, WVSA works collaboratively with various community
13 resource partners to proactively implement solutions to issues
14 that have negatively impacted the valley, including addressing
15 road access and safety issues and implementation of the Waipi'o
16 Valley Stream Management Plan; and
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18 WHEREAS, the Bishop Museum has owned and managed five
19 hundred and thirty-seven acres of Waipi'o Valley property,
20 representing approximately sixty per cent of the valley floor,
21 for the past one hundred thirty years and has publicly announced
22 its intent to sell its interest in order to enable the museum to
23 move forward with a new strategic management plan; and
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25 WHEREAS, the land, which is divided into approximately one
26 hundred tax map key parcels, contains a majority of the taro
27 growing lands as well as significant cultural sites such as
28 Pāka'alana Heiau; and
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30 WHEREAS, most of the taro production lands are leased to
31 Waipi'o families, many of whom have cared for their 'āina for
32 many generations, and the announcement by Bishop Museum to sell
33 their lands has created a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety
34 for the taro farming families of Waipi'o Valley and the future of
35 their beloved and well-cared for farms; and
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37 WHEREAS, WVSA is fully committed to take the lead on
38 stewardship efforts to transition the Bishop Museum lands, and
39 is currently working with many stakeholders, community leaders
40 from groups who have experienced similar situations, and others
41 who have expertise in land acquisition and land management to



1 identify possible options that will both ensure that Bishop
2 Museum can remain solvent and continue its important work caring
3 for Hawai'i's cultural treasures, while at the same time honoring
4 Waipi'o Valley's past, present, and future to ensure that the
5 land remains in the loving, caring hands of the Waipi'o families
6 as it has for centuries; now, therefore,
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8 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-eighth
9 Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2016,
10 that Waipi'o Valley Stakeholders Alliance is requested to
11 coordinate with the Bishop Museum, Kamehameha Schools, Friends
12 of the Future, County of Hawai'i, Office of Hawaiian Affairs,
13 Trust For Public Land, State of Hawai'i, and other interested
14 parties who may be invited by WVSA to provide their guidance and
15 mana'o regarding the future preservation and stewardship of
16 Waipi'o Valley; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that WVSA is requested to submit a
19 report of the results of stewardship meetings including
20 findings, recommendations, and any proposed legislation, to the
21 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the commencement
22 of the 2017 Regular Session; and
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24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
25 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chair of the Board of
26 Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Hawai'i State
27 Director of the Trust for Public Land, Mayor of the County of
28 Hawai'i, Community Liaison of Waipi'o Valley Stakeholders
29 Alliance, President of Bishop Museum, Chair of Kamehameha
30 Schools, and President of Friends of the Future.
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OFFERED BY: 

