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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO BURIAL SITES.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that traditional Hawaiian  
2 burials play a critical role in Hawaiian culture. A recognized  
3 traditional Hawaiian practice for treatment of human remains  
4 involves reducing the remains to its skeletal remains, known as  
5 ‘iwi, and interring the ‘iwi in a kapa or lauhala container. The  
6 cultural significance of ‘iwi is deeply rooted in Native Hawaiian  
7 oral traditions, language, and culture. Native Hawaiian burial  
8 traditions acknowledge the natural cycles of life and death.  
9 ‘Iwi are vital to the perpetuation of living native Hawaiians, as  
10 they are the lasting embodiment of ancestors and a continuous  
11 genealogical link from past, present, and future generations.

12           The legislature further finds that coastal erosion is an  
13 increasing threat to Hawaiian burial sites. The effects of  
14 climate change pose a significant threat to ‘iwi exposed or  
15 likely to be exposed by coastal erosion caused by rising sea  
16 levels. Recent extreme weather events such as torrential rains  
17 and king tides have catalyzed coastal erosion in low-lying



1 areas, which increase the likelihood of landslides and high  
2 surface runoff. Unidentified 'iwi in coastal areas are at severe  
3 risk of being exposed and compromised by coastal erosion that  
4 may impact burial sites as early as 2030.

5 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to create a  
6 department of land and natural resources inter-division program  
7 between the state historic preservation division, the land  
8 division, the burial councils from each county, and the office  
9 of conservation and coastal lands, in partnership with the  
10 office of Hawaiian affairs to address the location of Hawaiian  
11 burial sites and safe movement and restoration of 'iwi that are  
12 exposed or likely to be exposed due to coastal erosion.

13 SECTION 2. (a) The state historic preservation division  
14 of the department of land and natural resources shall establish  
15 an inter-division program to address the location, movement,  
16 relocation, and restoration of Hawaiian burial sites that are  
17 exposed or likely to be exposed by coastal erosion due to  
18 climate change. The state historic preservation division shall  
19 collaborate with the land division office of conservation and  
20 coastal lands, island burial councils, and office of Hawaiian  
21 affairs in the development of the program.



- 1 (b) The inter-division program shall:
- 2 (1) Examine the fiscal impacts of the movement and
- 3 relocation of 'iwi affected by coastal erosion to
- 4 locations inland that maintain lineal genealogical or
- 5 cultural connections;
- 6 (2) Take appropriate steps to move and relocate 'iwi from
- 7 impacted burial sites to areas further inland within
- 8 the same moku;
- 9 (3) Provide guidance and technical assistance to
- 10 communities, organizations, and other stakeholders
- 11 with lineal genealogical or cultural connections to
- 12 the impacted 'iwi; and
- 13 (4) Develop policies and procedures to protect impacted
- 14 'iwi and burial sites that have not been relocated or
- 15 those that have been relocated.
- 16 (c) The state historic preservation division may adopt
- 17 rules in accordance with chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to
- 18 carry out the purposes of this section.
- 19 (d) The inter-division program shall collaborate with
- 20 interested stakeholders, including appropriate Hawaiian
- 21 organizations, property owners, community organizations, and



1 other state and county government agencies and private  
2 organizations concerned with the location and movement of 'iwi  
3 from areas impacted by coastal erosion caused by climate change.

4 (e) The state historic preservation division shall submit  
5 a report of its findings and recommendations, including any  
6 proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty  
7 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2023.

8 SECTION 3. For 'iwi found, the office of Hawaiian affairs  
9 shall cover costs related to the movement and relocation of 'iwi  
10 impacted by coastal erosion. For non-Hawaiian human remains,  
11 the department of land and natural resources shall utilize funds  
12 expended in this Act to move and relocate remains in areas  
13 impacted by coastal erosion.

14 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
16 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for  
17 the development of policies and procedures to advance the  
18 purposes of this Act and for the movement and restoration of  
19 non-Hawaiian burial sites impacted by coastal erosion or likely  
20 to be impacted by coastal erosion.



1           The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
2 land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

3           SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.



**Report Title:**

Burial Sites; Coastal Erosion; State Historic Preservation  
Division; Office of Hawaiian Affairs; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes an inter-division program between the State Historic  
Preservation Division, Land Division, county burial councils,  
Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands, and the Office of  
Hawaiian Affairs that addresses the location, movement, and  
restoration of Hawaiian burial sites, or 'iwi, exposed or likely  
to be exposed to coastal erosion. (SD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is  
not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

