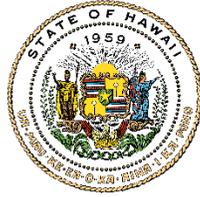


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on  
WATER AND LAND

Wednesday, February 15, 2023  
12:30 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 1136  
RELATING TO THE STATE PARKS

Senate Bill 1136 proposes to require the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to conduct a study of the carrying capacity of Mākena State Park in the County of Maui and appropriates funds. **The Department opposes this measure and provides the following comments.**

Mākena State Park is comprised of Oneloa (Big Beach) and Pu'u Ōla'i (Little Beach). At nearly two-thirds of a mile long (3,800 ft) Oneloa is one of Maui's largest and one of its most undeveloped beaches. Due to the remote location, Mākena State Park is one of 7 park units across the State with a live in Park Caretaker, who is specifically assigned to Mākena to maintain the park's natural amenity's and limited built infrastructure.

The bathymetry of the shoreline creates a significant shore break, and there is a history of severe spinal injuries. The Department's Division of State Parks (State Parks) contracts the services of Maui County Lifeguards, and the length of the beach requires that two towers are in place. The annual current contract cost for lifeguard salaries is \$1,610,237 dollars. The lifeguards have not indicated to State Parks that current patronage exceeds their ability to provide adequate coverage and ocean safety.

Management of rubbish requires only one 8-yard dumpster to collect all the trash gathered throughout the park daily by the Park Caretaker, it is emptied twice a week. Due to the lack of water and comfort stations, there are 10 standard and 2 ADA porta potties within the park that are serviced 3 times per week at a cost of \$27,600.00 annually.

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
LAURA H.E. KAAKUA  
FIRST DEPUTY  
M. KALEO MANUEL  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER  
AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

There is Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funds that has been deployed for planning and environmental review for the construction of a comfort station and rinsing showers, but that is now subject to a legal challenge that may jeopardize the ability to construct the amenities before the CIP funds lapse. Dune protection measures are underway by replanting with native coastal plants and roping off about 150 feet of dune sections towards the south end of the park where iwi has been inadvertently exposed due to coastal processes.

Current parking at both paved parking lots is comprised of 108 total marked stalls with plans for the north and south parking lots to also include paving and striping of the shoulder areas of the entry road. This will add 97 stalls to the north parking lot and an additional 41 to the south parking lot. However, this will not significantly add stalls or patronage, as these shoulder areas are already being used informally for parking. The new striping and paving will organize how the public parks in these areas. 246 cars will be the approximate total parking capacity. There is an appearance of overcrowding based on cars parked along the exterior county roadway. This is due to out of state visitors who frequently park along the mauka shoulder of the roadway to avoid paying the parking fee. When others see the cars along the roadway, there is a tendency to follow suit as others may think the lots are full. However, the interior lots rarely are all full. There is discussion among staff to install exterior fencing to better manage the flow of people and to further ensure that capacity is regulated by reducing the exterior parking, as the park boundary is very porous.

In FY22, Mākena fees from out of state visitors totaled \$933,705.25. With better boundary management, it is anticipated that this income will increase. The additional \$676,532 needed to cover current lifeguard cost is derived from other park unit revenues deposited into the State Park special fund.

State Parks is examining new and improved methods of destination management at targeted park units heavily patronized by visitors, but currently Mākena patronage and the ability to manage vehicle load, collect rubbish and ensure no impact from human waste, coupled with the spacious geography of Oneloa, a study to determine absolute capacity or establishing a reservation system is unwarranted at this time.

The only crowding that is discernable and where impacts may be more prevalent is Pu‘u Ōla‘i (Little Beach) which has only 400 linear feet of shoreline and is separated by a short but technical 0.8-mile trail from Oneloa. There are no porta potties close by, and there are archeological resources nestled between the small beach and Pu‘u Ōla‘i. Before the early closure of Pu‘u Ōla‘i at 4 pm on weekends, (7:00 pm is the closure time for Oneloa and the rest of the park), weekly drum circles that included illegal fire used in conjunction with dancing, use of alcohol and controlled substances and crowds of upwards to 400 people would gather on this Pu‘u Ōla‘i (Little Beach). However, the early closure has eliminated this illicit activity and weekly crowding.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Mayor

**KEKUHAUPIO R. AKANA**  
Acting Managing Director



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
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February 14, 2023

TO: Honorable Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Honorable Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Water and Land

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor

DATE: February 14, 2023

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF SB 1136, RELATING TO STATE PARKS**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The purpose of this Act is to appropriate moneys for the department of land and natural resources to conduct a carrying capacity study, which will be submitted before the legislature convenes for the regular session of 2024.

I **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Access to Makena State Park is an ongoing concern for Maui residents due to an excess of visitor traffic. This measure supports means to ensure that residents' public access to these important community assets will be preserved.
2. The measure will reduce the impact of humans on the health and abundance of natural resources, cultural resources, and native species within the park.

For the foregoing reasons, I **SUPPORT** this measure.

**SB-1136**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:48:25 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/15/2023 12:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Moran	Testifying for Kihei Community Assoc (KCA)	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Senators

I am testifying for the Kihei Community Assoc an unfunded non profit org., When we incorporated in 1960 , in spite of our name Kihei, we were established to represent the So Maui District, which of course include Oneloa or Makena.

We stand in support of this measure. KCA was specifically named as a stakeholder in the Oneloa Coalition in 2009 to "insure the preservation of historical sites and natural ecology at this State Park." In the past decade plus the area has become stressed by the growth surrounding it in Makena and all the park users. As changes within & around the Park continue, the number of users has brough forth the question, what is the limit, and how would that be determined? Parking limits is not a valid measure to insure preservation. Establishing carrying capacity is the way to go. Please support this measure. Mahalo

Mike Moran for KCA



# MAUI TOMORROW

Protecting Maui's Future

Testimony before the  
Senate Committee on Water & Land

February 15, 2023

S.B. No. 1136 – Relating to State Parks  
STRONG SUPPORT

By Albert Perez  
Executive Director  
Maui Tomorrow Foundation

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the committee:

The Maui Tomorrow Foundation STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB 1136. Thank you for hearing this important bill.

In the 1980s when the Wailea-Mākena area began experiencing rapid growth, developers made plans to build beachfront condos at Oneloa (or Big Beach), which was then a long, isolated stretch of sand surrounded by kiawe. Realizing what was at stake, citizens began a successful effort to convince the Legislature to acquire the land. The result is Mākena State Park, now one of the most popular beach parks on Maui. The waters offshore are still some of the cleanest in the state, and endangered hawksbill turtles are known to nest there.

Today this park is under immense pressure as a result of increasing tourism numbers. Residents are often unable to find parking, as every available space is often taken up. As a result, people are parking outside the paved parking areas, and State Parks' proposed response is to simply accommodate that demand by paving new parking areas without knowing the capacity of this beautiful natural area to absorb impacts. A carrying capacity study is needed to determine whether the Park's environmental, cultural, psychological or social carrying capacity have been exceeded. If such a study is not conducted, Mākena State Park will be at risk of losing its 'sense of place' due to the impacts of overtourism on the ecosystem and landscape. Many would argue that this has already occurred, but there is no objective way of knowing without conducting a carrying capacity study.

The Division of State Parks has already taken action to manage overtourism on Kaua'i, through its adoption of the Hā'ena State Park Master Plan. This plan aims to improve the long-term management of the park and visitor satisfaction by implementing transportation and parking management practices; as well as establishing a target for a reduction in the number of daily visitors.

Similarly, in recent years crowding at Waianapanapa State Park near Hāna had impacted the adjacent community and overall visitor experiences. In response, a reservation system was launched, with fees for visitor entry and parking, while Hawai'i residents are still able to park there for free.

On the State Parks web site for Waianapanapa, State Parks Administrator Curt Cottrell is quoted as saying, "Quality over quantity is our new target in management." Mākena State Park deserves the same consideration, and a carrying capacity study for this park will be a good first step.

I urge you to support this important bill.

Mahalo,

Albert Perez  
Executive Director  
Maui Tomorrow Foundation

**SB-1136**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:43:33 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/15/2023 12:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
carol lee kamekona	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am refuting the statement that Makena State Park is not a crowded park. I would highly support having a Carrying Capacity Study done to disprove this statement. As a lineal and Cultural descendant of the Honua'ula area, I've seen much traffic in the area from tourists and locals alike. Please do a Carrying Capacity Study. Mahalo! 

**SB-1136**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:29:06 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/15/2023 12:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daniel Kanahale	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I live 15 minutes from Makena State Park. It is often crowded. I have said for years that a carrying capacity study should be done for this very popular and ecological and cultural sensitive park.