

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

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DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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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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HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N.S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
and
WATER AND LAND

Friday, February 10, 2023
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1501
RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO

Senate Bill 1501 proposes to prohibit the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board) from disturbing or acquiring for development certain wetland taro-growing lands. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) offers the following comments and concerns, and proposed amendments on this measure.**

The Department supports taro cultivation but is concerned with this measure which proposes to amend Section 206-7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to prohibit the Board from disturbing “existing ancient taro-growing systems, ancient wetland taro lands, or structural elements of ancient wetland taro-growing systems”. Moreover, the measure proposes to prohibit the Board from acquiring for development “lands and infrastructure used or to be used for wetland taro-growing, including ancient wetland taro lands and structural elements of ancient wetland taro-growing systems”. The Department believes that by broadly preventing the disturbance and development of such lands and features without any minimum threshold, it may restrict the use of public lands zoned urban or agriculture for other compelling public purposes, even when the condition of the land and infrastructure may be where it is no longer feasible to engage in taro cultivation.

As an alternative, the Department recommends this measure be amended to adopt language used in a similar measure, Senate Bill 1498, which requires such undeveloped lands and infrastructure be used for

wetland taro cultivation before statehood and currently in use for wetland taro cultivation. The Department recommends that lines 12 through 14 on page 2 of the measure be amended as follows:

The board shall not disturb existing ancient taro-growing systems, ancient wetland taro lands, or structural elements of ancient wetland taro-growing systems on undeveloped lands used for wetland taro cultivation before statehood and currently in use for wetland taro cultivation.

Furthermore, the Department requests that page 4, lines 1 through 4, be amended as follows:

- (5) Undeveloped lands and infrastructure used for wetland taro cultivation before statehood and currently in use for wetland taro cultivation, including ancient wetland taro lands and structural elements of ancient wetland taro-growing systems;

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SB-1501

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:05:38 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ku Kahakalau, Ph.D.	Testifying for Ku-A-Kanaka LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My family and I who are Native Hawaiian educators and taro growers in Waipi‘o Valley on Hawai‘i Island strongly support SB1501 RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF TARO LANDS, which prohibits the Board of Land and Natural Resources from disturbing or acquiring for development certain wetland taro-growing lands. With over 2 million pounds of taro imported annually to Hawai‘i, protecting wetland taro-growing lands which have a much higher yield than dryland taro fields is absolutely essential and frankly way overdue. Please support SB1501.

SB-1501

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:40:29 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynette Cruz	Testifying for Malama Makua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Malama Makua totally supports this bill.

SB-1501

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:03:58 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bradford Lum	Testifying for Hawaiian Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our Agriculture lands are important because we rely heavily upon our food coming from the continent. It's important to keep our agricultural lands so we can feed Hawaii if a disaster occurs. Please say yes to this bill.

mahalo

kumu Brad Lum



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Honolulu, O'ahu

Ray Maki
Kauai

Aloha Chairs Gabbard & Inouye, Vice Chairs Richards & Elefante, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment & Water and Land Committees,

The Hawaii Farmers Union United (HFUU) is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports SB1501.**

We believe that the protection of taro lands is critical for the sustainability of the taro farming industry and the tradition of cultural heritage that taro farming provides. Taro farming is an integral part of Hawaiian culture and has been practiced from generation to generation. It provides a source of income and livelihood to multiple families in the state of Hawaii.

Throughout Hawaiian history, taro farmers have been constantly at risk of losing their right to the land due to large developments. SB 1501 is a critical step to protecting the taro lands and the livelihoods of taro farmers. This bill will ensure that the Board of Land and Natural Resources will be prohibited from disturbing or acquiring lands that are currently used for wetland taro farming. The long-term sustainability of this important industry requires the Board of Land and Natural Resources to protect the lands used for taro farming and SB 1501 is an important tool to ensure that this is accomplished. We urge the senate and the state of Hawaii to pass this legislation, as it is vital for the preservation of the taro farming industry and the Hawaiian cultural heritage attached to it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

SB-1501

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 4:27:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John R. Gordines	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please protect our fragile taro lands for the future generations!

Johnny Gordines

SB-1501

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 5:07:37 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support SB1501

SB-1501

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 7:59:26 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Juanita Kawamoto Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the purpose and need for all sustainable kalo land production in the State of Hawaii .

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-1501

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 8:40:56 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynda Asato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to preserve the land for kalo farmers to be able to provide us with a sustainable food. Please heed our call. We value our heritage and trust that you will make wise decisions on our behalf.

SB-1501

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 10:28:54 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sterling Bear	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this as it protects not only our food sustainability, but these places also promote healing, diet, values and community. As a cultural practitioner I use these spaces to conduct ho'oponopono with orphaned native Hawaiian children, and so these areas need protection because it is more than just an agricultural space.

SB-1501

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:21:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1501.

SB-1501

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 11:52:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
penny levin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oahu, more than any other island has the least amount of taro growing lands that have survived development and seperation between such lands and the waters that fed them. Very few have received any kind of protection. Sometimes in the push for more commercially developable sites and housing, affordable or not, we forget the need to protect those places that provide us with food, places to teach our children, to practice Hawaiian culture, and keep our communities well through the act of stepping into the lo'i. That kind of sustainance is a critical mirror to the quality of our shelter.

I strongly support SB1501.

Penny Levin