

Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
April 15, 2026

GM 636 – Nomination to the Board of Land and Natural Resources
Denise Iseri-Matsubara

April 14, 2026

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide a written response to the Chair's questions in connection with my nomination by Governor Green to serve on the Board of Land and Natural Resources (the Board). I appreciate the Senate's careful and deliberate confirmation process and respectfully submit the following responses for the Committee's consideration.

1. Why do you wish to serve as a member of the Board of Land and Natural Resources?

I wish to serve on the Board because I view stewardship of Hawai'i's land and natural resources as an important public trust responsibility. Throughout nearly two decades in public service, my work has been rooted at the intersection of land, community, and government accountability. I have seen firsthand how decisions involving land—whether related to water, housing, infrastructure, conservation, or economic use—have lasting consequences for communities and for the State as a whole.

While the BLNR is entrusted with protecting Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources, it is also responsible for ensuring those resources are managed prudently, transparently, and for the benefit of present and future generations. Serving on the Board represents an opportunity to apply my professional experience in public administration and fiduciary oversight—shaped by my work within government agencies tasked with stewarding public land and financial resources consistent with statute and public purpose—in service of that trust.

2. What is your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a BLNR member?

My understanding is that the Board serves as the State's primary fiduciary over approximately 1.3 million acres of public land and the natural resources associated with them, 3 miles of ocean, 750 miles of coastline, and the management of 55 state parks, historic sites, forests, and public hunting areas, natural area reserves, and marine sanctuaries. The Board's role is to exercise balanced, informed judgment in navigating competing demands—conservation, customary and traditional practices, public access, economic use, and legal obligation—within the framework of Hawai'i's Constitution, statutes, and the Public Trust Doctrine.

As a board member, my responsibility would be to make policy decisions that are grounded in law and informed by staff expertise and the administrative record. Board members are laypersons, and it is therefore critical that we rely on DLNR staff for technical and regulatory analysis, while we focus on direction-setting, accountability, and the careful exercise of discretion when faced with complex or difficult choices.

3. Why do you believe you are qualified to serve on the Board?

I believe I am qualified to serve because I bring extensive experience in government management and fiduciary oversight of public assets. I have served as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, where I was responsible for managing approximately \$1.5 billion in public assets and ensuring that State land and financing tools were used consistently with statutory mandates. I have also served as Executive Director of the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Housing and currently lead a nonprofit housing development organization focused on serving kūpuna and vulnerable populations.

Earlier in my career at the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, I worked on regional planning which included infrastructure improvements that helped secure approximately \$27 million in CIP funding for the East-West Road (now Kapolei Parkway), enabling hundreds of Hawaiian families to settle into homesteads. This experience shaped my understanding of how land stewardship is integral to infrastructure, access and opportunity. These collective experiences reinforced for me that effective public trust and public asset stewardship includes not only protection, but also planning, accountability, and long-term sustainability. Academically, my Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa emphasized ethics, public trust, and collaborative governance. Collectively, these experiences have prepared me to serve as an engaged, disciplined, and principled member of the Board.

4. If confirmed, what goals or priorities would you hope to accomplish?

If confirmed, my primary goal would be to contribute to a Board culture that is transparent, forward-looking, and grounded in responsible stewardship. In particular, I would prioritize:

- **Strengthening public trust** by supporting decisions that are legally sound, clearly articulated, respectful of public input, and in the best interest of the people of Hawaii.
- **Promoting long-term stewardship** that recognizes Hawai'i's economic sustainability as a necessary component of caring for trust lands—because stable funding is essential to support protection, enforcement, and public access.
- **Supporting administrative effectiveness**, particularly within the Land Division by encouraging continued efforts to modernize land management practices, improve lease and permit oversight, and ensure timely collection of revenues owed to the State.

- **Viewing recommendations from past audits**, including the 2019 Auditor’s review of the Special Land and Development Fund, **as an opportunity to strengthen systems**, improve transparency, and better align asset management practices with public trust responsibilities.

I believe that protecting natural and cultural resources, while ensuring the State responsibly manages its revenue-generating lands, are complementary goals that ultimately allow DLNR to fulfill its mission effectively and sustainably.

5. Are there any potential conflicts of interest or concerns regarding your ability to serve impartially?

I do not believe there is anything that would prevent me from serving impartially. I am aware of the ethical obligations and safeguards required of this position. My professional work is mission-driven and nonprofit-focused; however, if any matter were to involve my employer, I would fully disclose the issue and recuse myself in accordance with state ethics laws and best practices. I am honored by the Governor’s nomination and if confirmed, I commit to serving with humility, diligence, and a sense of fiduciary responsibility to the Trust and to the people of Hawaii.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

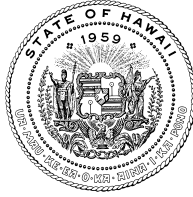
Respectfully,

Denise Iseri Matsubara



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



DEAN MINAKAMI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of

DEAN MINAKAMI

Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

April 15, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Room 224

In consideration of

GM636

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA, FOR TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029.

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** GM636, which nominates Ms. Denise Iseri-Matsubara to serve on the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR).

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara brings a rare and highly valuable combination of housing policy expertise, executive leadership, and deep familiarity with State land and development processes. Her service as Executive Director of HHFDC is particularly relevant to the work of the BLNR at a time when Hawaii must more effectively align land-use decisions with urgent housing needs.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara's experience would be especially valuable to the BLNR as the State seeks thoughtful ways to utilize public lands to support housing production while maintaining responsible stewardship of natural and cultural resources. Her understanding of financing tools, regulatory pathways, public-private partnerships, and development feasibility positions her to help the Board:

1. Identify State lands that may be appropriate for housing.
2. Evaluate proposals with a clear understanding of housing economics and timelines.
3. Coordinate more effectively with housing agencies and developers.

4. Balance housing needs with the Board's core conservation and resource protection mission.

Importantly, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has demonstrated throughout her career an ability to work across agencies, engage stakeholders, and navigate complex policy environments. These skills are essential for BLNR, where decisions often sit at the intersection of land management, community needs, and long-term State priorities.

Hawaii's housing shortage requires coordinated, strategic use of every appropriate tool, including the prudent use of State lands. Ms. Iseri-Matsubara's deep housing expertise, proven executive leadership, and collaborative approach make her exceptionally well-qualified to contribute meaningfully to the work of the Board.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support the nomination of Ms. Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY • COUNTY OF HAWAII

345 KEKŪANAŌ`A STREET, SUITE 20 • HILO, HAWAII 96720

TELEPHONE (808) 961-8050 • FAX (808) 961-8657

April 13, 2026

TESTIMONY OF KEITH K. OKAMOTO, MANAGER-CHIEF ENGINEER
DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY, COUNTY OF HAWAII

HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

DATE: Wednesday, April 15, 2026

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

**GM 636 – NOMINATION OF DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA TO THE BOARD OF LAND AND
NATURAL RESOURCES**

Honorable Chair Chris Lee, Vice-Chair Lorraine R. Inouye, and Committee Members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts,

I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of the nomination of Ms. Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Interactions with Ms. Iseri-Matsubara during her tenure as Executive Director of the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation indicate that she is an intelligent and pragmatic person able to make sound decisions based on her ability to gather and process relevant information.

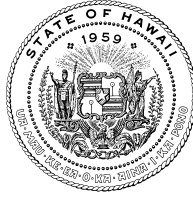
Her resume also shows her vast experiences in private, public and community service.

Based on the above, I strongly believe Ms. Iseri-Matsubara will bring a valuable perspective to this important body. I am confident that she will be a great asset to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, and in turn, the State of Hawaii and our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

...Water, Our Most Precious Resource...Ka Wai A Kāne...

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EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Testimony of
Josh Green, M.D.
Governor, State of Hawai'i

Before the
Senate Committee Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Wednesday, April 15, 2026
1:00 p.m..
State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

In consideration of
Governor's Message No. 636

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts:

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Governor's Message No. 636, the appointment of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources for a term to expire on June 30, 2029.

Denise Iseri-Matsubara is the executive director of Catholic Charities Housing Development Corporation, a nonprofit affiliate of Catholic Charities Hawaii. She previously led the Mayor's Office of Housing for the City and County of Honolulu and served as executive director of the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation, where she also sat on its board of directors.

Her career in housing and community development began in 2005 at the Department of Hawaiian Homelands. Denise holds both bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and is a Kamehameha Schools alumna. She has also served on the boards of the Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce and the Kamehameha Schools Alumni Association.

I am confident that Ms. Iseri-Matsubara's experience and record of service demonstrate her qualifications for this appointment, and I am pleased to offer my full support for her nomination.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Testimony of the Governor

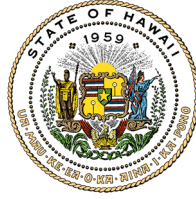
G.M. No. 636

April 15, 2026

Page 2

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

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Wednesday, April 15, 2026
1:00PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 636
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO
THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,
DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2029

Governor's Message 636 submits for consideration and confirmation, Denise Iseri-Matsubara, to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board). **The Department of Land and Natural Resources supports this nomination.**

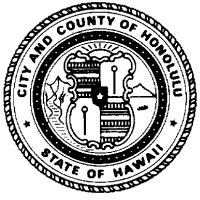
Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has worked in service to the people of Hawai'i in leadership roles at the state and county levels for more than two decades. She has shared her skills and expertise in housing and community development with agencies and offices including the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Hawai'i Housing Finance & Development Corporation, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, and the University of Hawai'i. Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has also served in senior advisor and special assistant roles for previous administrations in the Offices of the Governor and Lt. Governor.

She is currently the Executive Director of Catholic Charities Housing Development Corporation, a nonprofit affiliate of Catholic Charities Hawai'i, that focuses on developing and managing affordable housing for seniors and disadvantaged communities.

Previously, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara led the Office of Housing for the City and County of Honolulu, creating the administration's first housing plan, facilitating positive changes to achieve goals and deliver housing for the community.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara received her Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She is a capable leader who is committed to community and social justice and will be an asset to the Board.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of Denise Iseri-Matsubara.



HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU
530 S. KING ST. STE. 202, HONOLULU, HI 96813

ESTHER KIA'ĀINA
COUNCILMEMBER,
HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT III
TELEPHONE: (808) 768-5003
EMAIL: ekiaaina@honolulu.gov
<https://www.honolulu-citycouncil.org/district-3-kiaaina>

April 14, 2026

LATE

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice-Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts:

I strongly support the passage of **GM 636**, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Gubernatorial Nominee, Denise Iseri-Matsubara, for a term to expire June 30, 2029.

As the former First Deputy with the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), I understand, and have a deep respect for, the role and responsibilities tasked to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR).

I have known Ms. Iseri-Matsubara personally for over 45 years. She and I first worked together professionally in leadership positions at the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Most recently, I also worked closely with her when she served as the Executive Director for the Mayor's Office of Housing for the City and County of Honolulu.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara would be an excellent member to the Board of Land and Natural Resources. She has nearly two decades of experience serving the community across City, State, Native Hawaiian-serving organizations, and non-profit organizations. She is accustomed to dealing with complex issues dealing with the intersection of land and communities and stewarding affordable-housing opportunities for the people of Hawaii.

I believe Ms. Iseri-Matsubara's vast experience and track-record of serving Hawaii with compassion and integrity will bring the balanced, fiduciary perspective needed to uphold Hawaii's Public Land Trust while ensuring Hawaii's economic sustainability is maintained.

I urge your favorable consideration in support of GM 636.

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Councilmembers
K. Kauano'e Batangan
Tom Cook
Gabe Johnson
Tamara Paltin
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez
Shane M. Sinenci
Nohelani U'u-Hodgens



Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

April 15, 2026

LATE

TO: Honorable Chris Lee, Chair
Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts

FROM: Yuki Lei Sugimura
Council Vice-Chair 

SUBJECT: **Testimony in Support of GM 636 – Relating to Confirmation of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land & Natural Resources**

I respectfully submit testimony in support of the nomination of **Denise Iseri-Matsubara** to the Board of Land and Natural Resources. Ms. Iseri-Matsubara brings a wealth of experience in housing, community development, and public service that will be a valuable asset to the Board's important work stewarding Hawai'i's public lands and natural resources. She currently serves as the Executive Director of Catholic Charities Housing Development Corporation, where she focuses on developing and managing affordable housing for seniors and underserved communities. Her prior leadership roles, including serving as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation and leading the Mayor's Office of Housing for the City and County of Honolulu, demonstrate a strong track record of balancing complex policy, community needs, and responsible land use.

Beyond her professional qualifications, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has shown a deep commitment to Hawai'i's communities through her service and leadership. Her experience working across government, nonprofit, and community sectors positions her well to navigate the demands placed on the Board of Land and Natural Resources, which plays a critical role in protecting our public trust while supporting responsible and sustainable use. I am confident that she will bring thoughtful judgment, integrity, and a collaborative approach to the Board. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support and confirm her nomination.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



SanHi

GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW PARTNERSHIP

DATE: April 14, 2026

TO: Senator Chris Lee
Chair, Committee on Water, Land, Culture & The Arts

Senator Lorraine Inouye
Vice Chair, Committee on Water, Land, Culture & The Arts

FROM: Mihoko Ito / Chris Delaunay

RE: **GM 636 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Gubernatorial Nominee, DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.**

**Hearing Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room: 224**

Dear Chair Lee, Vice-Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee on Water, Land, Culture & The Arts:

I write in strong support of the nomination of Ms. Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR). Ms. Iseri-Matsubara brings extensive experience in the areas of land use, housing, and community development. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated an ability to navigate complex policy challenges while balancing community needs, economic realities, and long-term planning considerations.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara's leadership roles reflect a strong track record of public service and execution. As Executive Director of the Catholic Charities Housing Development Corporation, she is advancing affordable housing solutions for Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations. Previously, as Executive Director of the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Housing, she led the development of the City's first comprehensive housing plan and established a production goal of 18,000 units. Her time serving as Executive Director at the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) further highlights her qualifications, where she managed HHFDC assets and helped facilitate the delivery of housing while securing significant public investment to expand housing opportunities.

The BLNR is routinely called upon to make difficult decisions involving land use, resource management, and public access. These decisions require sound judgment, practical experience, and a long-term perspective. With nearly two decades of experience working across government, housing agencies, and community-based

initiatives, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara brings a broad, practical perspective that will be extremely valuable to the Board. Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has demonstrated these qualities throughout her career, and for these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support and confirm her appointment.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



SIERRA CLUB
OF HAWAII

LATE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

April 15, 2026

1:00 PM

Conference Room 224

Offering COMMENTS and CONCERNS on GM636: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Gubernatorial Nominee, DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Committee Members,

On behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i offers the following **COMMENTS and DEEP CONCERNS** regarding GM636, nominating Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR).

While Ms. Iseri-Matsubara is clearly committed to and experienced in housing development and financing, it is wholly unclear whether and how her experiences and expertise will help to fulfill the BLNR's wide-ranging responsibilities, whether concerning native and endangered species and watershed protections, to boating and ocean safety, to prudent land leasing practices, to fisheries management, to the identification and enforcement of Native Hawaiian rights.

To this latter point, the Sierra Club has deep concerns regarding the nominee's past advocacy opposing protections of constitutional Native Hawaiian rights in the development of a high-capacity drinking water well in Kona. Ironically, her decision as the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation director to challenge the Water Commission's proposed protective conditions for this well in 2022 resulted in a years-long delay in the development of a water source needed, in part, for affordable housing.

The Sierra Club is also deeply concerned as to the nominee's past written and verbal advocacy regarding "ceded" lands acquired through the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. This includes multiple instances where the nominee emphasized the state's purported legal ability to alienate "ceded" lands, in order to justify the issuance of long-term leases that would foreclose Native Hawaiian claims to these lands for a nearly a century at a time – and possibly indefinitely.

This history of advocacy raises questions as to whether the nominee will appreciate the moral and legal obligations of the BLNR to uphold the rights of Native Hawaiians in the lands they administer, the vast majority of which are "ceded" lands, when in conflict with other interests – including and particularly that of developers.

The vast acreages of lands and waters, the wide range of responsibilities under the BLNR's jurisdiction, and the ever more fragile state of our natural and cultural resources



SIERRA CLUB

OF HAWAI'I

as the foundation of our culture, economy, security, and ways of life, all require BLNR members to possess a wide range of experiences, subject matter expertise, and familiarity with the range of public rights and interests that they may impact. The Sierra Club is not confident that the nominee's particular set of experiences and expertise will be of much service to the BLNR in this regard, and may only frustrate its mission in light of their past advocacy and actions as a public servant.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.



LATE

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Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

April 15, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

TESTIMONY ON GM 636

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, gubernatorial nominee, DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA, for a term to expire 06-30-2029

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports the confirmation of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara brings extensive experience in public policy, housing, and government administration at both the state and county levels. Her leadership roles, including serving as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation and the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Housing, demonstrate a strong ability to manage complex programs, coordinate across agencies, and work with a wide range of stakeholders.

Her background in policy development, community engagement, and the implementation of large-scale initiatives will be valuable to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, which often balances multiple interests, including environmental protection, land use, housing, and economic activity.

HFB has appreciated Ms. Iseri-Matsubara's approachable and collaborative nature over the years and believes these qualities will serve her well in working with diverse stakeholders, including the agricultural community.

As the Board considers issues related to land use, conservation, and resource management, HFB looks forward to working with Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to ensure that the role of working agricultural lands and local food production is understood and considered as part of broader policy discussions.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau respectfully supports her confirmation and looks forward to continued engagement.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Ko`olau Foundation

P. O. Box 4749 / 46-005 Kawa St., #205
Kane`ohe, HI 96744

April 12, 2026

To: Sen. Chris Lee, Chair
Sen. Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair
And Members, Committee on Water, Land, Culture & the Arts

From: Mahealani Cypher, President
Ko`olau Foundation

Re: GM636, Confirmation of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land & Natural Resources

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Leong and Committee Members:

The Ko`olau Foundation supports GM636, which involves the Governor's appointment of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

We have known Ms. Iseri-Matsubara for many years and have been impressed with her dedication to public service and commitment to good government. She is community-oriented, always willing to listen to the concerns raised by the public regarding matters involving our `aina and surrounding oceans. She will be an asset to the BLNR.

We urge your support of her appointment and referral for the full Senate to consent to this appointment.

Mahalo nui for this opportunity to share our mana`o.

Testimony of EAH Housing | Hawai'i Region

**GM 636 - Relating to the Consideration and Confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources,
Gubernatorial Nominee, Denise Iseri-Matsubara, for a term to expire 06-30-2029**

April 15, 2026 at 1:00 PM
Written Testimony Only

Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Chair Chris Lee, Vice Chair Lorraine Inouye,
Members Stanley Chang, Rachele Lamosao, and Samantha DeCorte

STRONG SUPPORT

My name is Karen Seddon, and I am the Regional Vice President for Hawai'i at EAH Housing, a mission focused organization committed to developing, managing, and preserving affordable housing communities. I am pleased to submit this testimony in strong support of the continuation of Denise Iseri-Matsubara's service on the Board of Land and Natural Resources, which began on August 18, 2025.

From the standpoint of someone working daily in affordable housing development, Denise brings a combination of housing, land use, infrastructure, and public policy experience that is rare in Hawai'i. Her public service and leadership roles have included serving as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Executive Director of the City and County of Honolulu Office of Housing, and now Executive Director of Catholic Charities Housing Development Corporation. She also served as the Governor's lead on housing matters and worked on planning and infrastructure issues at the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. That breadth of experience gives her a practical understanding of how state land, public infrastructure, housing need, and long-term stewardship intersect in the real world.

Just as important, Denise has the judgment and temperament that public service requires. She understands the complexity of balancing public trust responsibilities with the need for thoughtful decision-making that allows communities to function and grow. Hawai'i benefits when boards such as BLNR include members who understand both the importance of protecting our natural and cultural resources and the practical consequences of land and infrastructure decisions for local residents.

In my view, Denise's continued service would benefit the State. She brings depth, credibility, and a strong record of leadership in areas directly affected by land use and public policy. I respectfully urge the Committee to support the continuation of her service on the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

April 13, 2026

Re: Letter of Support for Denise Iseri-Matsubara

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the confirmation of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.


Having known and worked with Denise, I have seen firsthand her deep understanding of public policy, land use, and community development. She also possesses a practical appreciation for the challenges associated with delivering on complex undertakings in Hawai'i. She understands how to navigate regulatory requirements and cost pressures while moving forward efficiently and remaining mindful of environmental and community needs.

What I appreciate most about Denise's approach is her ability to listen carefully and act decisively. She is a bridge-builder who seeks common ground, a trait that is essential for the complex deliberations often faced by the Board of Land and Natural Resources. She carries herself with an integrity that inspires confidence and encourages collaboration in those around her.

I am confident that Denise's experience in regional planning, housing, and development, combined with her commitment to public service, will make her an invaluable asset to the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Moss & Associates, LLC



Matthew Jun
Sr. Vice President

Grant Chang, *Principal*
Lowney Architecture
928 Nuʻuanu Ave., Suite 400
Honolulu, HI 96817

April 11, 2026

Re: GM 636: D. Matsubara Nomination to the Board of Land and Natural Resources

Aloha Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land,

My name is Grant Chang, and I am a Principal at Lowney Architecture, where I lead our Hawaiʻi office. I am writing in strong support of GM636, the nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

I have had the privilege of knowing Denise professionally through her role as Executive Director of Catholic Charities Housing Development Corporation, and through her broader leadership across Hawaiʻi's housing and public policy landscape. In every interaction, she has demonstrated a rare combination of thoughtfulness, integrity, and a deep commitment to serving our community.

Denise brings nearly two decades of experience working at the intersection of land use, housing, and public service. Her leadership roles—including Executive Director of the Hawaiʻi Housing Finance and Development Corporation and the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Housing—have given her a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in managing land resources in a way that balances the State's fiduciary responsibilities with the real needs of its people.

What distinguishes Denise is her ability to navigate these complexities with both rigor and empathy. She understands that land is not just an asset, but a foundation for community—supporting housing, economic opportunity, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship. Her work advancing affordable housing for kūpuna, individuals with special needs, and working families speaks directly to the core challenges Hawaiʻi faces today.

At a time when the Board of Land and Natural Resources is being asked to make consequential decisions—from water resource management to renewable energy and the stewardship of over a million acres of public land—Denise offers a balanced and pragmatic perspective. She is deeply grounded in the principles of the public trust, while also recognizing that sustaining our communities requires thoughtful consideration of housing and economic realities.

Just as important, Denise is a collaborative leader. She has consistently worked across government agencies, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations to deliver meaningful outcomes. In my experience, she listens

carefully, engages respectfully, and approaches challenges with a solutions-oriented mindset—qualities that will serve the Board and the people of Hawai‘i well.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support Denise Iseri-Matsubara’s confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources. She is exceptionally qualified and brings the leadership, judgment, and integrity needed at this critical moment.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Chang', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Grant Chang
Principal, Lowney Architecture

April 13, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land,

My name is Janice Li, Studio Director at Lowney Architecture's Hawai'i office, and I am writing in strong support of GM 636, the nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

I have come to know Denise through her leadership in Hawai'i's housing and development community, and I have consistently been impressed by her clarity of purpose, professionalism, and commitment to serving local communities.

Denise brings extensive experience in land use, housing, and public service, including leadership roles with the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation and the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Housing. She understands the complexities of managing land in Hawai'i and approaches these challenges with a balanced perspective that considers housing needs, environmental stewardship, and long-term community benefit.

In addition to her experience, Denise is a thoughtful and collaborative leader who engages constructively across agencies and sectors. She listens carefully, communicates clearly, and works toward practical, solutions-oriented outcomes, qualities that will be invaluable to the Board as it addresses increasingly complex issues.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support her confirmation. Denise Iseri-Matsubara is well qualified and will bring sound judgment and a strong sense of responsibility to this role.

Respectfully yours,



Janice Li, AIA
Studio Director



April 13, 2026

Dear Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye and members of the committee:

I am writing to express my strong **support** for the confirmation of **Denise Iseri-Matsubara**, as submitted under Governor's Message No. 636.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara brings more than two decades of distinguished public service in Hawai'i, with expertise in housing policy, finance, community development, and leadership. Her career reflects a combination of strategic vision, operational competence, and an unwavering commitment to serving Hawai'i's most vulnerable communities.

Throughout her tenure as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara provided leadership over a complex statewide housing finance agency, managing approximately \$1.5 billion in assets while significantly increasing housing production and securing historic levels of legislative funding. She is widely respected for her ability to work collaboratively with legislators, administration officials, developers, advocates, and community organizations to move housing solutions forward in a practical and results-oriented manner.

Her service has also included leadership roles with the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Housing, the State Office of Community Services, the Office of the Governor, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. Across these roles, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has demonstrated sound judgment, fiscal discipline, and a deep understanding of the policy and regulatory frameworks that shape housing and human services in Hawai'i.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara is known for her integrity, professionalism, and steady leadership style. She approaches complex challenges with humility, transparency, and a genuine willingness to listen. I respectfully urge the Legislature to support the confirmation of Denise Iseri-Matsubara under GM636.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karey Kapoi
Founder & Principal
KKL Collective

808-870-5171



info@kklcollective.com



285 W Ka'ahumanu Ave #103, Kahului HI 96732



www.kklcollective.com





CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**SUPPORT FOR GM 636: FOR THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
NOMINEE, DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA**

TO: Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: Wednesday, 4/15/26; 1:00pm; CR 224 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye and Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts,

I am writing to share my perspective on Denise Iseri-Matsubara and to express my appreciation for the leadership and expertise she brings to our community. She has dedicated her life's work to public service and has established herself as a leader of vision, integrity, collaboration and commitment to improving our community outcomes. Over the years, I have had the privilege of observing Denise's work in roles that sit at the intersection of government, community-based organizations, and the business community in her work with HHFDC and as Housing Director for the City and County of Honolulu. Her commitment to responsible management, collaboration, and balanced decision-making has been consistently evident.

As the new Executive Director for the Catholic Charities Housing Development Corporation, I see her bringing those same values to her approach in housing development, navigating difficult conversations around neighborhood concerns with empathy and steadiness, while thoughtfully balancing the needs of the individuals we serve with the realities and expectations of the surrounding communities.

With nearly two decades of experience in areas touching land use, housing, and community development—including time with DHHL, UH West O'ahu, and HHFDC, Denise has demonstrated a thoughtful and grounded approach to complex issues. She brings a strong fiduciary mindset, cultural awareness, and a deep understanding of the long-term implications of land management in Hawai'i.

As a graduate of Kamehameha Schools, Denise is deeply rooted in the values of responsibility and land management that respects and sustains mauka to makai. What stands out most is Denise's ability to listen to diverse perspectives, weigh competing priorities, and work toward solutions that are environmentally sound, culturally respectful, and supportive of Hawai'i's long-term sustainability. Her character, integrity, and dedication to serving our communities are qualities I have come to deeply respect.



It is important for Hawai'i to have leaders who honor the Public Trust while understanding the real challenges facing local families and communities. Denise embodies these values and consistently approaches their work with humility, balance, and a genuine desire to uplift our people.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my experiences with and appreciation for Denise's service and leadership. She would be an excellent candidate for the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Mahalo,



Tina Andrade
President & CEO



Leonard K.P. Leong
President

Testimony of _ Denise Iseri-Matsubara's
**GM 636 - Relating to the Consideration and Confirmation to the Board of Land and
Natural Resources, Gubernatorial Nominee, Denise Iseri-Matsubara**

April 15, 2026 at 1:00 PM

Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
Chair Chris Lee, Vice Chair Lorraine Inouye,

SUPPORT



My name is Leonard Leong, and I am the President of Royal Contracting Co. I am pleased to submit this testimony in strong support of the continuation of Denise Iseri-Matsubara's service on the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

From the standpoint of someone working daily in affordable housing development, Denise brings a combination of housing, land use, infrastructure, and public policy experience that is rare in Hawai'i. Her public service and leadership roles have included serving as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Executive Director of the City and County of Honolulu Office of Housing, and now Executive Director of Catholic Charities Housing Development Corporation. She also served as the Governor's lead on housing matters and worked on planning and infrastructure issues at the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. That breadth of experience gives her a practical understanding of how state land, public infrastructure, housing needs, and long-term stewardship intersect in the real world.

Just as important, Denise has the judgment and temperament that public service requires. She understands the complexity of balancing public trust responsibilities with the need for thoughtful decision-making that allows communities to function and grow. Hawai'i benefits when boards such as BLNR include members who understand both the importance of protecting our natural and cultural resources and the practical consequences of land and infrastructure decisions for local residents.

In my view, Denise's continued service would benefit the State. She brings depth, credibility, and a strong record of leadership in areas directly affected by land use and public policy. I respectfully urge the Committee to support the continuation of her service on the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,


Leonard K.P. Leong
President



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM636
RELATING TO THE NOMINATION OF DENISE MATSUBARA TO THE BOARD OF
LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

TO:

Chair Chris Lee
Vice Chair Lorraine Inouye
and Members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts (WLA)

HEARING DATE: April 15, 2026

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lahela Aiwohi, Principal Consultant, Ola Maui. I am writing in strong support of the nomination of Denise Matsubara (GM636) to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR).

Through my work across Maui and the State, I have seen firsthand the growing complexity of land use decisions and the urgent need for leadership that understands both the regulatory landscape and the real-life impacts on our communities. The BLNR is tasked with some of the most consequential decisions in Hawai‘i—from water resource management to renewable energy development and the stewardship of public lands that may help address our housing crisis.

Denise Matsubara brings nearly two decades of experience working at the intersection of land, housing, and community. Her work with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, the University of Hawai‘i West O‘ahu, and the Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation reflects a deep understanding of both policy and people. She understands that land decisions are not abstract—they directly impact whether local families can remain in Hawai‘i.

At a time when the State is navigating major decisions such as the East Maui water license and the use of public lands for housing, it is critical that the BLNR includes leaders who can balance the Public Trust with the realities facing our communities. Denise brings that balanced, thoughtful, and fiduciary perspective.

Importantly, she recognizes that economic sustainability is not separate from the Public Trust—it is a part of it. If we fail to create opportunities for our residents to live and thrive here, we risk losing the very communities we are trying to protect.

On behalf of Ola Maui, I strongly support Denise Matsubara's nomination and respectfully urge the Committee to confirm her to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Mahalo Nui,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'La'ela Aiwahi', is written over the printed name.

La'ela Aiwahi
President, Ola Maui

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/13/2026 8:55:56 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanoeuluwehianuhea Case	Testifying for Waiakea Crown land Heirs	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I oppose GM636 - nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the BLNR.

Due to the following:

>> served as the head of the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation, neglecting HHFDC lands, which became weed ridden and contributed to the Lahaina fires.

>> advocated for bills undermining BLNR authority and prioritizing development over the public trust.

>> pro development on ceded lands - advocated that HHFDC should be able to develop ceded lands at the expense of Native Hawaiians.

We are in a time in our Hawai'i in which we need to prioritize the needs of our People. The selection of these candidates should be open for discussion with the public before nominations are held and approved by the legislature.

Mahalo,

Kanoeuluwehianuhea Case

Waiākea Crown Land Heirs



**Howard's
Nurseries Inc.**

April 13, 2026

To: The Department of Land and Natural Resources

From: Howard Takishita

RE: Jay Carpio

Letter Of Recommendation

This serves as a positive endorsement of Jay Carpio for the position of Board Member.

I have known Jay Carpio for nearly 30 years since his early days as the Grounds Manager at the Hyatt Regency Maui and then have watched him expand his breath of experience in cultivation, restoration and preservation of our natural assets here in Hawaii.

He is a true son of our island and can think of no one better to sit on this Board and protect our home.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howard Takishita", written in a cursive style.

Howard Takishita

President

THE SENATE

KA ' AHA KENEKOA

THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

Honorable Chair Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair Lorraine Inouye, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Terri Napeahi a representative of the organization Waiākea Ahupua'a Crown Land Heirs (WACH). I respectfully urge you to recommend that the Senate does **NOT** confirm Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

As a Lineal Descendant of Monarchy and Crown Lands, this action to appoint Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources is concerning. Unfortunately, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has demonstrated the lack of consideration for the true purpose of the **Section 5(f) stolen lands**, since the 1893 illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. The Hawaii Supreme Court has acknowledged that the ceded lands were taken illegally, with on-going disputes over management. These 1.8 million acres-comprising former Crown and Government lands have been used and abused by the State of Hawai'i for housing infrastructure, commercial developments, and military installations. The Republic of Hawai'i seized these lands and "ceded" them to the U.S. Government without compensation to **HAWAIIANS (small "n" big "N")**.

The Admission Act Trust (1959): After the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, the Provisional Government and later the Republic of Hawaii seized these lands "ceded" or **stole**, approximately 1.4 million acres back to the State of Hawai'i to be held as a "**Public Land Trust.**" **The Admission Act** required that any revenue or development on these lands serve five specific purposes:

- Support for the public education
- **Betterment of conditions for Native Hawaiians**
- **Development of farm and homeownership.**
- Making Public improvements
- Provisions of lands for public use.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has demonstrated a clear focus on housing development, and repeatedly urged legislature to authorize the issuance of 99-year leases of illegally acquired "ceded" lands for housing development, without any accounting for the claims and rights of Hawaiians. Her justification for denying Hawaiian claims to their lands for

a century at a time was a decades-old supreme court opinion that did not prohibit the alienation of public lands, and the Admissions Act's identification of homeownership as a public land trust purpose. This reasoning dismisses Hawaiian claims and rights to the 1.4 million acres of land she will oversee. This is concerning to a very large population of Hawaiians that have for 133 years experienced the suppression and oppression of decision makers who continue to "take" and "abuse" the Hawaiian, and hope they remain silent in the sandbox with no voice. This is discriminatory and harmful!

Where is the accountability and constitutional duty to Hawaiians? The continued controversy of the "pro rate" share of revenue generated from ceded lands (stolen lands), is an indigenous concern, and it revolves around the State's mismanagement of the trust, lack of fair revenue sharing, and the continued military occupation of these lands. Some of these leases expire by 2029. The inventory of ceded lands has not been publicly shared, and even OHA claims they do not have a current inventory of these 5(f) lands. No transparency shows deceit! How can we trust decision makers, especially those who have already shown a **track record** of pro-development to generate revenue with no compensation to Hawaiians!

I believe that Ms. Iseri-Matsubara will not have the best interest of what the 5(f) lands were set aside for, especially her fiduciary responsibility to Hawaiians.

Please recommend to the Senate a rejection to the nomination of Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Sincerely,

Terri Napeahi
Founder of Waiākea Ahupua'a Crown Land Heirs\
(WACH)
1787 Auwae Rd.
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
tnapeahi@yahoo.com

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 12:38:00 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gladys Quinto Marrone	Testifying for Nareit Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice-Chair Inouye, and Committee members,

Please accept our testimony in support of GM636, for consideration and confirmation of Denise Iseri-Matubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has over 20 years of experience, including her tenure with DHHL, UHWO, and HHFDC, where she gained a balanced fiduciary perspective required to uphold the Public Trust and ensure Hawaii's economic sustainability is considered. She has the knowledge necessary to analyze and make significant decisions regarding land and its management.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony in support.

April 13, 2026

Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: GM 636 - Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Ms. Denise Iseri-Matsubara

Dear Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

I am in STRONG SUPPORT of the appointment of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

In the years that I have known Denise, I have found her to be a diligent, thoughtful, and highly capable leader with deep experience in land use, housing, and public policy. Through her leadership roles with Catholic Charities Housing Development Corporation, the Mayor's Office of Housing, and the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, she has demonstrated a strong understanding of complex regulatory environments and a commitment to serving our community. She brings a strong understanding of the intersection between development, community needs, and responsible stewardship of our resources.

Denise brings sound judgment, integrity, and a collaborative approach to her work. She is a strong consensus builder and will be an asset to the Board.

Accordingly, I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Denise Iseri-Matsubara's appointment.

Mahalo,



Lance Wilhelm

Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Wednesday, April 15, 2026; 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224

Re: GM 636 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, Gubernatorial Nominee, DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA, for a term to expire 06-30-2029

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of the nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR).

I have had the pleasure of working with Denise over the years. She has high integrity and is an excellent communicator and collaborator. Denise is currently the Executive Director of the Catholic Charities Housing Development Corporation and is an advocate for affordable housing.

Denise has the background and relevant experience to serve on the BLNR, having held positions at the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, UH West Oahu, Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation and the City & County of Honolulu's Office of Housing. She has a keen understanding of the BLNR's mission and challenges, and will bring a balanced, fiduciary perspective to the board. Denise is committed to ensuring our state's land management is environmentally sound, culturally rooted and economically viable for generations to come.

I'm confident the State will be well-served by her participation on the BLNR and ask for your favorable action on her confirmation. Mahalo.

Lori Lum

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/10/2026 5:48:48 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Ono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Along Senators, I support the nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources. Her expertise with non-profits and her past work experience is needed on the Board.

Mahalao, for allowing me the opportunity to provide input.

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/11/2026 10:06:57 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doreen Canto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/13/2026 3:28:49 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Kunz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Senate Committee on Water, land, Culture and the Arts

GM 636

Relating to the Consideration and Confirmation to the Board of Land and Natural Resources

Gubernatorial nominee: Denise Iseri-Matsubara

April 15, 2026

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye and Members of the Committee:

I am honored to write this letter of **strong support** for Denise Iseri-Matsubara’s nomination to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

I have had the privilege of working with Denise over the years in multiple professional capacities, including her work as the Sr. Special Assistant for the Office of the Governor, as a fellow board member for the Hawai’i Public Housing Authority, as the Executive Director of the Hawai’i Housing Finance and Development Corporation and as the Executive Director of the Office of Housing, City & County of Honolulu. Those experiences have given me a direct view of her professionalism, judgement and effectiveness in public service.

Denise’s exemplary professional background and unwavering commitment to public service make her uniquely qualified for this important role. With a wealth of executive experience in both state and nonprofit sectors, she has consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of community needs, strategic leadership, and a passion for advancing social justice.

Throughout her distinguished career, Denise has held several executive director positions, including leading Catholic Charities Housing Development Corp, the Office of Housing for the City & County of Honolulu, and the Hawai’i Housing Finance & Development Corporation. In each capacity, she has overseen complex operations, managed significant budgets, and advocated for affordable housing and community development. Her ability to collaborate with diverse

stakeholders, including government officials, nonprofits, and community members, has resulted in successful initiatives that have improved the lives of countless residents.

Her commitment to the well-being of Hawai'i's communities, combined with her proven track record in managing complex programs and advocating for equitable resource allocation, aligns perfectly with the mission of the Board of Land and Natural Resources. Denise's vision, integrity, and collaborative spirit will be invaluable assets as the Board addresses critical issues related to land stewardship, environmental protection, and sustainable development.

I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm Denise Iseri-Matsubara's appointment with the Board of Land and Natural Resources. I am confident that her expertise, dedication, and leadership will enable her to make a positive and lasting impact on the Board and the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Kunz

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/13/2026 6:07:05 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dee Green	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose the nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources and urge that it be denied.

Her record as Executive Director of the Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation raises serious concerns about her approach to Hawai‘i’s public trust lands and long-term stewardship obligations. She supported policies advancing very long-term leases on “ceded” and public lands that many in the community believe risk effectively locking up trust resources for generations and undermining the intent of Hawai‘i’s public land trust framework. Her public reasoning has relied on narrow interpretations of court decisions, despite ongoing legal and community disagreement about the State’s fiduciary duties and constitutional obligations under Article XI.

Her tenure also coincided with increased scrutiny of state-managed fallow lands in West Maui, including areas mauka of Lahaina that were later discussed in the broader context of the 2023 wildfire disaster. While multiple causes have been identified through official reviews, the event highlighted long-standing concerns about vegetation management, land stewardship, and agency accountability on state-controlled lands.

Given the Land Board’s responsibility for overseeing more than a million acres of public trust and “ceded” lands, this record does not reflect the level of care, foresight, and protection required for the position. For these reasons, her nomination should be denied.

Mahalo,

Dee Green

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/13/2026 6:44:32 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members:

I submit this testimony in **strong opposition** to the confirmation of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, and I respectfully urge that her nomination be **denied**.

The BLNR is not an advisory board. It is one of the most powerful land decision-making bodies in the State, overseeing over a million acres of public trust lands, including lands held for the benefit of Native Hawaiians and the general public. This requires not only technical experience, but a deep understanding of fiduciary duty, constitutional trust obligations, and the long-term consequences of land alienation decisions.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara’s record as former Executive Director of the Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation raises serious concerns about whether she is suited for that responsibility.

During her tenure, she supported legislative proposals advancing extremely long-term leases on public and “ceded” lands, in some cases approaching multi-generational timeframes. Many community members, including legal scholars and Native Hawaiian advocates, have warned that such lease structures risk functioning as de facto alienation of trust lands—locking up public resources for 99 years or more and effectively limiting meaningful future options for beneficiaries of the public land trust.

These concerns are not abstract. Hawai‘i’s constitutional framework under Article XI establishes a public trust duty that requires the State to protect and conserve trust resources for present and future generations. Any approach that prioritizes long-term commercial control over flexibility and restoration of land use raises legitimate questions about whether that duty is being fully honored.

Her public justification for these policies has relied heavily on selective interpretations of Hawai‘i Supreme Court precedent regarding state authority over “ceded” lands. However, there remains ongoing legal and political disagreement over how those rulings intersect with the State’s fiduciary obligations and the unresolved nature of Native Hawaiian claims to these lands. Many believe her positions reflect a narrow development-first framework rather than a balanced trust-based stewardship approach.

There are also broader concerns about her leadership during a period when state-managed fallow lands in West Maui came under intense public scrutiny following the devastating 2023 wildfire. While multiple official reviews—including the Hawai‘i Attorney General’s report and independent investigations—identified a combination of factors such as invasive grasses, land management practices, and infrastructure failures, the event exposed long-standing issues with how state agencies oversee and maintain large tracts of unmanaged land. HHFDC-controlled parcels were among those discussed in the broader context of land conditions in West Maui, raising questions about whether sufficient proactive stewardship and risk mitigation measures were in place.

Taken together, her record raises several serious concerns that the Senate should not overlook:

- Support for long-term leasing policies that may effectively diminish public trust control over strategic lands
- A development-centered interpretation of legal precedent that appears to narrow fiduciary responsibilities under Hawai‘i’s Constitution
- Lack of demonstrated leadership in proactive land stewardship and risk mitigation on state-controlled properties
- Public scrutiny surrounding agency-managed lands in areas impacted by catastrophic wildfire conditions
- Insufficient evidence of a stewardship approach grounded in long-term conservation and Native Hawaiian trust obligations

The BLNR requires members who will defend public trust obligations even when they conflict with development pressures. Based on her record, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara does not meet that standard.

For these reasons, her nomination should be **denied**.

Mahalo,

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 9:00:24 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bianca Isaki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you to recommend that the Senate does NOT confirm Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

As a Land Board member, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara will have the kuleana of upholding the public trust, the public land trust, and the public interest in over one million acres of public lands, much of which was acquired through the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and to which Native Hawaiians maintain unrelinquished claims. This includes ensuring that Hawaiian rights and interests, including constitutionally protected practices, are recognized while also ensuring that these public trust lands are properly maintained and cared for for the benefit of present and future generations.

Unfortunately, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has not demonstrated an adequate understanding of the many critical interests of the lands she will be tasked with overseeing, or of the need to steward and administer lands for anything other than housing development.

As the Hawai'i Housing and Finance Development Corporation ("HHFDC") director from 2020-2023, she repeatedly urged the legislature to authorize the issuance of 99-year leases of illegally acquired "ceded" lands for housing development, without any accounting for the claims and rights of Native Hawaiians. Her justification for denying Native Hawaiians' claims to their lands for a century at a time was a decades-old supreme court opinion that did not prohibit the alienation of public lands, and the Admission Act's identification of homeownership as a public land trust purpose. As a Land Board member, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara may continue to use such faulty and highly offensive reasoning to dismiss Native Hawaiians' claims and rights to the million-plus acres of land she will be overseeing, especially if it would facilitate, in her mind, housing development.

During her time at HHFDC, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara also failed to ensure the proper maintenance of substantial acreages of fallow, weed-ridden HHFDC lands mauka of Lahaina, despite years of warnings that this would create a fire risk. Just a few months after she departed HHFDC, Lahaina burned - and a subsequent Attorney General investigation noted how the fire may have spread from HHFDC's lands to the northern sections of Lahaina in the later evening. As a Land Board member, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara simply cannot be trusted to provide for the careful oversight and management of the million-plus acres of public lands that will be entrusted to her, particularly when her land management oversight may have played a role in the tragedy that took over a hundred lives and resulted in billions of dollars of liability.

Please recommend that the Senate **REJECT** the nomination of Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

April 13, 2026

Senator Chris Lee
Chair, Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

RE: GM 636 – Nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources

Dear Senator Lee,

I write with great enthusiasm in strong support of the nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources. I have had the privilege of working closely with Denise, and I can say without reservation that she is exceptionally qualified for this important role.

During my tenure as Lieutenant Governor of Hawai'i, Denise served on my staff and was the driving force behind the REACH program, which she built entirely from the ground up. This was no small undertaking. It required vision, persistence, and the ability to engage meaningfully with diverse communities across our state. Denise brought all of these qualities — and more — to that work every single day.

What distinguished Denise was not only her policy expertise and initiative, but her genuine commitment to the people she served. She is a natural leader who listens carefully, builds trust across communities, and translates complex policy challenges into real-world solutions. These are precisely the skills needed on the Board of Land and Natural Resources, where decisions have lasting consequences for our environment, our culture, and our communities.

I am confident that Denise will bring the same dedication, integrity, and thoughtfulness to this Board that she has demonstrated throughout her career. She has my highest recommendation.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Tsutsui".

Shan Tsutsui
Former Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 1:26:10 PM
Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you to recommend that the Senate does NOT confirm Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

As a Land Board member, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara will have the kuleana of upholding the public trust, the public land trust, and the public interest in over one million acres of public lands, much of which was acquired through the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and to which Native Hawaiians maintain unrelinquished claims. This includes ensuring that Hawaiian rights and interests, including constitutionally protected practices, are recognized while also ensuring that these public trust lands are properly maintained and cared for for the benefit of present and future generations.

Unfortunately, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has not demonstrated an adequate understanding of the many critical interests of the lands she will be tasked with overseeing, or of the need to steward and administer lands for anything other than housing development.

As the Hawai'i Housing and Finance Development Corporation ("HHFDC") director from 2020-2023, she repeatedly urged the legislature to authorize the issuance of 99-year leases of illegally acquired "ceded" lands for housing development, without any accounting for the claims and rights of Native Hawaiians. Her justification for denying Native Hawaiians' claims to their lands for a century at a time was a decades-old supreme court opinion that did not prohibit the alienation of public lands, and the Admission Act's identification of homeownership as a public land trust purpose. As a Land Board member, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara may continue to use such faulty and highly offensive reasoning to dismiss Native Hawaiians' claims and rights to the million-plus acres of land she will be overseeing, especially if it would facilitate, in her mind, housing development.

During her time at HHFDC, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara also failed to ensure the proper maintenance of substantial acreages of fallow, weed-ridden HHFDC lands mauka of Lahaina, despite years of warnings that this would create a fire risk. Just a few months after she departed HHFDC, Lahaina burned - and a subsequent Attorney General investigation noted how the fire may have spread from HHFDC's lands to the northern sections of Lahaina in the later evening. As a Land Board member, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara simply cannot be trusted to provide for the careful oversight and management of the million-plus acres of public lands that will be entrusted to her, particularly

when her land management oversight may have played a role in the tragedy that took over a hundred lives and resulted in billions of dollars of liability.

Please recommend that the Senate REJECT the nomination of Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Mahalo
Christy

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 1:45:51 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Poppler	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Michelle Jericho Poppler, a resident of ‘Ewa Beach, O‘ahu, and a community advocate committed to the protection of Hawai‘i’s people and ‘āina.

I am writing in **strong opposition** to the confirmation of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

This position carries immense responsibility, overseeing approximately 1.3 million acres of public lands, including ceded lands, as well as all submerged lands extending three miles from our shores. These lands are not only ecological resources—they are sacred, cultural, and foundational to the people of Hawai‘i, particularly Native Hawaiians.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara previously served as Executive Director of the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation for nearly four years, ending her tenure in March 2023. During that time, there were ongoing concerns regarding the management and maintenance of state lands under her oversight.

Later in 2023, the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires resulted in the tragic loss of over 100 lives and widespread destruction in Lahaina. Reports and community testimony have raised serious concerns about the condition and management of lands mauka of Lahaina, including those under HHFDC jurisdiction, where overgrown vegetation and lack of proper stewardship may have contributed to heightened fire risk.

While multiple factors contributed to this disaster, the scale of loss demands accountability and a demonstrated commitment to proactive land stewardship, risk mitigation, and community safety.

The role of the Board of Land and Natural Resources requires leadership that reflects the highest standards of kuleana, transparency, and care for both people and ‘āina. At this critical moment in Hawai‘i’s history—amid climate change, increased wildfire risk, and ongoing struggles over land use and Native Hawaiian rights—we must ensure that those entrusted with these responsibilities have a clear record of strong, preventative land management and community-centered decision-making.

Based on the concerns outlined above, I do not believe Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has demonstrated the level of stewardship necessary to oversee Hawai‘i’s public and ceded lands at this scale.

I respectfully urge the Board to **deny this confirmation** and instead prioritize candidates with a proven track record of responsible land management, cultural respect, and public accountability.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,
Michelle Jericho Poppler
‘Ewa Beach, O‘ahu

Riley W. Smith, P.E.

Hawaii Island Member - BLNR

LATE

April 14, 2026

Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Via email: senlee@capitol.hawaii.gov

**Re: Strong Support of Denise Iseri-Matsubara – GM636
Board of Land and Natural Resources**

I have known Ms. Iseri-Matsubara for about twenty years. Our paths crossed, when she was working at the State Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, within their housing section. We have been reacquainted, since she became a fellow Land Board Member in August 2025. During our time together on BLNR, she has impressed me as someone who is very compassionate and knowledgeable of land use, housing and the plight of those less fortunate in our community.

She shows up for our meetings very well prepared. She has many contacts in our community through her past government and community work. She is very at ease in our discussions, pays close attention to those members of the public that are testifying and is very respectful, even to those who may have a different point of view than her own. She has been and continues to be an asset to our Board.

For these reasons I wholeheartedly support Denise Iseri-Matsubara to be approved by this Committee!

Mahalo for your consideration. Very truly yours,



Riley W. Smith, P.E.

Cc: Senator Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Member
Senator Rachele Lamosao, Member
Senator, Samantha DeCorte, Member

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 4:07:19 PM
Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madison Owens	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you to recommend that the Senate does NOT confirm Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

As a Land Board member, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara will have the kuleana of upholding the public trust, the public land trust, and the public interest in over one million acres of public lands, much of which was acquired through the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and to which Native Hawaiians maintain unrelinquished claims. This includes ensuring that Hawaiian rights and interests, including constitutionally protected practices, are recognized while also ensuring that these public trust lands are properly maintained and cared for for the benefit of present and future generations.

Unfortunately, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has not demonstrated an adequate understanding of the many critical interests of the lands she will be tasked with overseeing, or of the need to steward and administer lands for anything other than housing development.

As the Hawai'i Housing and Finance Development Corporation ("HHFDC") director from 2020-2023, she repeatedly urged the legislature to authorize the issuance of 99-year leases of illegally acquired "ceded" lands for housing development, without any accounting for the claims and rights of Native Hawaiians. Her justification for denying Native Hawaiians' claims to their lands for a century at a time was a decades-old supreme court opinion that did not prohibit the alienation of public lands, and the Admission Act's identification of homeownership as a public land trust purpose. As a Land Board member, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara may continue to use such faulty and highly offensive reasoning to dismiss Native Hawaiians' claims and rights to the million-plus acres of land she will be overseeing, especially if it would facilitate, in her mind, housing development.

During her time at HHFDC, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara also failed to ensure the proper maintenance of substantial acreages of fallow, weed-ridden HHFDC lands mauka of Lahaina, despite years of warnings that this would create a fire risk. Just a few months after she departed HHFDC, Lahaina burned - and a subsequent Attorney General investigation noted how the fire may have spread from HHFDC's lands to the northern sections of Lahaina in the later evening. As a Land Board member, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara simply cannot be trusted to provide for the careful oversight and management of the million-plus acres of public lands that will be entrusted to her, particularly when her land management oversight may have played a role in the tragedy that took over a hundred lives and resulted in billions of dollars of liability.

Please recommend that the Senate REJECT the nomination of Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Mahalo.

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 5:04:24 PM
Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Piikea Tomczyk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in SUPPORT of Denise Iseri-Matsubara for BLNR.

She currently sits on the BLNR and has been asking good questions and making thoughtful and insightful comments/suggestions on staff reports.

Ms. Matsubara's background of service affords her to bring her a wide knowledge of government and private operations which is of benefit to the Board , especially for it's fiscal responsibility to the State.

I have known Ms Matsubara since highschool and have interacted with her off and on since, in a variety of situations, and find her to be an asset to any situation she is put in.

I support and encourage the confirmation of Ms Matsubara.

Mahalo, Piikea Tomczyk

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 5:30:34 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Chon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Angela and I'd like to **STRONGLY OPPOSE** this bill for Denise Iseri-Matsubara shouldn't serve on the Board of Land and Natural Resources. She has no conservation or cultural expertise, which neglects the very purpose of what BLNR is for.

Mahalo,

Angela

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 7:08:55 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sierra Dew	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I oppose the nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the **Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR)**. I am concerned that Denise does not represent the best interest of the people of Hawai‘i.

Denise formerly served as the director of the Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) until March of 2023. There, she was a strident advocate for bills that would facilitate the leasing of "ceded" a.k.a. stolen Hawaiian lands for a century at a time, foreclosing unresolved Hawaiian claims to these "ceded" lands for generations. Questions have also been raised regarding the extent to which HHFDC’s lands mauka of Lahaina, left fallow under Ms. Iseri-Matsubara’s tenure, contributed to the 2023 wildfire tragedy, as illustrated in the Attorney General's investigation and in aerial post-fire photographs of the region. These questions and concerns may be heightened with the vast acreages of public trust and "ceded" lands under the management of the BLNR.

Thank you,

Sierra

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 8:27:00 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I beg you to please do not nominate Denise Iseri-Matsubara to BLNR. She seeks only to profit and further destroy our precious lands. She is supported by the billionaires without regard for the native peoples and the sacredness of our land and resources. We need leaders whose goals are to protect our resources, which allows for our people to thrive when the land is cared for. Remove the military, stop desecration of our sacred sites, stop giving in to the billionaires. Lets all work together to keep Hawaii, Hawaiian in all it's natural beauty and rich culture

Julia Estigoy-Kaho'onei

Moku o Keawe

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 8:38:43 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice-Chair Inouye and members of the committee,

My name is Lauren, and I am writing in firm opposition to this nomination. I do not believe that someone with extensive development experience brings the right type of perspective to serving on the board on behalf of the public interest.

This concern is heightened by the specific record of the nominee, who currently serves as the Executive Director of the Catholic Charities Housing Development Corp., and until March 2023, she was the director of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC). In that role, she was known for her outspoken support of effectively selling off "ceded" and public lands for housing—a position that directly undermines the public trust responsibility we owe to current and future generations.

For decades, an imbalance of developer interests on the board has led to decisions with detrimental environmental impacts—consequences that will be felt by generations to come. In the face of accelerating climate destabilization, we need a board that exercises true due diligence, stewarding our resources responsibly to protect its integrity for both present and future generations.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Me ke aloha 'āina,

Lauren Ballesteros-Watanabe

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 8:40:35 PM
Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Marquez	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Ms Iseri-Matsubara should not be elected to such a powerful seat with the BLNR. Some of her previous work is not in alignment with Hawai'i and Hawaiian values. Please oppose this nomination.

Mahalo,

Malia Marquez

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 9:00:52 PM
Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Kau'i Young	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jennifer Kau'i Young and I vehemently oppose the appointment of Denise Iseri-Matsubara.

The executive director of the Catholic Charities Housing Development Corp., Ms. Iseri-Matsubara formerly served as the director of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) until March of 2023. There, she was known for her outspoken support of effectively selling off "ceded" and public lands for housing. Questions have also been raised regarding the extent to which HHFDC's lands mauka of Lahaina, left fallow under Ms. Iseri-Matsubara's tenure, contributed to the 2023 wildfire tragedy.

This track record is a glaring red flag against Iseri-Matsubara's appointment to the BLNR. How can someone like this be entrusted with managing "ceded" and public lands when she's notorious for contributing to privatization, as well as the deadly and devastating Lāhainā wildfire tragedy? Her wake of destruction speaks for itself. I implore you to reject her nomination to the BLNR.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,

Jennifer Kau'i Young

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 9:07:37 PM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OPPOSE!

Due respect, but nominee has ignored interests of Native Hawaiians in supporting approval of long term leases on ceded lands and favored harmful development over proper land stewardship.

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/14/2026 11:35:20 PM
Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Choy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you to recommend that the Senate does **NOT confirm** Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has not demonstrated an adequate understanding of the many critical interests of the lands she will be tasked with overseeing, or of the need to steward and administer lands for anything other than housing development.

Iseri-Matsubara's past actions and decisions are enough proof that she lacks expertise, respect, knowledge and wisdom to hold a seat on the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Please recommend that the Senate **REJECT** the nomination of Ms. Iseri-Matsubara to the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Thank you.

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 7:41:33 AM
Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators -

I am writing in **STRONG** opposition to the nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to the BLNR Board.

Ms Iseri-Matsubara's conflicts of interest in her prior work make her a bad candidate for this position. She supported the selling off of stolen lands for housing, and there are also questions about leaving land fallow that contribute to the removal of top soil. This may have contributed to the wildfire tragedy in 2023 on Maui.

In this position, Ms Iseri-Matsubara would be in charge of the land that she has not shown to properly take care of. As a housing developer, this is in opposition to caring for the land.

Please vote against Ms Iseri-Matsubara for a first official term on BLNR. The BLNR has a responsibility to the people to take care of the land in public trust, and this nomination goes against that responsibility.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 8:20:21 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo, and I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to the nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to serve on the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR).

The BLNR carries a profound kuleana to manage Hawai‘i’s public trust resources, including lands that are deeply tied to Native Hawaiian rights, history, and identity. This responsibility demands leadership that demonstrates a strong commitment to protecting these lands in a manner that is transparent, equitable, and grounded in the public trust doctrine.

Ms. Iseri-Matsubara’s record raises significant concerns in this regard.

During her tenure as Director of the Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC), she advocated for policies that would allow for the long-term leasing of so-called “ceded” lands for up to a century. These lands remain the subject of longstanding and unresolved Native Hawaiian claims. Advancing policies that could effectively encumber these lands for generations risks foreclosing future resolution and undermines broader efforts toward justice and reconciliation.

Additionally, serious concerns have been raised regarding land management practices during her leadership at HHFDC, particularly relating to lands mauka of Lahaina that were left unmanaged prior to the devastating 2023 wildfires. While responsibility for such a tragedy is complex and multifaceted, the questions surrounding land stewardship and risk mitigation underscore the importance of proactive, responsible management—especially for lands held in public trust.

Given that the BLNR oversees vast acreages of public and “ceded” lands, these concerns are not theoretical—they go directly to the core responsibilities of the Board. Members must exercise the highest level of care, foresight, and accountability in managing these resources.

At this time, I do not have confidence that Ms. Iseri-Matsubara’s record reflects the level of stewardship required for this role.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to reject this nomination.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 7:42:52 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassandra Chee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Committee Members,

I am writing to ask that you **REJECT GM636** which considers Denise Iseri-Matsubara to join the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

As the former director of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, Ms. Iseri-Matsubara has advocated in the past for bills that "cede" or steal Hawaiian lands for development for a century at a time. Additionally, the lands mauka of Lāhaina under HHFDC were left fallow while she was director, which likely contributed to the massive wildfires that devastated our community.

I want members of the BLNR to uphold their commitment to protect our 'āina and wai. **We need a board member who loves and prioritizes Hawai'i: 'āina, wai, and kānaka over profits and development in every decision.** I would not feel confident that this would be the case with Ms. Iseri-Matsubara.

Mahalo,

Cassie Chee
'Aiea, 96701

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 8:42:57 AM

Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya K.D. Alana	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly **OPPOSE DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA's** confirmation by Joshua Green! We the people OF Hawaii demand this fraudulent state to dissolve. There is NO TREATY OF ANNEXATION, meaning NO JURISDICTION. Public Law 103-150 still stands on the recognition of the ILLEGAL OVERTHROW, and the governments transition back to the people, which hasn't happened!! THIS ENTIRE GOVERNMENT AND PROCESSES ARE UNLAWFUL!!! AND YOU ALL KNOW IT!!! YOU ALL ARE JUST CHOOSING TO IGNORE INTERNATIONAL LAW FOR YOUR OWN PERSONAL GAIN AND TO FILL YOUR POCKETS!!! WE THE PEOPLE OF HAWAII ARE NOT DUMB, WE SE THROUGH ALL OF YOU!!!

LATE

GM-636

Submitted on: 4/15/2026 9:18:04 AM
Testimony for WLA on 4/15/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Calvin Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear WLA Committee Members,

I respectfully urge you to support the nomination of Denise Iseri-Matsubara to become a member of the Board of Land and Natural Resources. I have served alongside Denise for the last 8 months and I believe she is committed to doing what is best for our state. Denise comes to each meeting well prepared. I strongly support her.

Aloha Calvin Young