



LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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LATE

Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS
Director

before the
**HOUSE COMMITTEES ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY
AND LABOR**

Wednesday, February 11, 2026
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

in consideration of
HB 2473
RELATING TO THE RECOGNITION OF A HAWAIIAN SENSE OF PLACE.

Chairs Ilagan and Sayama, Vice Chairs Hussey and Lee, and Members of the
Committees.

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) would like to offer the following **comments with a concern** on HB 2473, which defines a “Hawaiian sense of place” in HRS Chapter 226 and establishes supporting implementation mechanisms to perpetuate these values.

Hawai‘i’s sense of place is integral to community well-being and cultural identity. This measure seeks to formally recognize and codify these principles across and throughout the work of state agencies.

While OPSD supports the intent of this measure, **OPSD is concerned** that the Hawai‘i State Planning Act is currently undergoing a comprehensive *Phase II Update* (2025-2027) pursuant to Act 36, SLH 2024. Through this process, the State Planning Act Task Force is conducting a holistic review of the Plan, including its framework, objectives, policies, definitions, and coordination and implementation mechanisms. This ongoing work provides an opportunity for concepts such as those presented in HB 2473—supported by additional research and stakeholder engagement—to be considered in a coordinated manner and integrated into a broader set of recommended updates to the State Planning Act, which will be submitted in a final report to the Legislature ahead of the 2027 Legislative Session.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



HAWAIIAN
COUNCIL

Hawai'i State House of Representatives
Committees on Economic Development & Technology and Labor
HB2473 – Relating to the recognition of a Hawaiian Sense of Place

RE: Strong Support for HB2473

February 11, 2026

Hawaiian Council expresses its **strong support for HB2473**, establishing the Hawaiian Sense of Place Act. Every place in Hawai'i is a deep well of history and significance that should be acknowledged and represented accurately. By formally defining the parameters of a "Hawaiian Sense of Place" and developing programs grounded in its principles, HB2473 works toward ensuring the Hawai'i of today stays connected to its roots.

How do we keep Hawai'i, Hawai'i? Defining and recognizing a Hawaiian sense of place protects the cultural, spiritual, and community relationships Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i residents maintain with 'āina, helping ensure development does not erode these connections. In promoting our relationships to the land and centering 'ōiwi-guided design choices, we can create a diverse and tangible experience for everyone. Although the concept is widely referenced, the lack of a clear definition has led to inconsistent application across state agencies; HB2473 establishes shared standards and accountability in planning and construction decisions.

This measure prioritizes education and understanding for residents, visitors, and public employees through meaningful programs and principles. Such parameters ensure that the public does not only see a Hawaiian sense of place but understands it as well. The recognition of Hawai'i's culture is a step toward achieving broader goals of respect, preservation, and authentic representation. By requiring meaningful engagement with Native Hawaiian practitioners, cultural experts, and affected communities, the bill supports more culturally grounded, sustainable, and community-informed development outcomes.

I ka wā ma mua, i ka wā ma hope—the future is in the past. For these reasons, Hawaiian Council strongly urges the committee to **PASS HB2473**. Mahalo for your support in ensuring Hawai'i remains progressive in embracing, representing, and acknowledging its culture.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Madelyn McKeague
Advocacy Director, Hawaiian Council

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HB-2473

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 3:39:54 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelene Tenno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB2473

I would like to ask that the "Hawaiian Sense of Place" will include being respectful to each other, the land, water and built environments.

I am assisting an 80 year old with a neighbor problem.

He has planted cactus within her property line that prevents her from walking along the side of her own property. In his eyes the distance from his house to her house belongs to him. That is not how this project was developed. Due to a recent incident, she had to call for police assistance, the neighbors gathered around and the responding officer called for "backup". The neighbors were cussing and swearing at her. This 80 year old woman was being verbally attacked. The backup officer could only state "Free Speech" as the right to verbally attack a senior.

That is so wrong in the islands today!

HB-2473

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 12:02:32 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/11/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

2473 HB RELATING TO THE RECOGNITION OF A HAWAIIAN SENSE OF PLACE.