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LAND
STATE PARKS

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

**Before the House Committee on
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

**Thursday, February 26, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2582, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

House Bill 2582, House Draft 1 amends the membership and responsibilities of the Public Land Trust Working Group (PLTWG), established under Act 226, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, and continues its work to account for the public land trust inventory and public land trust revenues. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure and offers the following comments.**

The Department recognizes the importance of the PLTWG's mandate and appreciates the bill's continued focus on improving the completeness and transparency of the public land trust inventory and related financial reporting. The Department has actively participated in the Working Group's efforts and remains committed to supporting this work moving forward.

The PLTWG Interim Report emphasized the importance of independent technical and professional expertise to assist the Working Group in fulfilling its responsibilities. The Department acknowledges that adequate resources and support will be important to ensuring the timely completion of the work contemplated by this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2582 HD1 WITH AMENDMENTS
Relating to Hawaiian Affairs

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Ho‘okolokolo a me ke Kuleana Hawai‘i
(House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs)

Hawai‘i State Capitol

February 26, 2026

2:00 PM

Room 325

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs:

Mahalo for hearing this bill to advance the vital work of the Public Lands Trust Working Group (“PLTWG”). The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in **SUPPORT of HB2582_HD1 with amendments** to limit the PLTWG to nine members, inclusive of four designated OHA seats and provide specific guidelines for the appointment of the designated “community member” seat.

It is well recognized that the State of Hawai‘i is paying OHA only a small fraction of the annual public land trust revenues, and not the full 20% pro rata share to which OHA is entitled under law. Currently, OHA receives \$21.5 million per year. A 2016 audit commissioned by OHA at its own expense determined that the amount due to OHA *at that time* was \$78.9 million.

Act 226, enacted in 2022, established the PLTWG to rectify this situation and directed the PLTWG to:

- (1) Account for all ceded lands in the public land trust inventory;
- (2) Account for all income and proceeds from the public land trust; and
- (3) Subsequently determine the twenty per cent pro rata share of income and proceeds from the public land trust due annually to [OHA] for the betterment of the conditions of Native Hawaiians.

Act 226, § 3.

In its 2024 Interim Report to the Legislature and OHA Supplement, the PLTWG members identified certain gaps in the Public Land Trust Inventory System (PLTIS) used by the Department of Land and Natural Resources and agency accounting policies and practices that prevented the ready accounting requested in Act 226.¹ To assist the PLTWG in resolving these issues, the PLTWG suggested retaining third-party professionals and

¹ See [PLTWorkingGroupInterimReportandOHASupplement_FINAL_12-24-2024-0.pdf](#). introduced legislation in 2025 requesting a \$1 million appropriation to retain qualified accounting and auditing expertise. See HB1358 (2005). The requested appropriation was informed by the cost of OHA’s 2016 financial review of public land trust receipts conducted by a respected accounting and auditing firm.

HB2582 builds upon this history and efforts of the PLTWG to fulfill its mandate. OHA appreciates the intent of this bill to ensure completion of the important tasks set forth in Act 226 and respectfully requests the following amendments to align this bill with the needs and practical restraints of the PLTWG.

PLTWG Composition

Currently the PLTWG is comprised of six members—three appointed by OHA and three appointed by the Governor—providing proportional representation of both OHA and the State. HB2582_HD1 proposes to significantly alter this balance by allocating four seats to OHA, two to designees of the Senate President, two to designees of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, three to the Governor, and a twelfth seat to a community member selected by the other PLTWG members. This structure would reduce OHA’s representation from parity (3 of 6 members) to a minority position (4 of 12 members).

In addition, expanding the working group to twelve members would likely prove unwieldy from an operational standpoint. The PLTWG’s mandate requires sustained technical analysis, coordination across agencies, and timely consensus on complex financial and land-inventory matters. A smaller composition promotes efficiency, accountability, and the ability to deliberate and act within the timelines contemplated by the legislature. **For these reasons, OHA recommends limiting the working group to nine members while maintaining balanced representation among appointing authorities.**

OHA appreciates incorporation of a prior comment indicating our strong belief that the elected community member should possess qualifications directly responsive to the PLTWG’s core responsibilities. Because the working group must evaluate executive-branch accounting methodologies and help establish a fair, transparent, and uniform formula for calculating OHA’s 20% pro rata share of income and proceeds from the public land trust, financial and auditing expertise—coupled with Native Hawaiian expertise and demonstrated community commitment—are essential to the success of the group’s work. OHA supports extension of these qualifications to other members in the manner reflected in HB2582_HD1.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to present testimony.

HB-2582-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:21:18 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

****Testimony in STRONG Support of HB2582 HD1****

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in ****STRONG SUPPORT**** of ****HB2582 HD1****. This bill strengthens the Public Land Trust Working Group (PLTWG), established by Act 226, SLH 2022, to finally deliver transparency, accountability, and the full constitutional 20% pro rata share of Public Land Trust (PLT) revenues owed to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) for Native Hawaiian betterment.

Key Provisions of HB2582 HD1 - **Expanded & Balanced Membership:** Increases OHA appointments to ****four members**** (from prior structure), plus three by the Governor, one each by Senate President and House Speaker, one legislative member from each chamber, and one non-governmental community member selected by the group. All members must have expertise in financial accounting/auditing, complex negotiations, Native Hawaiian history/governance/legal entitlements, and commitment to the community. The group elects its own chair. -

****Mandated Tasks with Third-Party Support**:** Oversees independent professionals to: - Assess and improve PLT inventory accuracy, completeness, reliability, and compliance (e.g., data collection, parcel status, encumbrances, tax map keys per Act 54 SLH 2011). - Validate financial reporting and accounting under Act 178 SLH 2006 (revenue data collection, gaps across agencies, parcel trust status).

- ****Strict Reporting Timeline**** (four reports to the Legislature): - August 1, 2027: First interim on preliminary financial reporting/accounting. - December 1, 2027: Second interim on preliminary PLT inventory. - June 1, 2028: Third interim with draft findings/recommendations on both. - October 1, 2028: Final report with proposed legislation, including the determined annual 20% pro rata share amount.

- ****OHA Administrative Role**:** Authorizes OHA to provide necessary administrative support (including report preparation) in coordination with a third-party consultant—ensuring efficiency and cultural alignment without overburdening state agencies.

- **Overall Mandate**: Account for all ceded lands in the PLT inventory, all income/proceeds, and calculate the exact 20% share due annually to OHA under Article XII, §6 of the Hawai‘i Constitution and HRS §10-13.5. **Why This Bill Must Pass – The Numbers Demand Action** The PLT stems from ceded lands taken during the 1893 overthrow—held in trust for Native Hawaiians' betterment. Yet chronic disputes over inventory, accounting, and inclusions have shortchanged beneficiaries for decades.
- **Benchmark Revenues**: The 2015–2016 independent financial review (still the standard benchmark cited by OHA and the Legislature in 2025–2026) estimated gross PLT revenues at **\$394.3 million annually** (including leases, airports, hospitals, etc.).
- **Constitutional 20% Share**: **\$78.9 million per year** owed to OHA for Native Hawaiian programs (housing, education, health, scholarships, small business, land stewardship, language immersion).
- **Current Reality**: OHA receives only an **interim fixed payment of \$21.5 million annually** (increased via Act 226 SLH 2022 from \$15.1 million; still far below entitlement).
- **Annual Shortfall**: **\$57.4 million** (\$78.9M – \$21.5M) — representing just ~5.4% of estimated revenues instead of 20%. This gap deprives beneficiaries of critical resources amid rising costs, homelessness, and health disparities. Without accurate inventory and audited accounting, the state continues to withhold what belongs to Native Hawaiians. HB2582 HD1 provides deadlines, third-party expertise, and OHA support to resolve these issues—building on Act 226's foundation and momentum from related bills (e.g., HB2584 temporary funding increase, which advanced this session). I have testified strongly on every OHA package bill this session (HB2102 historic preservation, HB2101 aquarium collection ban, HB2231 burial councils, HB2584 PLT funding, etc.). HB2582 HD1 is the accountability engine needed to turn promises into payments.

Pass HB2582 HD1 without weakening amendments. Native Hawaiians have waited long enough for justice from the Public Land Trust.

Mahalo nui loa for your kuleana. Imua!

Respectfully submitted,

Pikachu Shelby “Pikachu” Billionaire HRM Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands H.I. Ohana Unity Party, Chairman

HB-2582-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:44:33 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Keali‘i Pang, Ph.D. I am a resident of Kaimukī, a lifetime member of the Hawaiian Civic Club movement, a retired federal biologist, and a current State Commissioner. I am writing today in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2582, HD1, which seeks to ensure the State finally fulfills its constitutional obligation to Native Hawaiian beneficiaries.

Fulfilling a Constitutional Promise

As a member of the Hawaiian Civic Club movement—the oldest Native Hawaiian advocacy movement founded by Prince Kūhiō—I stand firmly behind the Association’s Resolution 2025-84. For decades, we have advocated for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to receive its constitutionally mandated twenty percent pro rata share of public land trust (PLT) proceeds.

The state’s failure to provide a full accounting of these lands and proceeds is not merely an administrative oversight; it is a breach of the trust established at statehood. As noted in the bill, OHA currently receives only \$21.5 million annually—a fraction of the estimated \$78.9 million that a 2016 financial review suggested was the actual minimum due.

Why HB 2582, HD1 is the Necessary Path Forward

From my perspective as a retired federal scientist and a state commissioner, I know that policy is only as good as the data supporting it. The Public Land Trust Working Group (established by Act 226) has struggled to fulfill its mission due to a lack of dedicated support and the reliance on "self-reporting" by agencies—a practice that lacks the necessary rigor for a multi-billion dollar trust.

I support HB 2582, HD1 for the following reasons:

- Independent Oversight: The bill recognizes that independent third-party professionals are required to evaluate current land inventory practices, such as the "rule of thumb" used for ceded vs. non-ceded parcels, which may be detrimental to the calculation of OHA’s share.
- Expanded Expertise (Section 2, §3b): By expanding the working group to include appointments from the Senate President and House Speaker, and requiring members to

have expertise in financial auditing and Native Hawaiian legal entitlements, we ensure a balanced and highly competent body.

- Clear Deliverables: The requirement for four distinct reports between 2027 and 2028 creates a roadmap for accountability. This is not "kicking the can down the road"; it is a structured approach to solving a 40-year-old accounting problem.
- Administrative Strength: Authorizing OHA to provide administrative support in coordination with third-party consultants (Section 2, §3f) gives the working group the technical "teeth" it needs to audit state and county land users effectively.

Conclusion

The genesis of this trust responsibility lies in the 1.8 million acres of crown and government lands taken without consent. We cannot continue to guess at what is owed to the people. We must count the lands, count the proceeds, and fulfill the promise of the State Constitution.

I respectfully urge your committee to PASS HB 2582, HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this critical matter of justice and accountability.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Keali'i Pang, Ph.D. Member, Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu