

SB-2336

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jack O'Neill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jack O'Neill, and I strongly support SB2336.

When public land is entrusted to the State to manage and care for, it becomes our responsibility to do so in a responsible and professional manner. Taking care of the trees on this land should not be optional or up to interpretation.

SB2336 sets a clear standard and helps protect this important part of our islands based on professional best practices. It also helps prevent long-term damage, safety hazards, and higher costs caused by improper maintenance.

Mahalo,
Jack O'Neill

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February 2, 2026

RE: The Outdoor Circle Complete Support for SB2336 Relating to Trees and Best Management Practices in Arboriculture

Dear Senator McKelvey and Committee Members,

The Outdoor Circle strongly supports SB2336 Relating to Trees, which would require that all arborists and other professionals managing trees, including contractors, adhere to best management practices.

Best practices are not a new or novel idea for any field, and are designed not only to protect and preserve beautiful living state resources, but also to ultimately save the state monies from poorly-planned and executed tree maintenance work.

As you are likely aware, The Outdoor Circle has been involved with planting, maintaining and advocating for trees for over a century across our beautiful state. In that time we have found that best practices as pertains to tree care are not a consistently applied standard, even within the state and its contractors.

We have witnessed over the years issues with poor-quality results from improper pruning or other tree care on state properties that should not have happened and can be easily avoided and remedied by SB2336.

In addition, over the years we have had arborists coming to us asking us to help them to intercede with various state entities, because they are being required, at times, to bid or work on a contract from the state which requires them to violate their professional standards and ethics that regulate best practices in arboriculture.

This is an intolerable situation to ask professionals to knowingly violate their own industry best practices standards. While this may seem like isolated instances, unfortunately, it is not.

The following quote is from Kevin Eckert in recent testimony on the same subject. Mr Eckert is a Board-Certified Master Arborist and Tree Risk Assessment Qualified Instructor, as well as the recent past president of the Western Chapter of the ISA (International Society of Arboriculture), of which the Aloha Arborists Association is a constituent member:

"Unless they involve qualified, competent, professional arborists, I don't know of any [Hawaii] State agency that consistently follows the recognized BMP. It seems that frequently, the local supervisor determines what is done based on

their preferences without consideration, and sometimes in conscious violation, of BMPs....I agree that it would be easier and more effective to adopt these across the board, as long as there is adequate support and a strong enforcement mechanism that is applied."

Fortunately, SB 2336 remedies this situation by mandating international standards of tree care that have existed for decades in the ANSI A-300 guidelines, the ISA and other similar organizations. This law will remove ethical conflicts, elevate the professionalism of those working in arboriculture in the state, and take better care of our tree assets.

Mr. Eckert further notes:

"The use of appropriately qualified personnel ensures a level of technical expertise, understanding and skill to conduct work satisfactorilyProper tree care is a long-term investment that can lead to substantial current and future benefits. Properly managed and maintained trees reduce tree-related risk, enhance aesthetics and add significant value to the environment, quality of life, and amenity value of the property. Pruning or removing trees, especially large trees, can be dangerous work if not performed by properly equipped, trained, and skilled workers."

This is a straightforward practice that simply requires a policy that is enacted and enforced. There is no need to reinvent the wheel here, but simply adopt standards that are universally-recognized.

In summary, the need for Hawaii to have a policy that is uniform, consistent, and enforced is essential for the care of our State's arboricultural resources. There should be no controversy or difficulties in requiring best practices to improve the quality of care by the state.

Accordingly, we strongly support SB2336.

Thank you for your service to elevate the care for our state's natural resources to keep Hawaii green and beautiful.

Sincerely,



Winston Welch
Executive Director