
HO`OMANA PONO, LLC
Mamua Kānaka

ATTENTION:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Chair

Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair

January 31, 2026

Re: **SB2785 RELATING TO HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee on Hawaiian Affairs!

We **STRONGLY SUPPORT** this, Bill.

It is a sad commentary that in Hawai'i Nei, we are even having to engage in this type of legislation. However, we must as **ONE LĀHUI ONIPA`A & KU`E** those who seek to erase who we are as a people and a ***Proud Kānaka Nation!***

As Uncle Liko has sung:

"All Hawai'i, stand together, it is now and forever, to raise our voices and hold your banners high. We shall stand as a nation, to guide the destiny of our generations to sing and praise the glory of our land."

The GLORY of this Ko Hawai'i Pae `Āina is our Hae Hawai'i! It must always be allowed to fly HIGH & PROUD!

Please pass this bill. Mahalo.

De Mont Kalai Manaole

De MONT Kalai Manaole, Co-Manager

Ho`omana Pono, LLC

86-044 Hoaha St.

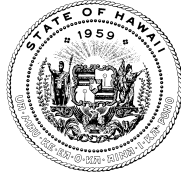
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'o Hawaii 'i*



KALI WATSON
CHAIRPERSON, HHC
Ka Luna Ho'okele

KATIE L. LAMBERT
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIR
Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS
Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawaii 'i

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TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIR
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
ON FEBRUARY 3, 2026 AT 1:10PM IN CR 224

SB 2785, RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

February 3, 2026

Aloha Chair Richards, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) **supports** this bill which appropriates funds for DHHL projects eligible for general fund revenues that are generated by increases in transient accommodations tax collections and intended to be expended equally across projects related to natural resources, climate resilience, and destination management.

This legislative proposal was approved by the Hawaiian Homes Commission as part of DHHL's 2026 Legislative Package. This bill reflects the many DHHL projects that fit the criteria for projects pursuant to Act 96, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025. Appropriating funds to support qualifying projects will protect the interests of beneficiaries of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, as amended, and advance State policy.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Cindy Freitas
makainanqi@gmail.com

OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED – S.B. 2785

RELATING TO DHHL APPROPRIATIONS / TAT REVENUES

He Mele komo a he mele aloha no na kupuna o ke au i hala Aloha mai kakou.

Aloha,

My name is Cindy Freitas and I'm a Native Hawaiian descended of the native inhabitants of Hawai'i prior to 1778 and born and raised in Hawai'i.

I am also a practitioner who still practice the cultural traditional customary practices that was instill in me by my grandparents at a young age from mauka (MOUNTAIN TO SEA) to makai in many areas.

I respectfully submit testimony **OPPOSING S.B. 2785 UNLESS AMENDED.**

S.B. 2785 appropriates general fund revenues associated with increased transient accommodations tax (TAT) collections for numerous Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) capital, maintenance, infrastructure, and environmental projects statewide. While investment in DHHL communities is important, the bill **authorizes significant spending without basic fiscal, accountability, and implementation safeguards.**

WHAT IS MISSING FROM S.B. 2785

- **A clear total appropriation amount.** The bill repeatedly states "\$ or so much thereof as may be necessary," without identifying an overall funding cap or confirming consistency with available revenues.
- **Project prioritization criteria.** Dozens of projects are listed without explanation of urgency, readiness, beneficiary impact, or alignment with risk or need.
- **Equity and distribution analysis.** The bill does not explain how funds are equitably allocated among homestead regions or whether allocations align with waitlists, population, or risk exposure.
- **Oversight, reporting, and audit requirements.** There is no requirement for DHHL to report expenditures, timelines, or outcomes to the Legislature or the public, nor any independent audit or performance review.
- **Project readiness and capacity assessment.** The bill does not confirm whether projects are shovel-ready or whether DHHL has sufficient staffing and procurement capacity to manage the scope of work.

- **Environmental and cultural review triggers.** Despite funding roads, waterlines, firebreaks, erosion control, and other ground-disturbing projects, the bill does not explicitly require Chapter 343 environmental review or cultural and historic safeguards.
- **Long-term operations and maintenance planning.** The bill does not identify ongoing funding sources for maintenance or operation of new or expanded infrastructure, risking future unfunded liabilities.
- **Interagency and county coordination standards.** Many projects affect water, sewer, roads, and drainage systems, yet the bill lacks required coordination with counties or other agencies.
- **Performance metrics tied to Act 96 goals.** Although Act 96 is cited, there are no measurable indicators showing how funded projects advance climate resilience, natural resource protection, or destination management.
- **Sunset, reversion, or reprogramming rules.** The bill lacks deadlines for expenditure, reversion of unspent funds, or limits on reprogramming between projects.

REQUIRED AMENDMENTS (OPPOSE UNLESS ADOPTED)

S.B. 2785 should not advance unless amended to:

1. Specify a **total appropriation amount and funding limits**;
2. Establish **project prioritization and equity criteria**;
3. Require **regular reporting, transparency, and independent audits**;
4. Confirm **project readiness and agency capacity**;
5. Explicitly require **environmental and cultural review compliance**;
6. Identify **long-term operations and maintenance funding**;
7. Require **interagency and county coordination**;
8. Include **performance metrics tied to Act 96 goals**;
9. Add **expenditure deadlines, reversion, and reprogramming controls**.

CONCLUSION

Public funds should be appropriated with **clear limits, accountability, and measurable outcomes**. Without the safeguards above, S.B. 2785 risks inefficient spending and undermines legislative oversight.

For these reasons, I **OPPOSE S.B. 2785 UNLESS AMENDED**.

Mahalo

Cindy Freitas

SB-2785

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:47:16 AM

Testimony for HWN on 2/3/2026 1:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

OPPOSE LINE ITEM 46 - Statewide geothermal energy commercialization should paid the State of Hawaii and NOT ON THE BACKS OF THE BENEFICIARIES. THIS IS A POOR INVESTMENT see Puna Geothermal Venture financial portfolio.

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry OPPOSE LINE ITEM 46

2785 SB RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.	HWN	CR 224 & Videoconference	Feb 3, 2026 1:10 PM
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