

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

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**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

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Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM**

April 16, 2026

9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 423

in consideration of

**SCR 159 SD1**

**URGING THE ADOPTION OF SHARED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE  
RESTORATION OF WAIKIKI BEACHES.**

Chair Tam, Vice Chair Templo, and Members of the Senate Committee on Tourism,

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** SCR 159 SD1, which urges the adoption of shared guiding principles for beach restoration projects in Waikiki, and **offers a clarifying amendment**. The guiding principles contained in this Concurrent Resolution would prioritize public access to and conservation of natural resources, approach planning decisions from a holistic perspective, reinforce the State's role as the policy and implementation lead in beach restoration efforts, and equitably distribute costs among the public institutions and private interests that benefit from a healthy and restored beach.

OPSD supports regional shoreline management as an appropriate planning tool and policy strategy to protect beaches and nearshore waters, preserve public enjoyment of public trust resources, and develop proactive, adaptive measures that reduce the risk of coastal hazards to natural resources, shoreline properties, and infrastructure.

The Waikiki we know today is the result of more than a century of large-scale civil engineering projects that created its sandy beaches and buildable land. Although we today may not make the same choices that our predecessors did, we also recognize that their past actions determine our current reality. Leaving aside its visitor-focused amenities, Waikiki is irreplaceable in terms of the jobs, housing, recreation, and ocean access that it provides for residents.

Waikiki's beaches are being lost at an average rate of approximately one foot per year, with up to 30 feet of mauka shoreline migration in key locations due to a combination of natural and human-caused factors. Significant beach loss has been documented in the area since the early 1900's and on-going mitigation efforts since that time, including shoreline hardening, erection of static groins, and periodic sand replenishment, have not stabilized the shoreline.

SCR159 SD1 URGING THE ADOPTION OF SHARED GUIDING  
PRINCIPLES FOR THE RESTORATION OF WAIKIKI BEACHES - SUPPORT  
Office of Planning and Sustainable Development  
April 16, 2026

Shoreline management solutions must be planned collaboratively to foster trust among all Waikiki beach stakeholders, work in concert across the total beach system, be designed to accommodate rather than oppose natural forces, and lie lightly enough on the ground to be adapted over time in response to continually changing conditions.

OPSD believes that the guiding principles contained in this measure will be a sound foundation for a unified, transparent, equitable, and effective strategy for restoring and preserving Waikiki's iconic beaches into the future. Because these guiding principles are grounded in maintaining flexible responsiveness to future changes, and in keeping with sound principles of public infrastructure planning, OPSD suggests omitting language that prescribes specific improvements before their design has been strategically considered in the context of the total coastal system and presented to the community of public beach and park stakeholders for comment and input.

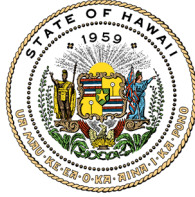
**In that spirit, OPSD offers the following clarifying amendment to paragraph (1) on page 3, lines 4 – 15:**

“Prioritization of public access to and enjoyment of the ocean, beach, and shoreline consistent with the State's policies relating to environmental protection and the protection of traditional and customary practices, including ~~[a permanent makai pathway along the shoreline that conforms]~~ features that conform to Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design, ~~[provides]~~ provide lateral and perpendicular public access for residents and visitors, ~~[and connects]~~ connect beaches and parks from Diamondhead to Kakaako, ~~[with sufficient width to also provide emergency access to light-duty emergency vehicles;]~~ and allow rapid access to beaches, parks, and the ocean for emergency responders;”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure and to propose a clarifying amendment to strengthen its language.

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  
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BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
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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 House Committee on  
TOURISM

Thursday, April 16, 2026  
9:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of  
**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 159, SENATE DRAFT 1  
URGING THE ADOPTION OF SHARED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE  
RESTORATION OF WAIKĪKĪ BEACHES**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 159, Senate Draft 1 proposes a set of guiding principles to be included in strategies for the maintenance of Waikīkī. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources supports this resolution.**

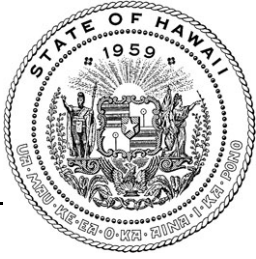
This Resolution recognizes that Waikīkī is not a naturally self-sustaining beach system, but rather an engineered urban shoreline that depends on continuous management and investment to exist.

It is possible that at one time the shoreline along Māmala Bay functioned as a single littoral cell—that is, one connected system of coastal processes where sand moved naturally along the coast. Over time, however, this system was fundamentally altered. Extensive dredging of the reef flat to fill the Kālia wetlands, the mining of beach sand for construction, and the construction of an estimated 37 seawalls all contributed to significant beach loss in the early 20th century.

The beaches that exist today are the result of repeated large-scale nourishment projects beginning in 1939, which created and expanded Kaimana, Queen's Surf, Kapi'olani, and Kūhiō Beaches. These engineered beaches were then locked in place by a series of groins and breakwaters.

By establishing clear guiding principles, this measure supports the coordinated, long-term stewardship of Waikīkī.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

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Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
**Director**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM**  
Thursday, April 16, 2026  
9:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 423  
in consideration of  
**SCR 159, SD1**  
**URGING THE ADOPTION OF SHARED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE  
RESTORATION OF WAIKIKI BEACHES.**

Chair Tam, Vice Chair Templo, and Members of the House Committee on Tourism:

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports** SCR 159, SD1, which urges the adoption of shared guiding principles for beach restoration projects in Waikiki. Waikiki is not only the State's flagship tourism destination, it is also a critical focal point of jobs, housing, and community for kamaaina. DBEDT supports considered and coordinated planning to preserve Waikiki's beaches for the benefit of all who live, work, and play in this iconic Hawai'i location.

DBEDT also supports the promotion of positive visitor experiences in Waikiki as a means of encouraging responsible tourism by directing visitors to appropriate accommodations, lifeguarded beaches, and amenities designed to meet visitor needs in an easily accessible area. A robust and attractive Waikiki relieves pressure on surrounding residential neighborhoods and remote natural resources. Responsive, forward-looking coastal management practices in Waikiki are essential tools for preserving Hawai'i's sense of place, protecting community well-being, and sustaining a healthy economy that benefits residents and visitors alike.

DBEDT supports the clarifying amendment proposed by OPSD. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this measure.

# STARN · O'TOOLE · MARCUS & FISHER

A L A W C O R P O R A T I O N

April 15, 2026

Representative Adrian K. Tam, Chair,  
Representative Shirley Ann Templo, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee Tourism

Hearing: House Committee on Tourism  
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026  
Time: 9:30 AM  
Place: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
Conference Room 423  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Testimony Regarding Senate Concurrent Resolution 159 SD1  
Urging Incorporation of Suggested Amendments of  
Shared Guiding Principles for the Restoration of Waikiki Beaches

Aloha Chair Tam, Vice Chair Templo,  
and Members of the House Committee on Tourism:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SCR 159 SD1. Our firm represents the Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District Association (“WBSIDA”).

## Comment With Clarification

### A. Existing Agreements.

In 1928 and 1929, the Territory entered into several agreements with private landowners in Waikiki. In 1965, the State entered into an agreement with the private landowners between the Moana Surfrider Hotel to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel.

### B. Hawaii Supreme Court Decisions.

Presently, there are multiple seawalls along the Waikiki shoreline. The public has historically used the top of these seawalls as pedestrian rights-of-way. The Hawaii Supreme Court has issued a number of opinions regarding seawalls located in Waikiki. The most recent Hawaii Supreme Court opinion regarding Waikiki seawalls is *Gold Coast Neighborhood Association v. State of Hawaii*, 140 Hawaii 437, 441. 403 P.3d 214, 218 (2017) (“**Supreme Court Decisions**”). In the *Gold Coast* case, the Hawaii Supreme Court decided that the State “has the right and the duty to maintain the surface of the [s]eawall over and across which it has an easement,” but “unless

Representative Adrian K. Tam, Chair,  
Representative Shirley Ann Templo, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee Tourism  
April 15, 2026  
Page 2

otherwise specified between the parties, joint use of an easement and any improvements thereon may give rise to an obligation to contribute jointly to the costs reasonably incurred for repair and maintenance.” Id. at 460, 237 (internal citations omitted). Because the public has an easement over the seawalls in Waikiki, the Hawaii Supreme Court found that the State has a duty to share in the maintenance and repair of the seawalls.

**C. History of Waikiki.**

The Waikiki shoreline originally consisted of a narrow barrier beach backed by wetlands, duck ponds, *lo‘i kalo*, and *loko i‘a* fed by numerous springs which created a wetland system. In the early 1900s, the government declared the wetlands a public health hazard, dredged the wetlands and used the dredged material to fill in low-lying areas and construct sandy beaches. As a part of this process, the Ala Wai Canal was built in the 1920s to divert existing stream outflows. Seawalls and groins were constructed, and channels were dredged, to protect these engineered beaches. See Final Programmatic EIS for the Waikiki Beach Improvement and Maintenance Program dated October 2024.

WBSIDA respectfully requests that the SCR 159 SD1 acknowledge and incorporate the Existing Agreements, Supreme Court Decisions and History of Waikiki as shown on the attached resolution with suggested amendments.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Mahalo nui,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ivan M. Lui-Kwan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the first name.

Ivan M. Lui-Kwan  
Cori J. Terayama

Attachment

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## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE ADOPTION OF SHARED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE  
RESTORATION OF WAIKIKI BEACHES.

1 WHEREAS, Waikiki beaches are global visitor destinations  
2 that accounted for over thirty-six percent of the State's total  
3 visitor expenditures in 2025; and  
4

5 WHEREAS, in 2024, Waikiki directly generated just under  
6 five percent, and indirectly generated almost seven percent, of  
7 the State's tax revenue, excluding tax revenue collected by the  
8 City and County of Honolulu; and  
9

10 WHEREAS, tens of thousands of local residents work at jobs  
11 in and connected to Waikiki's visitor industry, which  
12 constitutes a significant portion of all non-military jobs held  
13 by state residents; and  
14

15 WHEREAS, countless local families and residents living in  
16 the urban core visit beaches in Waikiki and along the southern  
17 shore daily for recreation and relaxation and to spend time with  
18 family and friends; and  
19

20 WHEREAS, numerous safety incidents regularly occur in the  
21 area and must be addressed by providing improved emergency  
22 access to the shoreline; and  
23

24 WHEREAS, Waikiki was established as the original capital of  
25 the Kingdom of Hawaii by Kamehameha I in 1795, and is home to a  
26 rich Hawaiian cultural heritage recognized by cultural  
27 practitioners, scholars, and descendants; and  
28

29 WHEREAS, with a shoreline shaped by years of coastal  
30 engineering and urban development, Waikiki in its current form  
31 has become an irreplaceable driver of contemporary Hawaii's  
32 economy and culture and is indispensable to kamaaina as a locus



1 of housing, jobs, recreation, ocean access, and outdoor green  
2 space in the State's densely populated urban core; and  
3

4 ~~WHEREAS, the original beaches of Waikiki were lost sometime~~  
5 ~~before 1920 due to a combination of sand mining, coral dredging,~~  
6 ~~and the construction of seawalls and groins that interrupted the~~  
7 ~~natural movement of sand along the coast; and See Insert A as a substitute.~~  
8

9 WHEREAS, Waikiki beaches require ongoing replenishment,  
10 maintenance, and coordinated management to sustain beach width,  
11 shoreline access, and recreational use and have been restored  
12 approximately eleven times since 1939 using both imported and  
13 offshore sand; and  
14

15 WHEREAS, the loss of beach access reduces opportunities for  
16 the public enjoyment of coastal resources that are held in trust  
17 for the people of the State; and  
18

19 WHEREAS, the loss of Waikiki as an economic engine would be  
20 catastrophic to the State's financial future and could severely  
21 impact the jobs of tens of thousands of kamaaina; and  
22

23 WHEREAS, the public benefits of increased public access to  
24 ocean natural resources and open spaces, and the private  
25 benefits to commercial interests that are located within and  
26 dependent upon Waikiki, are inextricably linked; and  
27

28 ~~WHEREAS, decades of coordinated efforts by the State, the~~  
29 ~~City and County of Honolulu, and private interests have~~  
30 ~~struggled to produce a sustainable and equitable long-term~~  
31 ~~strategy for preserving Waikiki beaches, infrastructure, and~~  
32 ~~commerce; now, therefore, See Insert B as a substitute.~~  
33

34 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third  
35 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026, the  
36 House of Representatives concurring, that the following shared  
37 guiding principles are urged to be adopted for the planning,  
38 financing, and undertaking of efforts to restore, maintain, and  
39 improve the beaches, shoreline, and coastal areas of Waikiki  
40 spanning from the Ala Wai Small Boat Harbor to Kaimana Beach;  
41 and  
42



1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the shared guiding principles  
2 are requested to incorporate the following strategies:

- 3  
4 (1) Prioritization of public access to and enjoyment of  
5 the ocean, beach, and shoreline consistent with the  
6 State's policies relating to environmental protection  
7 and the protection of traditional and customary  
8 practices, including a permanent makai pathway along  
9 the shoreline that conforms to Americans with  
10 Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design,  
11 provides lateral public access for residents and  
12 visitors, and connects beaches and parks from  
13 Diamondhead to Kakaako, with sufficient width to also  
14 provide emergency access to light-duty emergency  
15 vehicles;
- 16  
17 (2) Implementation of state policy to conserve and protect  
18 natural resources and promote their development and  
19 utilization in a manner consistent with their  
20 conservation and the self-sufficiency of the State;
- 21  
22 (3) Adherence to principles of regional planning that  
23 account for the interconnectedness of land despite  
24 ownership boundaries and for the natural tidal and  
25 littoral movement of water and sand across the area  
26 and its surrounding environment;
- 27  
28 (4) Planning and implementation of beach improvements led  
29 by the State, with cost-sharing among state, county,  
30 federal, and private property owners; and
- 31  
32 (5) ~~Confirmation of the responsibility of property owners~~  
33 ~~to maintain seawalls and other infrastructure above~~  
34 ~~the shoreline and located on the owner's property; and~~  
35 **See Insert C as a substitute.**

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
37 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Director  
38 of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Chairperson of  
39 the Board of Land and Natural Resources; Mayor of the City and  
40 County of Honolulu; and Chair of the Honolulu City Council.



## Suggested Amendments to SCR 159 SD1

### Insert A

WHEREAS, the Waikiki shoreline originally consisted of a narrow barrier beach backed by wetlands, duck ponds, lo'i kalo, and loko i'a fed by numerous springs which created a wetland system. Over time, seawalls and groins were constructed and channels were dredged to protect the engineered beaches;

### Insert B

WHEREAS, decades of coordinated efforts by the State, the City and County of Honolulu, and private interests have worked to produce a sustainable and equitable long-term strategy for preserving Waikiki beaches, infrastructure, and commerce, which include the 1928 and 1929 Waikiki Beach Reclamation Agreements and the 1965 Surfrider-Royal Hawaiian Sector Beach Agreement (collectively, the "Existing Agreements") with the Hawaii Supreme Court cases including *Gold Coast Neighborhood Association v. State of Hawaii*, 140 Hawaii 437, 403 P.3d 214, (2017) (the "Hawaii Supreme Court Decisions"); now, therefore;

### Insert C

- (5) Confirmation of the responsibility of state, county, federal, and private property owners to maintain seawalls and other infrastructure proximate to the shoreline, in accordance with authorities including but not limited to the Existing Agreements and Hawaii Supreme Court Decisions; and



April 16, 2026

Representative Adrian K. Tam, Chair  
Representative Shirley Ann Templo, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Tourism

**COMMENTS and PROPOSED AMENDMENTS in Strong Support of SCR 159,  
URGING THE ADOPTION OF SHARED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE  
RESTORATION OF WAIKIKI BEACHES.**

**TOU: Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.**  
**State Capitol, Conference Room 423, and VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawai'i (LURF) is a private trade association founded in 1979, whose members include major Hawai'i landowners, developers, utility companies, and land use professionals. LURF's mission is to research, educate, and advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, laws, and regulations that encourage well-planned and sustainable economic growth in agriculture, housing, renewable energy, commercial and industrial uses, health care, and tourism, while safeguarding Hawai'i's significant natural, environmental, historic, and cultural resources, public health, and safety.

LURF respectfully submits the following **COMMENTS and PROPOSED AMENDMENTS in strong support of SCR 159.**

LURF appreciates the intent of this measure, however, we are respectfully requesting the following **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:**

1. Consultation and collaboration with the Waikiki Beach hotels, landowners, University of Hawaii Sea Grant experts, and other stakeholders;
2. Afford DLNR the flexibility to address unique shoreline situations with consideration of different alternatives; and
3. An express "non-impairment/savings clause" that includes, among other things, words to the effect that: "...Nothing in this measure should modify, prejudice, supersede, waive or in any way alter, or impair any existing contractual or property rights, including among other things, the 1928 Reclamation Agreements, the 1965 Beach Agreement, and existing laws."

LURF appreciates your favorable consideration of the above proposed amendments.