

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3927

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 24 2026

RE: H.C.R. No. 179
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts, to which was referred H.C.R. No. 179, H.D. 1, entitled:

"HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION URGING THE 'AHA MOKU ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO FOLLOW ITS ADOPTED RULES OF PRACTICE, FULFILL ITS STATUTORY DUTIES, INCLUDING COMPLYING WITH THE SUNSHINE LAW, CONDUCT A PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF ITS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND ESTABLISH POLICIES TO ASSURE CONSISTENT STANDARDS OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY; AND REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL AUDIT OF THE 'AHA MOKU ADVISORY COMMITTEE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Urge the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee (Committee) to:
 - (A) Follow its adopted rules of practice;
 - (B) Fulfill its statutory duties, including complying with the Sunshine Law;
 - (C) Conduct a performance review of its Executive Director; and



- (D) Establish policies to assure consistent standards of administrative and managerial accountability; and
- (2) Request the Office of the Auditor to conduct a comprehensive performance and financial audit of the Committee.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from Ho'ala Kealakekua Nui, Inc.; Marine Advocates Collaborating for Sustainable Aquatic Life through Action and Discipline; and seven individuals.

Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Hawaii State Aha Moku.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Office of the Auditor and one individual.

Your Committee finds that the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee (Committee) was established in 2012 in response to multiple puwala gatherings held in the previous six years, in which Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners and representatives from state-wide moku advocated for the integration of traditional Hawaiian knowledge and management practices into state policy. Though the Committee held meetings in its first years and adopted administrative rules to govern its activities by 2016, concerns have arisen over the administration, representation, and transparency of the Committee and its Executive Director. This measure will improve public trust in the Committee by ensuring its operations align with statutory requirements, best practices in governance, and fiscal prudence.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the Committee is urged to fulfill all statutory duties, including complying with the Sunshine Law, holding regular meetings, ensuring transparency in decision-making, and submitting required reports in a timely manner;
- (2) Deleting language that urged the Committee to conduct a formal performance review of its Executive Director and



to convene an open and properly noticed meeting to evaluate legal and administrative risks facing the Committee, including compliance with the Sunshine Law, statutory reporting requirements, and fiscal accountability;

- (3) Deleting language that would have requested the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources to exercise oversight to ensure that the Committee fulfills its mandated purpose and operates in compliance with the Sunshine Law and other applicable legal requirements;
- (4) Deleting language that would have requested the Office of the Auditor to conduct a comprehensive performance and financial audit of the Committee;
- (5) Inserting language that convenes a working group to review the policies, administration, finances, and operations of the Committee, and make recommendations to ensure consistent standards of accountability and effective governance and the executive execution of its mission;
- (6) Inserting language requesting the membership of the working group to consist of the following members:
 - (A) One member appointed by the President of the Senate or the member's designee;
 - (B) One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the member's designee;
 - (C) One representative from the Committee or the representative's designee;
 - (D) One representative from the Department of Land and Natural Resources or the representative's designee; and
 - (E) One representative from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs or the representative's designee;



- (7) Inserting language requesting the working group to designate the member appointed by the President of the Senate or the member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives to be Chairperson of the working group;
- (8) Clarifying that the working group, rather than the Auditor, is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2027;
- (9) Amending its title accordingly; and
- (10) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of H.C.R. No. 179, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto as H.C.R. No. 179, H.D. 1, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Water, Land,
Culture and the Arts,



CHRIS LEE, Chair



