

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2690

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2003
S.D. 1

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

Sir:

Your Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and Education, to which was referred S.B. No. 2003 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Auditor's report pursuant to section 4 of Act 255, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, to include a recommendation as to whether the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority is fit to continue management of Mauna Kea lands; and
- (2) If the Auditor recommends that the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority is unfit to continue management of Mauna Kea lands, provide for the repeal of the Authority and reversion of management authority over Mauna Kea lands to the University of Hawaii.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from two individuals.

Your Committees received testimony in opposition to this measure from the HULI PAC, Na Wai Ho'ola Nui La'au Lapa'au Foundation, Hui Kulike Kakou, Ho'opae Pono Peace Project, Nation of



Hawai'i, Confederated Villages of Lisjan Nation, and fifty-one individuals.

Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Office of the Auditor, Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority, and six individuals.

Your Committees find that Act 255, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, established the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority because of the University of Hawaii's failure to adequately protect Mauna Kea's cultural and natural resources, its mismanagement of subleases, and its lapse of public trust responsibilities. However, since its establishment, the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority has experienced significant challenges in effectuating its statutory mandates. Requiring the Office of the Auditor to assess the performance of the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority and determine whether the Authority is unfit to continue the management of Mauna Kea lands would ensure accountability and transparency. This measure will yield more informed oversight of the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority's management of public trust lands.

Your Committees note the concern raised by the Office of the Auditor that, while it is the responsibility of the Office of the Auditor to assess whether an agency is performing certain activities key to achieving its statutory purpose efficiently, effectively, and ethically, it is the role of the Legislature to determine whether an agency should be reformed, dissolved, or have its responsibilities reassigned. Your Committees further note the concern raised that the University of Hawaii's master lease and all observatory subleases will expire in 2033 and additional time is needed to negotiate potential lease extensions. Therefore, amendments to this measure are necessary to address these concerns.

Your Committees have amended this measure by:

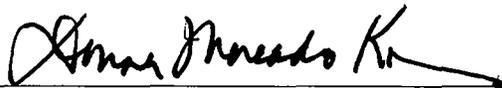
- (1) Deleting language that would have required the Office of the Auditor to include in its report a recommendation as to whether the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority is fit to continue management of Mauna Kea lands;



- (2) Inserting language that extends for a period of ten years the master lease of Mauna Kea lands that is currently set to expire on December 31, 2033;
- (3) Inserting language that requires that all subleases of Mauna Kea lands for astronomical observatories to be extended for ten years;
- (4) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts and Education that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2003, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2003, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

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



DONNA MERCADO KIM, Chair

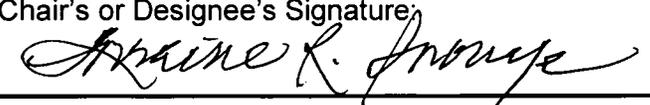


CHRIS LEE, Chair



The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
WLA

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:		
SB 2003	WLA/EDU, WAM	2-19-2026		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
LEE, Chris (C)	✓			
INOUYE, Lorraine R. (VC)	✓			✓
CHANG, Stanley				✓
LAMOSAO, Rachele	✓			
DECORTE, Samantha			✓	
TOTAL	3		1	1
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: 				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink File with Committee Report Committee Drafting Agency				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes

