

Aloha e Senator Chris Lee and other esteemed members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts,

Mahalo nui for granting me the opportunity to serve on the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission and contribute to the State’s longstanding commitment to empower and vitalize the trust setup by HRS 6k until such a time as Kanaloa may be transferred to the sovereign native Hawaiian entity. I have prepared below answers to the questions posed to me by Senator Lee via Kula Kukonu in e-mail on March 12th. I hope that these answers may satisfactorily furnish grounds for further fruitful discussion during my confirmation hearing on the 18th.

Mahalo again for your consideration of my appointment as well as your sincere dedication to kūkulu ke ea a Kanaloa. Please find my answers below:

1. Why do you wish to serve as a member of the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission?
 - a. Kaho‘olawe has been a part of my life for as long as I can recall. I first went to Kaho‘olawe at the age of five and have only missed four makahiki ceremonies since then, the call to Lono to bring the winds that carry the clouds that bring the rains that raise the water table and regreen the island in accordance with the original vision of George Helm and aunty Edith Kanaka‘ole has been a central mission of my life from before I had the words to formulate it myself. It’s quite difficult for me to even begin to think who I might be in the absence of Kanaloa and therefore I feel a deeply personal, even existential, sense of obligation to ensure that Kohemālamalama remains the beacon of aloha ‘āina that it always has been—that it facilitates the return of ea to Hawai‘i and its people. In my professional work as an Assistant Professor of Hawaiian Studies, I have only worked in offshoots of this anchoring ideal with minimal centrifugal momentum to stray me from these ends; my scholarly work generally spans two categories: historicizing the state of Hawai‘i and its people as well as critically inquiring as to Hawai‘i’s unique contributions to human thought. A particularly insightful period that merits studying relevant to both my areas of study is the Hawaiian Renaissance and its various efforts to rekindle ‘Ōiwi values as a response to the disenfranchisement of not only Kānaka Maoli but all working class people by a powerful elite, the remnants of which stand on the shoulders of those who played meaningful roles in the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893. Kaho‘olawe stands as a beacon of hope amongst myriad efforts endeavoring to realize a public trust, most of which have faltered in the face of overwhelming capital. The persistence of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana and their

insistence on a strict banning of all commercial use of the island stands as a seminal example for what it takes to fully sustain a sense of a commons signified by the language of a “trust:” in order for people to share in the trust, capital must be, at the very least, marginalized in the equation if not outrightly abolished. It is only then, when the people are confronted with the reality of one another in relation to the ‘āina that we can truly begin to think the possibilities of a better Hawai‘i that works for each and every one of us. Aloha ‘āina lays the foundation for this necessary work of imagining alternatives to our current future visions of dystopia. This is why Kohemālamalama is important: whether one interprets the name as the southern beacon or the enlightened birth canal the rhetorical implications are the same—Kaho‘olawe has subtracted us from the inevitability of disaster and Kanaloa has reminded us that there is an alternative, one in which we all may prosper if only we holdfast to the vision of aloha ‘āina. And so it is quite true what the current strategic plan echoes: i ola Kanaloa, i ola kākou; so long as Kanaloa lives, we have a chance.

2. What is your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission?
 - a. The role of a commissioner as I understand it is principally to hold the KIRC staff and director accountable to the KIRC's vision, which I quote here:
 - i. “The kino (physical manifestation) of Kanaloa is restored. Forests and shrublands of native plants and other biota clothe its slopes and valleys. Pristine ocean waters and healthy reef ecosystems are the foundation that supports and surrounds the island. Nā po‘e o Hawai‘i (the people of Hawai‘i) care for the land in a manner, which recognizes the island and ocean of Kanaloa as a living spiritual entity. Kanaloa is a pu‘uhonua and wahi pana (a place of refuge, a sacred place) where native Hawaiian cultural practices flourish. The piko of Kanaloa (the navel, the center) is the crossroads of past and future generations from which the native Hawaiian lifestyle is spread throughout the islands.”¹
 - b. While the presently expiring *I Ola Kanaloa* strategic plan² details more tangible efforts necessary to the realization of this plan, this vision carries the essential spirit of the KIRC that is very synergized with the efforts of its hoā kahu‘āina, the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana. I imagine that an immediate item on the agenda for the commission is to review the efforts of the KIRC and the ‘Ohana to see how they each measure up to the ideals

¹ Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission, *Kūkulu ke Ea a Kanaloa: Kaho‘olawe*, <https://www.kahoolawe.hawaii.gov/home.php>. Accessed 16 March 2026.

² Kanaloa 2026 Working Group, *I Ola Kanaloa: A Plan for Kanaloa Kaho‘olawe Through 2026*, 2014.

and plans proffered by the *I Ola Kanaloa* plan. There will surely be great cause for both praise and critical reflection as we look forward to crafting the next strategic plan.

- c. Another duty of a commissioner is to administer and uphold the laws that have set up the reserve, inclusive of the aforementioned strict ban on all commercial use in addition to (1) Preservation and practice of all rights customarily and traditionally exercised by native Hawaiians for cultural, spiritual, and subsistence purposes; (2) Preservation and protection of its archaeological, historical, and environmental resources; (3) Rehabilitation, revegetation, habitat restoration, and preservation; and (4) Education. HRS 6k provides a robust framework for the KIRC and its commissioners to realize the *ea* of Kanaloa.
 - d. A third critical role that commissioners must fulfill is to maintain amiable and vigorous relationships with both the KIRC staff and the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana. Filling one of the “‘Ohana seats” on the commission makes this third role particularly incumbent upon me, as I am tasked with, “1. [Maintaining] the ‘Ohana’s position as the principal steward of Kaho‘olawe, empowering the ‘ohana in its ho‘omana and hana kaulike endeavors in every way possible; 2. [Ensuring] the KIRC is well-funded and is equipped to properly steward Kaho‘olawe with the ‘Ohana; and 3. [Continuing] to advocate for KIRC to support and facilitate the completion of the ‘Ohana’s major initiatives: Ala Loa (circumnavigational trail), our sustained ho‘omana activities (Makahiki, Ipu a Kāne, etc.) the Mua at Honokanai‘a, and others all to ensure the ‘Ohana’s lasting legacy,”³ per the official letter sent by the ‘Ohana in nominating me for this position. To do so I must maintain and develop the relationships I currently hold within the KIRC and the ‘Ohana. I offer these three chief responsibilities as I see them and hope that they may suffice in this brief adumbration.
3. Based on your understanding of the role and responsibilities of this position, please explain why you believe you are qualified to serve. Include a brief description of the skills, experience, expertise, or knowledge you would bring to the Commission and how they would inform your decision-making.
 - a. I possess, in my humble opinion, a rather good sense of the history of the ‘Ohana and the Commission and I believe that gives me a strong sense of the mission of the ‘Ohana and the Commission. This makes me keenly aware of our opportunities to collaborate as well as our other opportunities to empower one another to do what only the other can accomplish. I have also been involved in the ‘Ohana and the KIRC for over twenty years and call my seniors on both sides of the aisle uncle and aunty, this grants me

³ Kylee Pōmaika‘i Mar to State Boards & Commissions, 2 March 2026, Office of the Governor, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

the distinct privilege of knowing both sides intimately which allows me to explore resolutions to difficult situations. As a brief example, our Makahiki access was cancelled this past February due to severe weather conditions and so we could not bring participants. The ceremony, however, has an independent existence from the people and must run its course according to the *I Ola Kanaloa* plan and the numerous presuppositions of that plan (HRS 6k, Title X, and even the 1980 Consent Decree). On the foundation laid by the 'Ohana and the fifty years of their impassioned work to realize aloha 'āina through ceremony, I along with other members of 'Ohana leadership were able to successfully negotiate for 10 members of our 'Ohana to come to Kaho'olawe via the KIRC's 'Ōhua, and pack all of our meals and ho'okupu (offerings) down to Hakioawa so that we could carry out the kuleana of completing the Makahiki ceremonies. Such a negotiation would not be possible without the longstanding relationships that I both maintain and benefit from. These relationships have long been entwined over the course of Kanaloa's recent history in the past fifty years, this historical knowledge is thus also a relational knowledge. Knowing the people and their life's work allows us to find mutually beneficial partnerships that cohesively aim at the best interests of Kaho'olawe.

- b. Professionally, my work at the University has equipped me with a number of skills that will certainly be of great use on the commission. In the interest of brevity I will aim to contain them to just three: research, facilitation of critical dialogue, and the articulation of complex ideas. As a researcher I believe I have much to offer the commission: as we try to negotiate potential new projects furthering the vision of the KIRC and the synergistic 'Ohana and KIRC plans for Kaho'olawe, it will be critical to ground these propositions in precedent set in the past and a rich interpretation of the language afforded to us by our guiding documents. That being said, no matter how strong the precedent or how lucid the interpretation, work on a commission attempting to organize and mobilize the desires of a community organization like the 'Ohana within the parameters of various state agencies while upholding the ideal of a public trust will never be an easy task. It is therefore necessary for a commissioner to be able to facilitate critical dialogue that coordinates the efforts, needs and wants of all stakeholders while staying true to previously held agreements like the Palapala 'Aelike built upon the precedent set by laws like HRS6k which give form and function to the KIRC. In such a complex situation, no idea is definitively given, therefore it will be the task of the commissioners who facilitate these conversations to be able to articulate in a manner that can be readily understood by all stakeholders the issue at hand so that we can cooperatively come to the best possible

conclusion for Kaho‘olawe. I have learned a great deal from attending to uncle Craig Neff, aunty Davianna McGregor, uncle Lopaka Aiwohi, uncle Kelvin Ho, and—of course—our stalwart leader uncle Emmett Aluli. Each of these senior Kua of our ‘Ohana have such a powerful way of negotiating the complex ranges of emotions, motives and aims of the members of the ‘Ohana and our policy making partners in the State. They all do so masterfully in their own way, but a central question that they each pose regardless of circumstance is “What is best for Kanaloa? Will the decision that we make be in the best interest of Kohemālamalama?” I have inherited these as my central guiding questions for all discussions pertinent to Kaho‘olawe. With this genealogy, I am confident that I will be able to facilitate and articulate the complex needs of Kaho‘olawe in my capacity as a commissioner.

4. If confirmed, what goals or priorities would you hope to accomplish during your term of service?
 - a. The first immediate goal is to maintain the status quo and find ways to improve upon it, to amplify the work already being done. Both the KIRC and the ‘Ohana both do incredible labor for the benefit of Kanaloa, whether it be physically toiling in the sweltering sun and soaking downpours to open up the ala loa around the island, spreading seeds to revitalize the islands ecosystems, the spiritual labor of our ceremonies, or the intellectual labor of educating people, there is so much work being done that first and foremost must be sustained and then eventually elevated. Fortunately for a prospective incoming commissioner like myself, we are at a time of review and assessment which I imagine will be the first step to procuring our next strategic plan. This will allow the commission the opportunity to learn even more about the various initiatives taken by the KIRC and the ‘Ohana in more salient detail before drawing our conclusions in preparation for the new strategic plan. My second goal is to craft that strategic plan: we need to survey the work done and report it to our community, the lāhui and people of Hawai‘i. Following the presentation of the various successes and impediments found in the term of the last 12 years, we will then be able to look forward and reconceptualize what should be the priorities of the next period. Then my third goal as commissioner will be to execute that next strategic plan to the best of our ability.
5. Do you believe there is anything in your background, professional affiliations, financial interests, legal record, or prior work that could reasonably be perceived by the public as creating a conflict of interest or otherwise raise questions regarding your character, judgment, or ability to serve impartially on the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission? If so, please explain.

- a. I do not believe so. The seat I will hopefully fill is one of the 'Ohana seats on the commission and so I believe it makes a great deal of sense that I am intimately involved with the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana. As I have noted in other areas of this query, I believe my intimacy with the 'Ohana affords me far more advantages than disadvantages. I know what is at stake in Kanaloa: it is aloha 'āina and the possibility of a vision of Hawai'i that is liberated from the destructive exploitation of 'āina and our fellow citizens. I will advocate with every fiber of my being to keep that dream alive.

I am hopeful that these responses find you well and that I have answered them satisfactorily. I look forward to any questions that may arise in our conversation on March 18th during my confirmation hearing. Mahalo once more for considering my nomination and for your resolve to empower the Kaho'olawe island reserve.

Mahalo piha,



Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala



MICHELLE PESCAIA
Chairperson
FAITH KAHALE SAITO
Vice Chair

J. KALAMA CHOCK
RYAN KANAKA'OLE
SAUMALU MATAAFA
BENTON KEALII PANG, Ph.D
KEONI SOUZA

Michael K. Nāho'opi'i
Executive Director

KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA
KAHO'OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
KŌMIKINA MĀLAMA KAHO'OLAWE

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Testimony of
MICHAEL K. NĀHO'OPĪ
Executive Director

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND

Wednesday, March 18, 2026
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 738
CONFIRMATION TO THE KAHO'OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION,
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, KAIPULAMAKANOLONIO KEALA

Governor's Message No. 738 submits for consideration and confirmation, Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala to serve on the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC), in the seat reserved for the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO). On behalf of the KIRC, I wish to express my **strong support and recommendation** for his confirmation.

Kaipu is an Assistant Professor of Hawaiian Studies for the Kamakākūokalani Center at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa Campus (UHM), where his specialization is classical mo'olelo (history, legends and stories) of Kanaka Maoli, especially as they relate to Hawaiian philosophy, modern (post-1970 Renaissance) Hawaiian politics and the return of traditional religious practices of aloha 'āina work of the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana. He is also a PhD Candidate in the UHM Department of English and graduated from UHM with a master's in fine art (MFA) in Hawaiian Theatre with eight national Kennedy Center awards for his thesis production of *He Leo Aloa*.

Kaipu has been a lifelong PKO member and has regularly volunteered to facilitate and lead PKO accesses to Kaho'olawe. Additionally, Kaipu is a PKO kua or leader and a cultural practitioner, perpetuating the on-island Makahiki Ceremony as a Mo'olono. Kaipu represents the next generation of PKO leadership for the KIRC as his father, Kaliko Baker, was also a KIRC Commissioner from 2011 to 2019. I have known Kaipu his entire life as his father and I trained as Mo'olono together in the early '90's and I was there when he selected Kaipu's name from our main Makahiki chant.

Kaipu brings a strong background in native Hawaiian cultural practices and deep understanding of the historical and political movements of Kaho'olawe, which would greatly benefit the KIRC's mission. The KIRC will be truly fortunate to have the support and advice of Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala on the commission, and I strongly support his confirmation.

PROTECT KAHO‘OLAWE ‘OHANA
1733 Wili Pā Loop, B-1
Wailuku, Hawai‘i 96793



March 15, 2026

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM738 CONFIRMING KAIPULAUMAKANIOLONO KEALA TO
THE KAHO‘OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION THROUGH JUNE 30, 2030**

Chair Chris Lee, Vice-Chair Lorraine Inouye and members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts. Aloha! My name is Davianna Pōmaika‘i McGregor and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana in support of GM 738 confirming Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) through June 30, 2030.

HRS Chapter 6K Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Section 5. Commission provides that "(2) Two members shall be appointed by the governor from a list provided by the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana." The term for Michell Miki‘ala Pescaia, who currently holds one of these two positions on the KIRC has expired. The Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana supports the appointment of Assistant Professor Kaipulaumakanolono Keala to now serve on the KIRC through June 30, 2030.

Professor Keala has been coming to Kaho‘olawe and participating in the annual Makahiki ceremonies since he was six years old, to present (with the exception of 4 ceremonies). He is trained as both a Kua to provide safe and meaningful journeys to the island and as a KIRC Access Guide - able to identify, mark and avoid unexploded ordnance. Kaipu is also a Mo‘olono, a group of men in the ‘Ohana responsible to conduct the annual religious ceremonies to Lono, during his season of Makahiki. All of these accomplishments more than qualifies hime to serve on the KIRC.

Professor Keala is very knowledgeable about the mo‘olelo, deep history of Kaho‘olawe, as well as the more recent history of the struggle to stop military use and heal the island. He is very familiar with the landscape of the island and the challenges to revegetate the island. He also knows the location of the important cultural historical sites on the island that have contributed to the entire island being on the National Register of Historical Places. Kaipu is culturally grounded in Native Hawaiian cultural and spiritual customs and practices associated with the management of these sites. In summary, Kaipu is a responsible, insightful, visionary leader of the new generation providing stewardship of Kaho‘olawe into the future.

The ‘Ohana wholeheartedly supports the confirmation of Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala to serve on the KIRC. Mahalo

Mahalo nui loa,
davianna mcgregor

GM-738

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 12:30:46 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joshua Kaakua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Lee, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the Committee of Water Land Culture and the Arts,

Please accept this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of the confirmation of Mr. **KAIPU KEALA** to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC). The nominee has the knowledge, community support, integrity and voice to lend a bright future for Kaho‘olawe and the State of Hawai‘i. My perspective comes from growing up with Kaipu in the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana and watching him serve as a thoughtful advocate, worker, and leader. I am also familiar with the KIRC as a former Board member and Chair, and recognize Kaipu’s unique talents to be an asset and good fit for the Commission.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of this nominee.

Josh Kaakua

GM-738

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 8:34:58 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hardy Spoehr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senator Lee, Chair, and Senator Inouye, Vice Chair

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony strongly supporting Gov's Message 738 asking appointment of Ms. Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala to the Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Commission for a term to expire on 06-30-2030. Her resume not only speaks for itself but I am so reminded of Queen Kapi`olani's 'olelo na`auao - "Kulia i ka Nu`u." She has done this and will continue to do this throughout her life. She brings her vibance and "palena `ole ka `ike" to the commission. MAHALO.

Hardy Spoehr; 1833 Vancouver Place; Honolulu, Hawai`i; 96822

GM-738

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 3:16:08 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Kaliko Baker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nui e ka mea Hanohano Ronald D. Kouchi, Pelekikena o ka ‘Aha ‘Ōlelo Moku‘āina Hawai‘i, a me nā hoa hanohano ōna e noho maila:

Me ke kāko‘o piha au e kākau nei i ka‘u leka no KAIPULAUMAKANIOLONO KEALA i moho komikina no ke Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC). Mai kōna wā li‘ili‘i ko‘u ‘ike ‘ana iā ia. Puka ‘o ia mai Kamehameha mai i ka makahiki 2016. He mau kēkelē kulanui kāna: BA ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i (Mei 2019), MFA in Hana Keaka Hawai‘i (Mei 2022) a ke pa‘a mai nei kāna kēkelē lae‘ula (PhD) ma ka ‘Ōlelo Pelekania. Pākela kāna hana no‘eau. ‘O ka mea nui na‘e e mākaukau ai ‘o ia i ke kūlana moho komikina, ‘o ia nō kōna ho‘ohiki ‘ana i kāna hana no ka pono o Kaho‘olawe. He 22 ā keu aku paha nā makahiki ‘o kōna hele ‘ana i Kaho‘olawe. A i kēia mau makahiki he 3 a 4 paha i ka‘ahope aku nei, ua kū mai nei ‘o ia he alaka‘i nui i loko o ka PKO. He Mo‘o Lono ‘o Mr Keala ma Kaho‘olawe. He ‘oihana kahuna ka Mo‘o Lono nāna e mālama nā kuleana pili iā Lono, ke akua o ka Makahiki. ‘Oiai ‘o ka mo‘omeheu kekahi mea nui no ke KIRC, ua pono kōna koho ‘ia ‘ana e ka PKO, a pēlā ho‘i me ke koho a ke Kia‘āina, Mr J. Green, i moho hemolele ‘o ia e kō ai nā pahuhopu o ke KIRC.

Summary: My testimony is that I completely support the nomination of Mr. Kaipulaumakaniolono Baker to be appointed to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission.

Me ka ‘oia‘i‘o,

Dr. C.M. Kaliko Baker

kalikobaker@gmail.com

GM-738

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 3:43:42 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tammy Hailiopua Baker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

He leka kāko‘o kēia no Kaipulaumakaniolono K. Keala no ke kulana kōmikina ‘o Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission. He lālā ‘o Kaipulaumakaniolono no ka Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana no ‘umi a ‘oi makahiki a he Kua nō ho‘i ‘o ia ma nā huaka‘i PKO. Ma ka‘u i ‘ike ai, ua mākaukau nō ua moho nei e ‘auamo piha i ke kuleana kōmikina. He kāko‘o piha kēia iā Kaipulaumakaniolono K. Keala e lilo i kōmikina ma ke Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission. Mahalo.

me ka ‘oia‘i‘o,

Tammy Haili‘ōpua Baker

Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts
Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 1 pm
State Capitol, Conference Room 224
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Support for GM 738 for Nominee Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission

Aloha e Chair Lee, Vice Inouye, and Committee Members,

I am a member of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana. I submit **testimony in strong support of GM738** in my personal capacity.

I have worked along Keala for many years on Kaho‘olawe where we as PKO members help to facilitate community accesses to help restore the island after decades of abuse from the military. I have seen firsthand Keala’s dedication to the work the PKO does, including his commitment to conducting the Makahiki ceremonies as a mo‘olono that were the impetus for Kānaka to gain access during the military’s occupation and that are critical for bringing consistent rain to regreen Kaho‘olawe.

I am confident that as a commissioner, Keala will not only bring his experience as a cultural practitioner but his knowledge as a scholar of Hawaiian history that will provide an unique perspective to the Commission.

Please vote to support GM 738.

Humbly,

Kaulu Lu‘uwai

GM-738

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:11:40 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kuuleialohaonalani Salzer	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear President Ronald D. Kouchi and Members of the Senate:

I am writing in **strong support** of the nomination of Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala to serve on the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission, with a term to expire on June 30, 2030.

The stewardship of Kaho‘olawe is both a profound responsibility and a sacred kuleana. The island represents not only ecological restoration but also the ongoing cultural revitalization and healing of Native Hawaiian people. Commissioners entrusted with this role must bring a deep understanding of ‘ike kūpuna, a commitment to Aloha ‘Āina, and the ability to engage thoughtfully with community and cultural practitioners.

Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala embodies these qualities. Their dedication to cultural preservation and community engagement reflects the core values necessary to guide the continued restoration and protection of Kaho‘olawe. Their leadership is grounded in respect, ‘ike, and a clear commitment to future generations, ensuring that decisions made today honor both the past and the sustainability of the island moving forward.

At a time when culturally grounded, community-informed leadership is essential, this nomination represents an opportunity to strengthen the integrity and vision of the Commission. I am confident that Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala will serve with the wisdom, humility, and dedication that this role requires.

Mahalo for your consideration of this nomination and for your continued commitment to the stewardship of Kaho‘olawe.

Mahalo,

Ku‘ulei Salzer

March 17, 2026

To Whom it May Concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for GM738. As a member of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO) since 2009, I wish to offer full support for the consideration and confirmation of Kaipulaumakani Keala for the position of commissioner of the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission.

I have had the honor and delight to watch Kaipu grow into the outstanding young man he is through his lifelong relationship and stewardship of Kaho‘olawe. Raised in an ‘ōlelo upbringing with deep family ties to Kaho‘olawe. He has excelled in his roles of Mo‘olono for our Makahiki ceremonies, leadership as an access guide for countless public groups being provided access to the island by the PKO, and as a spokesperson for the ‘ohana. He represents the very best of the younger generation that have been raised with the strongest of cultural upbringing and foundation in life.

Kaipu is extremely respectful and caring of the PKO’s kupuna. He keeps in the forefront of his decisions and actions the gratitude and reverence we feel for those who sacrificed and fought to provide all that the PKO represents in Hawaii. His youth is a great asset with his understanding of the younger generations coming up and how to communicate with all the tools of this digital age.

Kaipu’s character and actions have ensured the trust and faith we have in him. He is seen as a bright rising star that inspires hope and respect with so many today. I personally and the entire Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana wish to express our support and gratitude for his consideration and confirmation as a commissioner and voice for the people.

Mahalo,
Kathleen Ho
Lawai, Hawaii

808 635-4110

LATE

GM-738

Submitted on: 3/17/2026 10:58:21 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Pescaia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kāko'o piha wau iā Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala i moho na ke Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission. He kūpono ka 'āpono 'ana iā ia 'oiai ua ho'okō 'o ia i nā kuleana he nui, mākaukau 'o ia e 'auamo hou aku i kuleana hou e kūkulu i ke ea a Kanaloa. He keiki piha 'o ia o ka Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana, he keiki piha a Lono, a Kane, a Kū me Kanaloa. Akamai 'o ia i ke 'ano kanawai o kānaka me nā akua. Pēlā ke alelo o kahi kanaka nei, 'o Kaipulaumakaniolono Keala, no ka noho komisina KIRC. Mahalo. KĀKO'O.