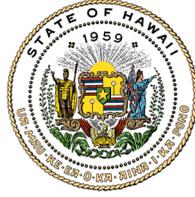


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
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
FINANCE**

**Thursday, March 5, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1949, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO GREEN FEE**

House Bill 1949, House Draft 1 would establish the Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and Green Fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard to be administered by the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure and offers the following comments.**

Act 96, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2025, established a climate impact fee, or "green fee," by increasing the transient accommodations tax to fund specific projects to: 1) protect, manage, and restore the State's natural resources; 2) increase climate resilience and hazard mitigation; and 3) support destination management and sustainable tourism. Pursuant to Act 96, green fee revenues are deposited into the State's General Fund, and the Governor is required to request those revenues in the executive budget or supplemental budget for projects aligned with the three abovementioned green fee purposes.

House Bill 1949, House Draft 1 seeks to establish a statewide Green Fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard to consolidate data, standardize reporting, and provide clear narratives and metrics illustrating how green fee revenues are used, where projects are located, and what environmental benefits are being realized. The Department appreciates the bill's stated goal of supporting transparency and accountability in the use of green fee funding.

Given the additional responsibilities and capacity required by the bill, the Department respectfully requests a sufficient appropriation to administer the Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and Green Fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1949 HD1
RELATING TO THE GREEN FEE

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka ‘Oihana ‘Imi Kālā
(House Committee on Finance)
Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Malaki 5, 2026

2:00pm

Lumi 308

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and House Members of the Committee on Finance:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB1949 HD1** which establishes a green fee transparency and accountability program and green fee resiliency impact dashboard to ensure that the public and decisionmakers understand how the green fee tax is being deployed to support community-led cultural and ecological restoration and protection projects, and thereby ensure the most productive and meaningful allocation of this important funding source over time.

OHA is the constitutionally-established body responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of Native Hawaiians.¹ Under the Hawai‘i State Constitution Article XII, section 7, the state has a specific duty to protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices, including practices that mālama ‘āina. OHA has long sought to promote the resiliency and health of our islands’ lands and natural and cultural resources. OHA is also a member of the Hawai‘i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. Hawaiian cultural foundations are intimately tied to this ‘āina, shape our identity and worldview, and also provide guidance to plan for seven generations into the future. It is with these obligations – based on the constitution and to our mo‘opuna – that OHA offers these comments in support of this measure.

OHA supports transparent and data-informed decision making as hallmarks for good governance and good government. While the “green fee” will provide much needed funds to care for our precious natural and cultural resources that this bill acknowledges

¹ Haw. Const. Art. XII Sec. 5

are foundational to Hawai‘i, the dashboard proposed in this bill will provide clear and timely data for transparency of how funds are allocated. In the coming years, the green fee is projected to generate up to \$100 million of revenue to the state each year. The proposed dashboard will be useful for both public decisionmakers and the larger community with a vested interest in the success of this program to understand how this significant source of funding is being distributed. Moreover, the dashboard will enable greater synergy and cross-collaboration among community groups leading funded projects, and thus help to accomplish the substantive goals of this program: to minimize and mitigate the growing impacts of climate change on our island home.

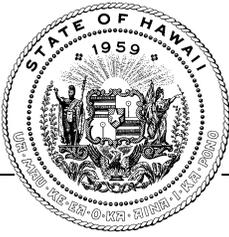
Native Hawaiian communities are uniquely impacted by climate change due to loss of cultural and ecological resources foundational for cultural practices. OHA understands that the impacts of climate change – such as coastal flooding and erosion and impacts to terrestrial and marine ecosystems – are already altering our natural and cultural environment with dire consequences for cherished places, native species, food security, and livelihoods. As Native Hawaiian practices sustained upwards of 1 million kānaka maoli here on these islands with minimal negative impact on the natural environment, we look forward to the inclusion of Native Hawaiian practices as a specific tactic²³ to help the state achieve its climate goals.

OHA respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** HB1949 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

² Bremer, L.L., McGuire, G., Hastings Silao, Z. *et al.* Carbon benefits through agroforestry transitions on unmanaged fallow agricultural land in Hawai‘i. *Sci Rep* **15**, 5097 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-87891-y>

³ Kurashima, Natalie & Berio Fortini, Lucas & Ticktin, Tamara. (2019). The potential of indigenous agricultural food production under climate change in Hawai‘i. *Nature Sustainability*. 2. 10.1038/s41893-019-0226-1.



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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846
Fax: (808) 587-2824
Web: <https://planning.hawaii.gov/>

Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Friday, March 5, 2026, 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

in consideration of
HB 1949, HD 1
RELATING TO THE GREEN FEE.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** HB 1949, HD1 which advances transparency and accountability in the administration of the Green Fee.

Providing a clear, publicly accessible dashboard to track revenues, allocations, and expenditures will strengthen public trust and demonstrate the State's commitment to responsible stewardship of these funds. Transparent reporting is essential to ensure that Green Fee investments deliver measurable environmental, climate, and community benefits.

OPSD also recognizes the strong foundation established by last year's passage of the Green Fee and the significant opportunity it presents to support sustainable tourism, environmental restoration, and climate and hazard mitigation statewide. The Green Fee represents a forward-looking investment in protecting Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources while strengthening long-term climate resilience and sustainable development for residents and visitors alike.

To ensure effective implementation, OPSD **recommends amending this measure to designate the Department of Budget and Finance as the administering agency** for the Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and the Green Fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard.

As the State's central fiscal agency, the Department of Budget and Finance is well positioned to manage the dashboard's fiscal tracking and reporting functions, given its established expertise in financial oversight and statewide reporting systems. Aligning administration within B&F, would promote operational efficiency and clear fiscal accountability, while allowing the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission to continue fulfilling its advisory role.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on HB 1949, HD 1.

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
House Committee on Finance (FIN)

From: Carmela Resuma, Member
Green Fee Advisory Council (GFAC)

HB1949 HD1 – Relating to Green Fee Appropriations – Support with Comments
[Thursday, 03-05-26 / 2:00PM / House Conference Room 308]

Aloha Chair Chris Todd and Members of the FIN Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1949 HD1, which establishes the Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and a publicly accessible Green Fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard.

Act 96 (SLH 2025) created Hawai'i's Green Fee to provide a dedicated funding source for environmental stewardship, climate and hazard resilience, and sustainable tourism. As the Green Fee begins generating revenue, it is equally important that the public can clearly see how those funds are being used and what outcomes they are producing.

HB1949 HD1 advances that goal by creating a centralized, publicly accessible platform to track Green Fee investments statewide. The bill directs the development of an online dashboard that will report on revenues collected, allocations by project and agency, expenditures, project locations, timelines, and measurable outcomes.

This type of transparency is essential for maintaining public trust and ensuring that these investments deliver real environmental and community benefits. Hawai'i residents, policymakers, and stakeholders should be able to easily understand where funds are going and how projects are performing over time.

From the perspective of the Green Fee Advisory Council, a public dashboard will also strengthen coordination across agencies implementing Green Fee projects. Many departments and partners will be responsible for carrying out funded initiatives, from watershed restoration and wildfire mitigation to visitor management and coastal resilience. A shared reporting framework helps ensure that progress is documented consistently and that lessons learned can inform future investments.

Equally important, transparency tools like this help demonstrate the real impact of prevention-focused investments. Climate adaptation, ecosystem restoration, and hazard mitigation often produce benefits over years or decades. By tracking progress and outcomes through a public dashboard, the State can show how these investments reduce long-term risk, protect communities, and safeguard Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources.



The Green Fee represents a long-term commitment to caring for the places that sustain Hawai'i's people, culture, and economy. Establishing strong accountability mechanisms at the outset will help ensure that this commitment is carried out responsibly.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1949 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your continued leadership on policies that protect Hawai'i's environment and strengthen resilience for future generations.

Me ka ha'aha'a,
Carmela Resuma, Member
Green Fee Advisory Council (GFAC)



Chair Todd
Vice Chair Takenouchi
House Committee on Finance

Thursday, March 5, 2026
2:00 PM

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1949 HD1 RELATING TO THE GREEN FEE

Aloha Members of the House Committee on Finance,

The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission was first created through Act 106 in 2018, “to advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the State.” The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission’s Education legislative committee is in strong support of **HB1653 HD1**.

As stated in the bill, the impact that the Green Fee may have on giving back to the Hawai‘i and its residents is incredible. However, we recognize that the politicization of environmental protection efforts alongside erosion of trust in the state may obscure the trajectory of the fee’s mission—which is why we are in support of the various methods of funding accountability provided by this bill.

We believe that the tasks of monitoring and reporting allocated to the Hawai‘i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Committee are pertinent to securing further approval and support of the Green Fee by Hawai‘i residents. If we establish security around this particular climate

solution, perhaps we can look forward to enough trust to take on further issues. Therefore, the Hawai'i State Youth Commission strongly urges the committee to **PASS HB1949 HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission

hawaii-state-yc@gmail.com

Verbal Testimony

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, Members of the House Committee on Labor and Government Operations,

My name is _____, and I am speaking today on behalf of the Hawai'i State Youth Commission. The Hawai'i State Youth Commission is in **strong support** of **HB1653 HD1**.

As mentioned in our testimony, one of the most critical issues in Hawai'i's current education system is the teacher shortage and retainment rates. The significance of teachers' role in the future of Hawai'i's youth has been long overlooked, represented by salaries that are among the lowest in the nation. As the Youth Commission recognizes the importance of education in facilitating the next generation of thinkers, innovators, and leaders, we recognize the importance of teachers who guide the path for students to do so.

We must work to ensure that teachers are offered financial stability to support all they do for our keiki. Providing automatic step increases in teacher and educational officer salaries is a crucial initiative to filling the teacher shortage and retaining high-quality teachers for all future generations of learners in Hawai'i.

Therefore, the Hawai'i State Youth Commission strongly urges the committee to **PASS** **HB1653 HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Committee

FROM: Terry George, Chief Executive Officer & President

RE: Testimony in Support for HB 1949 HD 1, Relating to the Green Fee

DATE: Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 2:00 pm

LOCATION: Hearing Room 308

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) **supports HB 1949 HD 1** relating to the creation of a green fee transparency and accountability program and green fee resiliency impact dashboard.

Protecting natural resources is a priority area within HCF's CHANGE Framework under the Natural Environment sector. HB 1949 HD 1 will help ensure transparency and accountability relating to Green Fee spending, with a designated entity to track and fund, as well as create a publicly accessible dashboard so that constituents and community members can see how Green Fee funds are being spent. Transparency preserves and increases public confidence.

Protecting the 'āina, preserving the ocean and its marine life, and ensuring fresh water is critical to the future of our people. The Green Fee will provide important investments in land stewardship, conservation, and biocultural revitalization efforts, and transparency relating to these investments is equally crucial. **We respectfully urge the legislature to advance HB 1949 HD 1.**



Hawai'i State Senate

Committees on Energy & Environmental Protection and Tourism

HB1949 – Relating to the Green Fee

RE: Strong support of HB1949

February 12, 2026

Hawaiian Council writes in **strong support of HB1949** to establish the Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and Green Fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard (GRID). The Green Fee was created with a clear promise that visitor revenues would be reinvested in Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources. This bill fulfills that promise by improving transparency, standardizing reporting, and giving the public a clear view of how these dollars are allocated and what outcomes they deliver.

As an organization dedicated to advancing the interests of Native Hawaiians and their connection to the 'āina, Hawaiian Council recognizes the transformative potential of the Green Fee in supporting community-based sustainability projects. From ahupua'a stewardship to visitor education, the Green Fee has potential to revitalize Hawai'i's environment and infrastructure from mauka to makai.

The establishment of a transparency program and impact dashboard are essential to promote informed decision-making and accountability for all stakeholders of Green Fee projects. HB1949 ensures that Green Fee investments remain aligned with their intended purpose and are evaluated consistently across agencies. With a large portion of proposed Green Fee projects turning to 'ike kupuna (ancestral knowledge) and the historic work of aloha 'āina activists for guidance, it is crucial that Native Hawaiian communities have an accessible means to track the progress of projects and work collaboratively with state agencies.

He ali'i ka 'āina; he kauā ke kanaka—the land is chief; the people are its servant. The task of protecting and stewarding the 'āina is the collective responsibility of all of us, including legislators, state agencies, and community advocates. For these reasons, Hawaiian Council respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS HB1949**. Mahalo for your commitment to accountability towards sustainability projects protecting Hawai'i nei.

Me ke aloha 'āina,

Madelyn McKeague

Director of Advocacy

Hawaiian Council

HAWAIIANS ADVANCING HAWAI'I

91-1270 Kinoiki Street, Building 1, Kapolei, HI 96707

info@hawaiiancouncil.org

www.hawaiiancouncil.org

Testimony in Support of [HB1949](#)
House Committee on Finance
Position: Support

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lauren Buck, and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of HB1949, which would establish a public transparency dashboard to track the allocation and use of revenues generated by the Hawai'i Green Fee. I'm a student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa who's majoring in Natural Resources and Environmental Management (NREM). With a specialization in coastal watershed management, I have a strong interest in preserving and protecting our marine resources, here in Hawai'i.

The Green Fee represents a significant and promising investment in Hawai'i's future. It provides needed revenue to support climate resilience, sustainable tourism, and environmental stewardship, helping us close the \$560 million annual conservation funding gap. For this policy to succeed long-term, the public must be able to clearly see where funds are going, how decisions are made, and what outcomes are being achieved - in their communities and through the dashboard.

A publicly accessible dashboard is a practical and a necessary tool to ensure:

- Accountability in how public funds are distributed
- Public trust in the Green Fee program
- Equitable investment across communities and ecosystems
- Data-driven evaluation of program outcomes over time

In addition to the necessary tracking component of the fund, I strongly support that green fee funds should be used to resource community-based organizations who already lead stewardship efforts across Hawai'i. State agencies should partner with organizations through contracts, grants, and other financial mechanisms to promote a collaborative and co-management model for project success. Through my work at the Ānuenue Sea Urchin Hatchery, where I help breed sea urchins to manage coral reef smothering in Kāneʻohe Bay, I have seen how important this collaboration can be. Our efforts would be strengthened through partnership with community-based organization that have the funding to support these types of mitigation efforts. For this reason, I believe that it's critical to ensure transparency and accountability in how funds will be distributed among organizations to ensure long-term success for these efforts.

During the first year of green fee implementation, we have a kuleana to ensure the fund is set up with integrity and strength. A transparent and community-driven fund will also empower community members, practitioners, and policymakers to learn from what works and continuously improve how funds are deployed.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to pass HB1949 and affirm Hawai'i's commitment to transparency, accountability, and community-centered investment.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your leadership on this important issue.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,
Lauren Buck
O'ahu
96826

HAWAI'I OCEAN LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE



March 5, 2026

Hawai'i State Legislature
House Committee on Finance

Re: Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB 1949 HD1, Relating to the Green Fee

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and esteemed members of the committee,

The Ocean Legislative Task Force—a coalition of more than 150 individuals across over 20 organizations statewide—**strongly supports** HB 1949 HD1, relating to the Green Fee. This measure would establish a public Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and a Resiliency Impact Dashboard.

HB1949 HD1 will ensure that the public can see how Green Fee revenues are allocated and what impacts those investments are producing for Hawai'i's environment, communities, and ocean resources. A transparent dashboard is essential to building trust and empowering Hawai'i's residents, policymakers, and ocean stakeholders with real-time data on where funds are going and how priorities are being met.

The Ocean Legislative Task Force also supports HB1949 HD1 because transparency will help the public and lawmakers understand how funding recommendations from the Green Fee Advisory Council align with our state's critical environmental needs. The Advisory Council—a diverse group of local experts convened to guide the use of Green Fee resources—has identified an initial slate of projects that will directly benefit Hawai'i's marine and coastal ecosystems, including:

- **Community-driven Coral Reef Resilience and Restoration**
Funding to support coral and coastal restoration initiatives that enhance coral health, increase coastal resilience to storm impacts, and strengthen collaboration between community partners and state agencies.
- **Monitoring and Assessment of Reef and Nearshore Ecosystems**
Investment in ocean monitoring programs to track water quality, reef conditions, and nearshore fisheries resources, which are essential for adaptive management and protecting ecologically significant areas statewide.

The Hawai'i Ocean Legislative Task Force advocates for measures that advance cesspool conversion and wastewater management, protect Hawai'i's coral reefs and reef fish, ensure transparent and sustainable implementation of the Green Fee program and long-term environmental staffing, and support other measures that strengthen Hawai'i's coastal and marine ecosystems.

- **Marine Resource Co-management and Enforcement Partnerships**
Funding for community co-management efforts and expanded marine resource enforcement collaborations, which support volunteer Makai Watch groups and bolster protection of coastal and marine areas.
- **Pilot Cesspool Conversions in Priority Coral Hotspots**
Targeted support for cesspool conversion efforts in critical coral reef landscapes (such as Hōnaunau), addressing ocean water quality at its source and reducing sewage discharge that harms reefs and nearshore waters.

These recommended investments highlight how Green Fee revenues will be put to work protecting Hawai'i's ocean ecosystems, improving water quality, and supporting community-based stewardship—outcomes that are consistent with the mission of the Ocean Legislative Task Force. A public dashboard, as proposed in HB1949 HD1, will allow all stakeholders to track these kinds of strategic environmental investments over time, ensuring that funds intended for ocean and watershed health are visible, evaluated, and continuously improved.

For these reasons, the Ocean Legislative Task Force strongly urges the Legislature to pass HB1949 HD1 to affirm Hawai'i's commitment to transparency, accountability, and long-term, data-driven stewardship of our marine environment.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this critical measure.

The Hawai'i Ocean Legislative Task Force advocates for measures that advance cesspool conversion and wastewater management, protect Hawai'i's coral reefs and reef fish, ensure transparent and sustainable implementation of the Green Fee program and long-term environmental staffing, and support other measures that strengthen Hawai'i's coastal and marine ecosystems.



A Community Dedicated to Saving Puakō Reef

Return the reef to its historic 70% coral coverage from its existing 7%.

www.Puako4reefs.org * [Puako for Reefs Facebook](#)

Story map of Puakō: [Wahi Pana -A Sacred Place](#)

HEARING FOR STATE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE Thursday, March 5, 2026 2:00 p.m. Conference Room 308, State Capitol

TO: House Committee on Finance Chair, Chris Todd, and Vice-Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and all members

RE: House Bill 1949 HD1. Relating to the Green Fee.

Aloha Chair, Committee Members, and Honorable Legislators,

Puakō For Reefs is a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to protecting the reef near Puakō and building a scalable model to protect all Hawai'i coral reefs from wastewater pollution. We strongly support HB 1949, HD1, which establishes the Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and Green Fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard.

We are grateful that funding will be provided for mitigation of tourism and visitor related impacts, as well as basic environmental stewardship. The idea of a dashboard for tracking funding as well as progress on multiple efforts is great. And, of course, this will inform decision-makers on future funding by being able to see impacts of past projects. Win-win for everyone.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your leadership on this urgent matter.

Puakō for Reefs Board members and its many volunteers

Karen Anderson, Board Chair,
Stephanie Erickson, Board Treasurer,
Barbara Bell, Board Secretary, and
George Fry, Board member.

HB-1949-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/5/2026 11:20:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rafael Bergstrom | Sustainable Coastlines Hawaii | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i continues to support the impact a Green Fee can have and, further, that mechanisms for public transparency are vital to ensure the funding is implemented in the most effective way. SCH strongly supports HB 1949.

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting HB1949 HD1, Relating to the Green Fee
Committee on Finance
March 5, 2026 at 2:00 pm
Conference Room 308 and via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Hawai'i and Palmyra strongly supports HB1949 HD1, which establishes the Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and Green Fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard, to be administered by the Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission.

Hawai'i faces surmounting environmental challenges including wildfires, disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of our natural and cultural resources. As an island region, our community safety faces growing risk the longer we go without significant funding toward environmental protection and restoration. Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. Act 96, which increased the TAT by 0.75% and extended its collection to the cruise ship industry, is a generational investment in Hawai'i's natural resources, will build climate resiliency and allow us to better manage our state as a visitor destination.

HB1949 HD1 advances Act 96 by ensuring that the public can clearly see how green fee revenues are allocated and used. By creating a statewide transparency dashboard, the bill provides communities with a central, accessible place to track green fee spending, project outcomes, geographic distribution, and environmental benefits. This level of visibility is essential for building and maintaining public trust, especially as green fee investments expand across the islands.

The Governor's green fee-related budget requests include major investments that align with urgent statewide needs and directly overlap with the on-the-ground conservation work that partners like TNC help deliver. These include:

- *Native Species and Terrestrial Ecosystems:*

This subcategory of requests would fund a number of critical actions to restore the forests, grasslands and support communities across Hawai'i. By investing in watershed protection and partnerships, this funding would ensure that we can act now to remove the ungulates that decimate our landscape, control dangerous invasive species, and continue the everyday work we need to restore our native forest and fight against forest-bird extinction. TNC and our partners are already leading work like this across the main Hawaiian Islands, including at the 84,000 acres TNC manages on Kaua'i (Wainiha Valley and Kanaele Bog), Moloka'i (Kamakou, Pelekunu and Mo'omomi), Lāna'i (Kānepu'u), Maui (Waikamoi and Kapunakea) and Hawai'i Island (Kona Hema and Ka'u). However,

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Duke E. Ah Moo Kris Billeter Anne S. Carter Ka'iulani de Silva Daniel J. Dunn Dave Eadie Jan Elliott Matt Emerson
Hon. Judith Epstein Dr. Alan M. Friedlander Benjy Garfinkle Puni Jackson David Lassner Brett MacNaughton (Chair)
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Ihupani Advisory Council: Christopher J. Benjamin Kenton T. Eldridge Eiichiro Kuwana
Duncan MacNaughton Jean E. Rolles Crystal K. Rose Nathan E. Smith

Founders: Samuel A. Cooke Herbert C. Cornuelle

additional, sustained investment is direly needed to protect the functions of our forests and watersheds.

- *Aquatic Resources and Coastal Ecosystems:*

This subcategory of request would help steward the long-term sustainability and health of our aquatic resources, including reefs, fisheries, wetlands, and nearshore ecosystems. Investments in coral nurseries, reef restoration, hybrid reef structures, marine debris removal, and comprehensive monitoring of coral reefs, water quality, and fisheries conditions align with work that TNC and partners carry out across the islands. Strengthening loko i'a resilience, restoring nearshore habitats, and supporting the revival of traditional aquaculture systems are crucial for reinforcing mauka-to-makai connections and community-based stewardship. Together, these efforts improve ecosystems health and protect the coastal communities, cultural practices, and food systems that depend on them.

- *Wildfire Mitigation:*

This subcategory of request would support critical work to reduce wildfire risk and build community resilience statewide. By investing in vegetation management, climate-hazard modeling, and Firewise community preparedness, the State can directly address the conditions that fuel extreme fire behavior in Hawai'i. TNC has worked to restore native vegetation, remove ungulates, and pilot innovative post-fire recovery.

- *Coastal and Flood Mitigation*

This subcategory of request would strengthen the nature-based systems that protect our coastlines and waterways. Wetlands that absorb floodwaters, reefs that reduce wave energy, and ahupua'a restoration that improves interconnectedness all provide powerful defenses for communities of Hawai'i. With sea level rise, king-tide events, and shoreline erosion, these defenses need consistent funding to remain effective.

These types of projects are essential to safeguarding the future of Hawai'i, and HB1949 HD1 ensures that every dollar is visible to the public. A statewide dashboard gives residents, cultural practitioners, nonprofits, and community stewards the ability to track progress, see outcomes, and understand how these investments are addressing real needs.

HB1949 HD1 is an important step toward ensuring that the State's green fee revenues are used transparently and effectively, giving the community a clear, accessible way to understand how funds are allocated, spent, and distributed across islands and agencies. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1949 HD1.

Guided by science, TNC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 84,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and 18 managed areas and have supported over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands.



**Care for 'Āina Now Coalition Letter
 HB1949: Relating To The Green Fee
 In support of Community Grant Program for Hawai'i Green Fee**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB1949 on behalf of the Care for 'Āina Now (CAN) coalition.

Care for 'Āina Now is a diverse coalition of more than 65 organizations, businesses, and community leaders from across Hawai'i dedicated to protecting, restoring, and responsibly managing Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources. CAN advocates for dedicated funding to support 'āina stewardship, climate change resilience, and natural disaster mitigation, with a strong focus on ensuring Green Fee revenues are used appropriately, transparently, and in alignment with community and environmental priorities.

HB1949 is a timely and necessary step to strengthen public trust in the Green Fee established through Act 96 in 2025. The Green Fee was created with a clear promise that tourism related revenues would be reinvested in Hawai'i's natural, cultural, and community resources. HB1949 helps fulfill that promise by improving oversight and public visibility into how funds are used.

Community-based organizations are the foundation of climate solutions here in Hawai'i. Green Fee revenues are intended to support key priorities, including environmental stewardship, climate and hazard resilience, and sustainable tourism. These priorities include protecting land and aquatic resources, preserving native species, reducing wildfire and flood risks, strengthening infrastructure, supporting destination management, and improving parks and beaches. **CAN strongly supports these priorities, detailed in the Project Recommendations and Governors Message,, and urges that the Legislature encourage strong community leadership and comangement with agencies to reach them.**



Currently, it is unclear how Green Fee funds will be allocated, spent, and evaluated. HB1949 addresses this gap by establishing a Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and a publicly accessible Resiliency Impact Dashboard. This dashboard will allow residents and policymakers to track revenues from allocation to expenditure and evaluate project outcomes in a clear and consistent manner.

Equally important, the bill reinforces appropriate use of funds by establishing uniform reporting standards across agencies. This improves coordination, reduces the risk of mission drift, and helps ensure limited resources are directed to the highest impact needs.

HB1949 does not expand the Green Fee or change how revenues are collected. It focuses on responsible stewardship of existing funds and aligns with Hawai'i's public trust obligation to protect natural resources for present and future generations.

For these reasons, the Care for 'Āina Now coalition respectfully urges the committee to pass HB1949 and move this measure forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

These community groups, organizations and businesses support funding for 'āina, resilience, restoration, protection, management, and stewardship solutions for the communities of Hawai'i.

1. Agripelago
2. Agriculture Stewardship Hawai'i
3. Blue Planet Foundation
4. Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory
5. Care About Climate
6. Citizens' Climate Lobby Hawai'i
7. Climate Future Forum
8. Conservation Council for Hawai'i
9. Conservation International



10. Conservation Council of Hawai'i
11. Coral Reef Alliance
12. Delphi Cinema
13. Excurinsure
14. Everblue
15. Fish Pono–Save Our Reefs
16. Friends of Hanauma Bay
17. Full Circle Farm
18. FutureSwell
19. Global Preservation Initiative
20. Good Food Movement
21. Hanalei Initiative
22. Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA)
23. Hawai'i Alliance for Community Based Economic Development (HACBED)
24. Hawaiian Council
25. Hawai'i Environmental Change Agents
26. Hawai'i Green Growth
27. Hawai'i Impact Collaborative
28. Hawai'i Land Trust
29. Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition
30. Hawai'i Wildlife Fund
31. Hawai'i Youth Climate Coalition
32. Ka'ala Farms
33. Kailua Beach Adventures
34. Kauai Climate Action Coalition
35. Kauai Farm Planning
36. Kanu Hawai'i
37. Kingdom Pathways
38. Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (KUA)
39. Kuleana Coral Restoration



40. Kupu
41. Limahuli Garden and Preserve
42. Leftover Love Co
43. Mālama Huleia
44. Mālama Learning Center
45. Mālama Maunaloa
46. Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea
47. Maui Bicycling League
48. Maui Ocean Center
49. Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute
50. National Tropical Botanical Garden
51. Native Ecosystem Services
52. The Nature Conservancy
53. North Shore Community Land Trust
54. Ocean Music Action
55. Palehua Conservation Initiative
56. Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project
57. Parley for the Oceans
58. Pono Hawai'i Initiative
59. Protea Zero Waste Store
60. Resources Legacy Fund
61. Reuse Hawai'i
62. Surfrider Foundation Hawai'i Chapters
63. Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i
64. Sustainable Moloka'i
65. Travel2Change
66. Trust for Public Land
67. Wai'oli Valley Taro Hui
68. Waipā Foundation
69. Wakeful State



- 70. Wastewater Alternatives & Innovations (WAI)
- 71. Wild Kids
- 72. Young Progressives Demanding Action
- 73. Zero Waste Hawai'i Island

Mahalo for your consideration to protect Hawai'i's natural resources.



Testimony Before The
House Committee on Finance (FIN)
IN SUPPORT OF HB1949 HD1
March 5, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Room 308 via Videoconference

We are Olan Leimomi Fisher and Kevin Chang, Kua'āina Advocate and Executive Director, respectively, testifying on behalf of [Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo \(or KUA\)](#). "Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo" stands for "grassroots growing through shared responsibility," and our acronym "KUA" means "backbone." **Our mission is to connect and empower communities to improve their quality of life through the collective care for their biocultural (natural and cultural) heritage, serving as a "backbone organization" that supports creative and community-driven solutions to problems stemming from environmental degradation.** Hawai'i's biocultural resources continue to be negatively impacted by political, economic, and social changes, and the increasing dangers of climate change make fostering and empowering resilient communities acutely critical.

Currently KUA supports three major networks of: (1) over 40 mālama 'āina (caring for our 'āina or "that which feeds") community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together); (2) over 60 loko i'a (fishpond aquaculture systems unique to Hawai'i) and wai 'ōpae (anchialine pool systems) sites in varying stages of restoration and development, with numerous caretakers, stakeholders, and volunteers known as the Hui Mālama Loko I'a ("caretakers of fishponds"); and (3) the Limu Hui made up of over 50 loea (traditional experts) and practitioners in all things "limu" or locally-grown "seaweed." **Our shared vision is to once again experience what our kūpuna (ancestors) referred to as 'ĀINA MOMONA – abundant and healthy ecological systems that sustain our community resilience and well-being.**

KUA strongly supports HB1949 HD1 as an incremental step towards 'āina momona.

This bill would establish a public transparency dashboard to track the allocation and use of revenues generated by the Hawai'i green fee.

KUA supported the passage of Act 96 (2025), and is grateful for the opportunity that this new funding source will provide to mālama 'āina efforts across Hawai'i. The new green fee represents a significant and promising investment in Hawai'i's future, helping us close the estimated \$560 million annual conservation funding gap. However, to ensure success, it is essential that this new funding maintain accountability and transparency from the very start. This dashboard would also allow for easier reporting, evaluation, and justified improvements as the fee structure matures.

We also acknowledge and hope to amplify the many supporters calling for a portion of these funds to support the various existing and forthcoming community mālama 'āina groups through a community stewardship grant program in partnership with DLNR. The state cannot carry the kuleana of its public trust responsibilities, collaborative mālama 'āina is the future of conservation and is growing both in Hawai'i and worldwide.

The communities we work with are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources that they have cared for and depended on for generations since time immemorial. **We believe protecting our environment, the foundation of our very existence, is about sustained and long-term commitments toward achieving ‘āina momona abundance once again.** To get there requires continued accountability, transparency, and genuine investments in collaborative mālama ‘āina efforts, including through this bill. Our decisions today will continue to shape the future that our keiki’s keiki’s keiki will one day inherit – we hope for a future of shared and harmonious abundance, and hope you do, too.

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to submit testimony. Please **PASS** HB1949 HD1.

Aloha ‘Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.



PO Box 4, Kunia, Hawaii, 96759 || 808-622-9026 || www.agstewardshiphawaii.org

March 3, 2026

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

On behalf of **Agriculture Stewardship Hawaii**, we support HB1949 HD1 which integrates greater transparency through the Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and Impact Dashboard.

Agriculture Stewardship Hawaii is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the viability and sustainability of Hawaii's farmers and ranchers through technical assistance, resource coordination, business education, and policy support. We have **25 years of experience** supporting conservation agriculture and stewardship on Hawaii's working lands. We also lead the [Statewide Food Systems Coordination Initiative](#) (HSFSC) initiative, launched in 2024 with philanthropic and gubernatorial support to strengthen coordination within Hawaii's food system.

The Green Fee represents a historic step forward, and embedding strong transparency and accountability measures — including clear tracking of how revenues are allocated and spent — will significantly strengthen its long-term success. As the Green Fee is implemented in its first year, we **have a responsibility to establish the fund with integrity, transparency, and strong governance**. A clear, community-informed framework will not only build confidence in the program, but also enable community members, practitioners, and policymakers to learn from outcomes and continuously improve how resources are invested for Hawaii's future.

In addition, **Green Fee revenues should also strengthen the work of community-based organizations** that are already leading stewardship efforts across Hawaii. State agencies should actively partner with these organizations through contracts, grants, and other funding mechanisms to advance collaborative and co-management approaches that improve project effectiveness and long-term impact.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Dr. Amanda Shaw, PhD, Statewide Food Systems Coordinator
Email: amanda@agstewardshiphawaii.org, Tel: 808 429 5310

*Agriculture Stewardship Hawaii is a DBA of:
O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council, a 501c3 Nonprofit Corporation*



Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea

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501(c)(3) FEIN 27-0855937
www.pupukeawaimea.org
info@pupukeawaimea.org

March 05, 2026

FIN Hearing, Conference Room 308

HB 1949 HD1 Relating to the Green Fee – In Support

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee, Mālama Pūpūkea-Waimea (MPW) is a Hawai'i non-profit organization founded on the North Shore of O'ahu in 2005, working to replenish and sustain the natural and cultural resources of the Pūpūkea and Waimea ahupua'a through community stewardship, education, and partnerships.

MPW strongly supports HB 1949 HD1.

The bill establishes a Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and Green Fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard to **strengthen oversight and improve visibility into how green fee revenues are distributed and what outcomes they are producing statewide.**

As an organization implementing stewardship projects in partnership with state agencies, MPW understands the importance of sustained investment paired with clear accountability. **Transparent reporting supports informed decision-making, improves coordination, and builds public trust and confidence in the effective use of public funds.**

HB 1949 HD1 represents a sensible investment in fiscal transparency that enhances our collective ability to steward 'āina responsibly and effectively.

Mahalo for your time and the opportunity to submit testimony.

Jacqueline Leinau
Executive Director, MPW



**Testimony in Support of [HB1949](#)
House Committee on Finance
Position: Support**

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Christopher Hawkins, Executive Director of the Malama Kai Foundation, and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of HB1949, which would establish a public transparency dashboard to track the allocation and use of revenues generated by the Hawai'i Green Fee. I am physically based in Kamuela, Hawai'i Island, but our efforts are state-wide.

A publicly accessible dashboard is practical and necessary. It is a tool that will help ensure sustained public support via facilitating funding disbursement, decision-making, and outcomes transparency. This is very much related to the a concept that is personally and professionally important to me - procedural justice (the idea that fairness in the process (i.e., focusing on the quality of interactions, voice, neutrality, respect, and trust) leads to the perception that the final outcome is justly derived). Procedural justice is strengthened when decision-making processes are transparent, allowing stakeholders to see how information is used, how decisions are made, and whether rules are applied consistently. Public transparency builds trust by demonstrating that agencies are not withholding information or privileging certain interests, which is critical for perceptions of fairness and legitimacy. Without transparency, even technically sound decisions can be viewed as unjust, because affected communities lack the visibility needed to understand, evaluate, and meaningfully engage in the process.

In addition to the necessary tracking component of the fund, I strongly support resourcing community-based organizations, who already lead stewardship efforts across Hawai'i. Because many of these organizations advance State conservation goals, objectives, and policies, State agencies should partner with them via contracts, grants, and other financial mechanisms to promote a collaborative and comanagement model for project success. For 35 years, the Malama Kai Foundation has worked to care for Hawai'i's marine and coastal resources by advancing environmental education, supporting place-based conservation initiatives, and providing college scholarships to Hawai'i students engaged in marine conservation-related STEM fields. Our goals center on empowering local communities to actively protect nearshore ecosystems, coral reefs, fisheries, and culturally significant coastal capacity. Our work saves, conservatively, 90,000 anchor drops per year on Hawaii's fragile coral reef ecosystems.

During the first year of green fee implementation, we have a kuleana to ensure the fund is set up with integrity and strength. A transparent and community-driven fund will also empower community members, practitioners, and policymakers to learn from what works and continuously improve how funds are deployed.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to pass HB1949 and affirm Hawai'i's commitment to transparency, accountability, and community-centered investment. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your leadership on this important issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Hawkins", written in a cursive style.

Christopher Hawkins, Ph.D., Executive Director
Malama Kai Foundation
Hawai'i Island
96743



TESTIMONY from Kupu on HB1949 HD1: Relating To The Green Fee

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Keone Nakoa, and I am the Vice President of External Affairs at Kupu. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Kupu in **strong support of HB1949 HD1**.

Kupu is a statewide nonprofit organization based here in Hawai'i that focuses on creating programs that empower youth and young adults with opportunities to learn, serve, and work in ways that restore environments and communities. Our programs seek to build a local workforce that is prepared to address Hawai'i's unique challenges, and create community-specific solutions. As an organization that helps people transform their love for the environment into a professional career, the state legislature's bold action in bills like Act 96 last year and HB1949 stand as a testament to the strong leadership role our islands can fill around the world.

We are immensely grateful to the many people and groups that were instrumental in helping to pass the Green Fee, including members of these committees. The historic legislation passed last year, Act 96, bears a clear promise to reinvest tourism generated revenue back in our 'āina. HB1949 is a timely and necessary step to help fulfill this promise by improving visibility in how the funds are being used and what the tangible impacts are—to Hawai'i residents and tourists, alike. This bill will strengthen public trust in the Green Fee and create long term buy in and community support of the funds, which are crucial to the ultimate success of Act 96.

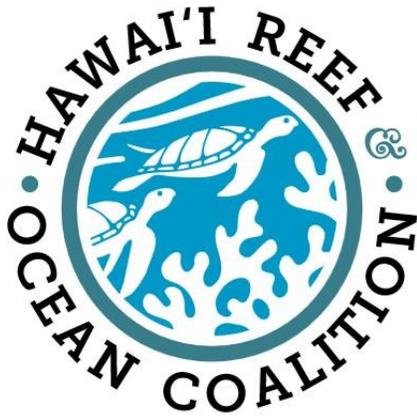
For Act 96 to achieve its visionary goal, Green Fee revenues must support Act 96's three express priorities: environmental stewardship, climate and hazard resilience, and sustainable tourism. Passing the fee was an important act of leadership, but it is only the beginning. What will ultimately determine success is whether residents and visitors can see the positive outcomes these funds make possible. Green Fee revenues will support key projects across multiple state agencies in partnership with community organizations, including establishing a statewide climate disaster resilience workforce, developing green jobs and training opportunities in natural resource management, and supporting land stewards and education and engagement for visitors at popular trails. Yet today, there is no simple way for the public to understand where the money goes or what it is accomplishing.

HB 1949 fills this gap by establishing a publicly accessible Green fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard (GRID). This dashboard would allow residents and policymakers to track revenues from allocation to expenditure and evaluate project outcomes in a clear and consistent manner. This is critically important as the data on the GRID will help us to tell a story of Hawai'i as a leader in climate resilience, and to demonstrate what is possible when initiative is taken to address these issues head on. For example, over the last 5 years Kupu has produced an estimated \$115 million of economic benefit; and for every dollar in funding it receives, Kupu generates ~\$6.25 in operating capacity. Impact results like these are easily understood and will help build trust and confidence in the new Green Fee mechanism.

The Green Fee represents a real opportunity to invest in resilience, restoration and the long-term care of 'aina. HB 1949 helps ensure that opportunity is realized by making results visible, building trust and doing so in a way that is practical for those carrying out the work. Kupu strongly urges the committee to pass HB 1949 and move this measure forward to help ensure the best stewardship of these funds possible.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Keone Nakoa
Vice President of External Affairs, Kupu



To: The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair, the Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and Members of the Finance Committee.

From: Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: **Hearing HB1949 HD1 RELATING TO THE GREEN FEE**

Hearing: Thursday March 5, 2026 2:00 p.m.

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Finance Committee!

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean.

The mission of the Climate Protectors Hawai'i is to educate and engage the local community in climate change action.

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii STRONGLY SUPPORT HB1949 HD1!

Last year, the State established a "green fee," an increase in the transient accommodations tax and a new imposition of taxes on cruise fares, to mitigate the impacts of tourism and climate change. The green fee supports environmental protection, climate resilience, ecosystem restoration, natural resource management, sustainable tourism, destination management, and environmental stewardship throughout Hawaii, Act 96, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025. The green fee represents a transformative opportunity to ensure that those who enjoy Hawaii's natural resources also contribute to their care. It provides needed revenue helping us close the \$560 million annual conservation funding gap.

Now that the green fee has been passed, Immediate action is necessary to establish a publicly accessible, regularly updated transparency platform that reflects the State's commitment to accountability, responsible resource management, and the long-term health of Hawaii's environment. For this policy to succeed long-term, the public must be able to clearly see where funds are going, how decisions are made, and what outcomes are being achieved - in their communities and through the dashboard.

This bill establishes the Green Fee Transparency and Accountability Program and Green Fee Resiliency Impact Dashboard, to be administered by the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission. This program and dashboard would support informed decision-making, promote fiscal responsibility, enhance collaboration across agencies, enable real-time public insight into project performance, and strengthen trust in the stewardship of Hawaii's natural and cultural resources. The dashboard would consolidate data, standardize reporting, and provide clear narratives and metrics illustrating how revenues are used, where projects are located, and what environmental benefits are being realized.

In addition to the necessary tracking component of the fund, Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i strongly support using green fee funds to support resource community-based organizations who already lead stewardship efforts across Hawai'i. State agencies should partner with organizations through contracts, grants, and other financial mechanisms to promote a collaborative and co-management model for project success.

Please pass this bill to affirm Hawai'i's commitment to transparency, accountability, and community-centered investment.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your leadership on this important issue!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)



Care for 'Āina Now Coalition

March 5, 2026

Hawai'i State Legislature
House Committee on Finance

Re: Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 1949 HD1, Relating to the Green Fee

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and esteemed members of the committee,

On behalf of the Care for 'Āina Now Coalition leadership committee, we write in strong support of HB 1949 HD1, relating to the Green Fee. This measure would establish a public-facing dashboard to track the distribution and use of revenues generated by Hawai'i's Green Fee.

The Green Fee represents one of the most important recent investments in Hawai'i's environmental future. These funds are intended to strengthen climate resilience, protect natural resources, and support responsible visitor management—while helping address the estimated \$560 million annual shortfall in conservation funding statewide. For this ambitious policy to succeed over time, it is essential that residents have confidence that resources are being allocated fairly, strategically, and in ways that deliver meaningful benefits for local communities and ecosystems.

HB 1949 HD1 advances that goal by creating a transparent and accessible system that allows the public to understand where Green Fee revenues are being invested, how funding decisions are made, which communities and ecosystems are benefiting, and what outcomes are being achieved over time. This level of visibility is critical to building public trust, promoting accountability, and ensuring that the program is guided by data and continuous improvement.

The Care for 'Āina Now Coalition also supports the initial spending recommendations developed by the Green Fee Advisory Council. These recommendations reflect a thoughtful, community-informed approach to investing Green Fee revenues in projects that strengthen ecosystem resilience, improve water quality, support stewardship of public lands and waters, and advance climate adaptation priorities statewide. We particularly support investments that fund community-based organizations to carry out critical environmental restoration, stewardship, and resilience work in coordination with state

agencies. Across Hawai'i, nonprofit and grassroots organizations already serve as frontline stewards of our lands and waters, bringing deep place-based knowledge and strong community relationships that are essential to successful project implementation.

As the Green Fee enters its first year of implementation, Hawai'i has both an opportunity and a responsibility to establish this program with strong transparency and accountability from the outset. A well-designed public dashboard will empower communities, practitioners, and policymakers alike to track investments, understand outcomes, and ensure that Green Fee revenues deliver long-term benefits for the people and places of our islands.

For these reasons, the Care for 'Āina Now Coalition respectfully urges the Committee to pass HB 1949 HD1 and continue advancing transparency, accountability, and community-centered stewardship of Hawai'i's natural resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

Care for 'Āina Now Coalition Leadership Committee



Testimony in Support of HB1949

House Committee on Finance

Position: Support

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Saman Dias**, and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of **HB1949**, which would establish a public transparency dashboard to track the allocation and use of revenues generated by the Hawai'i Green Fee.

I serve as **Chair of the Maui Bicycling League and lead advocate for the West Maui Greenway**, a planned 24-mile multi-use corridor connecting communities across West Maui. I am writing from **Maui** in support of this measure because transparency and accountability are essential to building long-term public trust in the Green Fee program and ensuring these funds are used effectively to strengthen climate resilience across our islands.

The Green Fee represents a significant and promising investment in Hawai'i's future. It provides needed revenue to support climate resilience, sustainable tourism, and environmental stewardship, helping address the estimated **\$560 million annual conservation funding gap**. For this policy to succeed long-term, the public must be able to clearly see where funds are going, how decisions are made, and what outcomes are being achieved in their communities.

A publicly accessible dashboard is a practical and necessary tool to ensure:

- Accountability in how public funds are distributed
- Public trust in the Green Fee program
- Equitable investment across communities and ecosystems
- Data-driven evaluation of program outcomes over time

Transparency will also help demonstrate how Green Fee investments support **multi-benefit resilience projects** across the state. For example, multi-use trails like the **West Maui Greenway** provide a unique combination of benefits: reducing transportation emissions, improving safe mobility for residents and visitors, and serving as **redundant evacuation corridors in disaster-prone regions**. Following the Lahaina wildfire, West Maui communities have become acutely aware of the need for additional evacuation routes and resilient infrastructure that supports both everyday mobility and emergency response.

In addition to the necessary tracking component of the fund, I strongly support the use of Green Fee funds to resource **community-based organizations that already lead stewardship efforts across Hawai'i**. Nonprofits and community groups play a critical role in advancing environmental protection, sustainable transportation, and stewardship of our natural resources. Strong partnerships between state agencies and community organizations will ensure that Green Fee investments deliver meaningful outcomes on the ground.

During the first year of Green Fee implementation, we have a **kuleana** to ensure the fund is set up with integrity and strength. A transparent and community-driven fund will empower community members, practitioners, and policymakers to learn from what works and continuously improve how funds are deployed.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to pass **HB1949** and affirm Hawai'i's commitment to transparency, accountability, and community-centered investment.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your leadership on this important issue.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Saman Dias', written in a cursive style.

Saman Dias

Chair [Maui Bicycling League](#) | [West Maui Greenway](#)

808-276-2068 | maui@hbl.org |

HB-1949-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 6:39:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Aaron Magee | Global Preservation Initiative | Support | In Person |

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Aaron Magee and I'm writing in support of HB1949.

With last year's historic establishment of the Green Fee, it's critical that we build a public dashboard to clearly track how these funds are used.

I'm the Executive Director of Global Preservation Initiative, a local nonprofit that already utilizes a public-facing dashboard to stay accountable to the communities we serve. Our Lifetime Impact Report openly shows our revenue, expenses, and the environmental impact we've created since our founding in 2022.

I strongly believe that when people contribute their money, they deserve to easily understand how it's being used and the results it creates.

I hope we can hold ourselves to that same standard when it comes to the residents and visitors who are funding these Green Fee projects.

I also believe State agencies should leverage the proven solutions of community organizations through contracts and grants because collaboration is what creates lasting impact.

Global Preservation Initiative leads restoration efforts at Mauiola, also known as Sand Island State Recreation Area, as well as Makapu'u Beach Park. These public lands benefit from consistent community stewardship and show how Government and community partnerships can succeed.

I hope you will commit to building transparency and public trust by passing HB1949.

Thank you.

HB-1949-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 3:00:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| helen raine | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support this bill because it includes vital community projects that will benefit both people and native Hawaiian wildlife, providing essential funding to protect the 'āina.

HB-1949-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 2:38:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jessica Kuzmier | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in support of HB1949. It sounds like a good methodology for transparency and ease of navigation. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1949-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 9:28:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Stuart Coleman | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of [HB1949](#)
House Committee on Finance
Position: Support**

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

my name is Stuart Coleman, and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of HB1949 which would establish a public transparency dashboard to track the allocation and use of revenues generated by the Hawai'i Green Fee.

The Green Fee represents a significant and promising investment in Hawai'i's future. It provides needed revenue to support climate resilience, sustainable tourism, and environmental stewardship, helping us close the \$560 million annual conservation funding gap. For this policy to succeed long-term, the public must be able to clearly see where funds are going, how decisions are made, and what outcomes are being achieved - in their communities and through the dashboard.

A publicly accessible dashboard is a practical and necessary tool to ensure: Accountability in how public funds are distributed; Public trust in the Green Fee program; Equitable investment across communities and ecosystems; and Data-driven evaluation of program outcomes over time

In addition to the necessary tracking component of the fund, I strongly support green fee funds should be used to resource community-based organizations who already lead stewardship efforts across Hawai'i. State agencies should partner with organizations through contracts, grants, and other financial mechanisms to promote a collaborative and comanagement model for project success. Our nonprofit WAI is seeking funds to help homeowners convert their cesspools, and it would be beneficial to show the public our successful efforts on the dashboard.

During the first year of green fee implementation, we have a kuleana to ensure the fund is set up with integrity and strength. A transparent and community-driven fund will also empower community members, practitioners, and policymakers to learn from what works and continuously improve how funds are deployed.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to pass HB1949 and affirm Hawai'i's commitment to transparency, accountability, and community-centered investment. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your leadership on this important issue.

Aloha, Stuart Coleman, Hbiacus Pl., Hon., HI 96815

HB-1949-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:47:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mark Owens | Individual | Oppose | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Opposed.

HB-1949-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 9:47:34 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Jessica Redford | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Redford and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of HB1949, which would establish a public transparency dashboard to track the allocation and use of revenues generated by the Hawai'i Green Fee. I am a resident of Hawaii Island and am deeply concerned about the impact tourism has on our environment, and I want to know that the Green Fee funds are being used appropriately to offset negative any impacts and increase our State's resilience in the face of climate change.

The Green Fee represents a significant and promising investment in Hawai'i's future. It provides needed revenue to support climate resilience, sustainable tourism, and environmental stewardship, helping us close the \$560 million annual conservation funding gap. For this policy to succeed long-term, the public must be able to clearly see where funds are going, how decisions are made, and what outcomes are being achieved - in their communities and through the dashboard.

A publicly accessible dashboard is a practical and necessary tool to ensure:

- Accountability in how public funds are distributed
- Public trust in the Green Fee program
- Equitable investment across communities and ecosystems
- Data-driven evaluation of program outcomes over time

In addition to the necessary tracking component of the fund, I strongly support green fee funds should be used to resource community-based organizations who already lead stewardship efforts across Hawai'i. State agencies should partner with organizations through contracts, grants, and other financial mechanisms to promote a collaborative and comanagement model for project success. In particular, Kanaka-led groups who can provide culturally appropriate guidance inspired by deep connection to 'āina, should be enlisted.

During the first year of green fee implementation, we have a kuleana to ensure the fund is set up with integrity and strength. A transparent and community-driven fund will also empower community members, practitioners, and policymakers to learn from what works and continuously improve how funds are deployed.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to pass HB1949 and affirm Hawai'i's commitment to transparency, accountability, and community-centered investment.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your leadership on this important issue.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jessica Redford
Holualoa, Hawaii Island
96725

HB-1949-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 12:58:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Carrie Ostroski | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee,

Mahalo for allowing me to share my strong support for HB1949 for the Green Fee and Green Fee transparency. This is a vital opportunity to get this right from the start and propel amazing efforts and projects as outlined in the outstanding Advisory Committee's portfolio, with accountability and information for best decision making.

Mahalo nui for your support of HB1949,

Carrie Ostroski

Waikoloa

808 731 5220

HB-1949-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 1:09:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Paul Bernstein | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Todd and members of the FIN committee:

I am submitting written testimony in strong support of HB1949, which would establish a public transparency dashboard to track the allocation and use of revenues generated by the Hawai'i Green Fee.

Transparency around the collection and disbursement of the revenues is key to people maintaining faith in the Green Fee and remaining supportive of this important policy.

Mahalo nui,

Paul Bernstein

Honolulu

Testimony in Support of HB1949

**House Committee on Finance
Position: Support**

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Hawkins Biggins, and I am a resident of O‘ahu writing in support of HB1949, which would establish a public transparency dashboard to track the allocation and use of Hawai‘i Green Fee revenues.

As a member of the Hawaiian Trail and Mountain Club, I regularly volunteer on trails across our island and see firsthand the importance of reliable and accountable funding for trail maintenance, watershed protection, and the stewardship of our natural places. Caring for these landscapes reflects our shared kuleana and the practice of mālama ‘āina — caring for the land that sustains us.

A public dashboard would allow residents and community organizations to clearly see how Green Fee funds are allocated, how decisions are made, and what outcomes are achieved. Transparency is essential for building the public trust needed for this program to succeed over the long term.

The Green Fee represents an important investment in Hawai‘i’s climate resilience, sustainable tourism, and environmental stewardship. Clear and accessible reporting will help demonstrate the impact of these funds and ensure they are benefiting both our communities and the places we care for.

I also encourage the Legislature to prioritize directing Green Fee funds to community-based organizations already leading stewardship work across the islands. Groups like the Hawaiian Trail and Mountain Club contribute thousands of volunteer hours each year maintaining trails and practicing mālama ‘āina. Supporting these organizations strengthens community-driven stewardship and honors the partnerships that help care for Hawai‘i’s landscapes.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1949 and affirm Hawai‘i’s commitment to transparency, accountability, and community-centered stewardship.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

**Hawkins Biggins
O‘ahu
96825**