

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
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
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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
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Tuesday, February 24, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2103, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE LAND USE COMMISSION

House Bill 2103, House Draft 1, proposes to amend the composition of the Land Use Commission (LUC) to require at least one member to have substantial experience and expertise in water resource management and requires the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to submit a list of nominees to the Governor for the appointment of a commission member having substantial experience or expertise in traditional Hawaiian land usage and knowledge of cultural land practices. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources supports this measure.**

As freshwater availability declines and demands increase, careful consideration and more effective coordination between land use and water planning is needed. Historically, the LUC has not considered the water demands of a particular project when making decisions about land use district changes, boundary amendments, special use permits, and declaratory rulings for developments and construction projects. Requiring at least one member of the LUC to have substantial experience in water resource management will help ensure that questions about water availability are addressed early in the land use planning process.

In addition, this requirement would complement the make-up of the Commission on Water Resource Management's 7-member commission, which requires at least one member to have substantial experience or expertise in traditional Hawaiian water resource management techniques (Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 174C-7(b)).

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2103 HD1
Relating to the Land Use Commission
Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Ho‘okolokolo a me ke Kuleana Hawai‘i
(House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs)

Pepeluali 24, 2026 2:00 p.m. Lumi 325
Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary
and Hawaiian Affairs:

Mahalo for setting HB2103 HD1 for public hearing. This measure is part of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' (OHA's) 2026 Legislative Package and OHA submits this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB2103 HD1. HB2103 HD1** strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC)'s ability to fulfill its vital kuleana to protect Hawai'i's 'āina, wai, and Native Hawaiian rights by: (1) requiring that at least one member have water management experience; and (2) designating OHA to recruit candidates to fill the existing traditional Hawaiian land usage seat.

OHA's Constitutional Mandate to Protect Native Hawaiian Rights

Established pursuant to the terms of Section 5 of the Admissions Act and the Hawai'i State Constitution, Article XII, sections 4, 5, and 6, OHA serves as a semi-autonomous agency and trust vehicle for the betterment of the conditions Native Hawaiians. OHA's statutory duties include "[a]ssessing the policies and practices of other agencies impacting on native Hawaiians and Hawaiians, and conducting advocacy efforts for native Hawaiians and Hawaiians." Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 10-3(4).

Consistent with these legal mandates, OHA actively advocates before state agencies and commissions, including the LUC, to ensure not only compliance with, but the meaningful advancement of, Native Hawaiian statutory and constitutional rights, often in the context of project-level land use reviews. In 2025 alone, OHA provided agency comments on over three hundred projects, many involving land use and development decisions with direct implications for water resources, cultural practices, and public trust obligations. In carrying out this advocacy, OHA has a strong interest in ensuring that state agencies are equipped with the expertise, cultural competency, and legal grounding necessary to make informed decisions that uphold these rights and protect the interests of Native Hawaiian beneficiaries.

The LUC Is a Critical Forum for Protecting Native Hawaiian Rights

Based on OHA's experience advocating for and enforcing Native Hawaiian rights at the agency level, the LUC is a uniquely vital forum for the protection of natural resources and the traditional and customary practices that depend on them. The landmark decision in *Ka Pa'akai O Ka 'Āina v. Land Use Commission*, requires that prior to making discretionary permitting decisions state and county agencies must identify: (1) the scope of valued cultural, historical or natural resources and traditional practices in the area; (2) the extent to which resources or practices will be negatively affected by the decision; and (3) feasible mitigation measures to protect resources and Native Hawaiian rights. See 94 Haw. 31, 47 (2000). State and county agencies are also constitutionally bound to affirmatively protect the public trust in water by prioritizing public trust water uses over private commercial uses, and requiring that private commercial users justify water demands. *In re Waiāhole*, 94 Haw. 97, 142 (2000).

Unlike many other agencies, commissions, and boards that share this kuleana, the LUC is uniquely positioned **to enforce** these rights and effectuate these duties through its quasi-judicial process for hearing petitions for district boundary amendments. Under this process, parties with an interest in the property, which includes Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, can intervene in the redistricting hearing. See HRS § 205-4. The result is a transparent, evidence-based decision-making framework supported by due process safeguards, that creates a complete evidentiary record and better ensures meaningful consideration of relevant facts, data, and cultural 'ike.

It is within this context that OHA strongly supports ensuring at least one LUC member possesses water expertise: to ensure project proponents consider water needs, sources, and challenges at the earliest possible stages of project review to inform subsequent project design and permitting decisions, and to ensure the LUC consistently upholds its important constitutional mandates to protect public trust resources and the rights of Native Hawaiian beneficiaries.

Integrating Water and Land Use Planning is Vital to Protect Public Trust Water Resources

Water's importance is captured in the 'ōlelo no'eau "Ola i ka Wai (Water is Life)." Since ancient times, intelligent management of this precious resource has been necessary to ensure sufficient water for food production, drinking, healthy estuaries, and productive nearshore fisheries. Kānāwai (Hawaiian Law) literally means "relating to water," reflecting

the centrality of wai and its management to governance in Hawai‘i.¹ Informed land use decisions today should be no different and must consider water management. Decisions by the LUC create development entitlements which impact the availability, allocation, and long-term sustainability of water resources needed to support communities and fulfill public trust obligations. These decisions must therefore be grounded in a clear understanding of water systems and must not impair other public trust water uses. Despite the centrality of water to land use outcomes, current law does not explicitly require water expertise on the LUC.

HB2103 HD1 seeks to strengthen the LUC by requiring that “at least one member have substantial experience in the area of water resource management.” Ensuring a water expert is seated on the LUC will help advance responsible stewardship of wai resources, improve the quality of land use decision-making, and increase transparency and public accountability around land use entitlements that affect long-term water availability. Integrated land use and water planning is a recognized best practice to ensure that water sources, infrastructure capacity, and sustainability constraints are considered at the earliest stage in the decision-making process—before land use entitlements are granted and impacts become difficult or impossible to mitigate.

OHA is Uniquely Positioned to Support the LUC With Recruitment

HB2103 HD1 designates OHA to recruit candidates for the traditional Hawaiian land usage seat that already exists. OHA maintains extensive and trusted communication channels with beneficiaries statewide, many of whom may be well-qualified to fill this seat. OHA regularly communicates with beneficiaries through social media, email alerts, its award-winning online and print newspaper *Ka Wai Ola*, and other in-person outreach events and forums.

OHA also brings demonstrated expertise in recruitment, evaluation, and nomination of candidates to state board and commissions due to its existing kuleana to nominate candidates for the Island Burial Councils. See HRS § 6E-43.5. Because the OHA Board of Trustees is governed by HRS chapter 92, Hawai‘i’s Sunshine Law, all candidates nominated by OHA must be confirmed for nomination at a publicly noticed meeting, ensuring transparency and early opportunities for meaningful community input.

Designating OHA to provide names to the governor for the already established traditional Hawaiian land usage seat will promote broad outreach, transparent vetting, and the selection of highly qualified candidates with lived experience and cultural insight. While recruitment, evaluation, and nomination of candidates is resource-intensive, OHA is committed to ensuring the long-term success and effectiveness of the LUC and strengthening its capacity to protect Native Hawaiian rights.

¹ Sproat, D. Kapua‘ala, *Ola i Ka Wai: A Legal Primer for Water Use and Management in Hawai‘i*, Ka Huli Ao Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law (Honolulu 2009).

OHA respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** HB2103 HD1 so the LUC may more fully carry out its vital kuleana with the advice and insight of members with expertise in areas directly relevant to the LUC's original mission and purpose: "to preserve, protect and encourage the development of the lands in the State for those uses to which they are best suited for the public welfare."²

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

² Act 187, § 1 (1961).



LAND USE COMMISSION

Komikina Ho'ohana 'Āina

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

Ka 'Oihana Ho'omōhala Pā'oihana, 'Imi Waiwai a Ho'omāka'ika'i

JOSH GREEN, MD
GOVERNOR

DANIEL E. ORODENKER
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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Statement of
Daniel E. Orodenker
Executive Officer
State Land Use Commission

Before the
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Tuesday February 24, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Room 325 and Video Conference

In consideration of
HB2103 HD1

RELATING TO THE LAND USE COMMISSION

Chair Tarnas; Vice Chair Poepoe; and members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs:

This measure would require at least one member to have substantial experience in water resource management and for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (“OHA”) to submit a list of nominees to the Governor for the appointment of a commission member with substantial experience or expertise in traditional Hawaiian land usage and knowledge of cultural land practices.

The Land Use Commission (“LUC”) met on February 11, 2026, to discuss legislative proposals. At that time the LUC did not take a position on this measure.

The Land Use Commission (“LUC”) staff notes however, that additional expertise that would assist the Commission in rendering a decision and balancing its public trust responsibilities with economic development is helpful.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Councilmembers
K. Kauano'e Batangan
Tom Cook
Gabe Johnson
Tamara Paltin
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez
Shane M. Sinenci
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

February 23, 2026

TO: Honorable Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: TAMARA PALTIN
Councilmember

DATE: February 23, 2026

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT FOR HB 2103, HD1, RELATING TO THE LAND USE COMMISSION**

Water availability and long-term water security are central to any responsible land use decision. Yet the Hawai'i Land Use Commission (LUC) currently has no required water management expertise among its members, leaving it to evaluate large-scale district boundary amendments without the technical capacity to rigorously assess claims regarding water supply or regional watershed impacts.

The LUC also serves as one of the only formal forums where Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners can assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights in land use proceedings. While the Commission includes a designated cultural expert, that member is appointed solely by the Governor.

HB2103 HD1 addresses these gaps by requiring water management expertise on the LUC and authorizing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to assist the Governor in identifying nominees for the cultural expert seat. These targeted improvements will strengthen informed decision-making and better protect water resources and Native Hawaiian rights. Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tamara A. M. Paltin".

TAMARA PALTIN
Councilmember

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 6:13:11 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaulani Lum	Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat.

Ola i ka wai! Water is life! Through it, we thrive. Without it, we perish.

As an organization committed to restoring natural resources and traditional historic spaces in urban environments, we understand intimately the need for caring for this precious resource in harmony with our desired land use needs.

Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club was chartered by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs in 1973, an organization with over 5,000 supporters who care deeply about Hawai'i's well-being.

We urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

Project Planning Must Consider Water Availability:

Water and land are connected, and this is especially apparent in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for denser development carries implicit assumptions about associated water resource availability. Sound land use decision-making requires deliberate consideration of water source availability and impacts. A dedicated water expert seat would help ensure that this type of careful deliberation occurs at the outset of project planning before project size and infrastructure decisions have been locked in.

Professional Best Practices Calls for Integrated Water and Land Use Planning:

Multiple professional associations, including the American Planning Association, encourage and support integrated water and land use planning as a best practice. As such, other states have also

integrated water and land use planning processes to ensure water management is considered early in the project entitlement process. This model of planning best protects water sources over the long term and easily integrates into the existing regulatory structure.

Supporting the LUC's Constitutional Duties:

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights.

Strengthening its membership with a water expert will better equip the LUC to fulfill its duty to protect public trust water resources. Moreover, allowing OHA a role in recruiting, vetting, and nominating candidates to the traditional Hawaiian land usage seat would provide beneficiaries and the general public with the opportunity to provide early input on the selection of candidates. OHA nominees would be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public meeting prior to nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC's critical role in protecting our 'āina.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kehaulani Lum, President

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 11:32:51 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nakoʻolani Warrington	Kupuna for the Moopuna	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2103 HD1

We, Kūpuna for the Mo‘opuna, a hui of Hawaiian Homes Commission Act kūpuna beneficiary farmers from Pana‘ewa, Hawai‘i, **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2103 HD1.**

This bill will strengthen the Land Use Commission by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. This bill will ensure the following:

- * Project planning must consider water availability.
- * Professional Best Practices calls for integrated water and land use planning.
- * LUC’s constitutional duties are in compliance.

Please support and pass HB 2103 HD1. Mahalo.



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

February 24, 2026

2:00 PM

Conference Room 325

In **SUPPORT** of **HB2103 HD1**: RELATING TO THE LAND USE COMMISSION

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of our more than 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **strongly SUPPORTS** HB2103 HD1, which will provide the Land Use Commission (LUC) with much needed water management expertise, while also allowing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to assist the Governor in selecting commissioners for the LUC's cultural expert seat.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any land use proposal, and its availability and use is central to a variety of critical public interests the LUC is tasked with balancing and protecting when overseeing large-scale land use changes. However, the law does not provide for LUC commissioners to have any background in water management. As a result, the LUC must often rely on developers' assertions regarding water availability and use, and may render decisions without a full understanding of whether and how a land use proposal's impacts to water may affect the public interest in natural and cultural public trust resources, agricultural activities, Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights, and affordable housing opportunities, among others.

By requiring at least one LUC commissioner to have substantial experience in water management, this bill will fill the gap in the LUC's collective knowledge regarding water, and help to ensure that approvals of potentially vast land use changes are appropriately tailored to balance and safeguard the range of public interests associated with water.

In addition, the LUC provides one of the only opportunities for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their traditional and customary rights, and to have their constitutionally recognized practices explicitly considered and reasonably protected in large-scale land use changes. While the law accordingly requires the LUC to include a commissioner with substantial experience or expertise in Native Hawaiian land usage and cultural practices, appointments to fill this requirement are made by the Governor, without an opportunity for input from the Native Hawaiian community. As a result, the Governor may appoint individuals who may not necessarily be the best qualified candidates for such a critical position.

By requiring the Governor to fill the cultural expert LUC seat from a list of nominees provided by OHA, this bill would assist the Governor in vetting and identifying individuals who may best be able to help the LUC understand and reasonably protect the rights of Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, pursuant to the state's statutory, constitutional, and moral obligations.

For the reasons described above, the Sierra Club respectfully but strongly urges the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 3:43:26 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Sunday, February 22, 2026

To: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Re: HB 2103, H1 Land Use Commission (scope of membership)
Hearing: Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 2:00 pm, Conference Room 325 & videoconference
Position: **STRONG SUPPORT**

Aloha, Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs!

The 6,680 members of the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i believe that the State's Land Use Commission (LUC) must be strengthened. The LUC acts as a quasi-judicial entity, with a strong institutional memory and strong record of environmental protection should not be disturbed unless proposed changes are shown to be truly meritorious.

HB 2103 HD 1 would indeed improve the scope of the mandatory membership of the LUC, and the bill should be approved. This bill would, if enacted, require that LUC have a member with expertise in water-rights issues and a member versed in Hawaiian cultural practices. These are essential inputs that must be ensured. We concur with the earlier testimony of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs in support of this bill:

The landmark decision *in Ka Pa'akai O Ka 'Āina v. Land Use Commission*, requires that prior to making discretionary permitting decisions state and county agencies must identify: (1) the scope of valued cultural, historical or natural resources and traditional practices in the area; (2) the extent to which resources or practices will be negatively affected by the decision; and (3) feasible mitigation measures to protect resources and Native Hawaiian rights. See 94 Haw. 31, 47 (2000). State and county agencies are also constitutionally bound to affirmatively protect the public trust in water by prioritizing public trust water uses over private commercial uses, and requiring that private commercial users justify water demands. *In re Waiāhole*, 94 Haw. 97, 142 (2000).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Alan B. Burdick, co-chair Burdick808@gmail.com 808-927-1500



February 24, 2026

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS
To the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
In Support of

HB2103 HD1 – RELATING TO THE LAND USE COMMISSION

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs **supports** HB2103 HD1 Relating to the Land Use Commission, which, in part seeks to revise the membership of the commission to include at least one member with substantial experience with traditional Hawaiian land usage and practices, and at least one member with substantial experience in water resource management; both to be appointed from a list submitted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

The well-being of ʻāina is essential to the well-being of our people. The preservation, protection, and stewardship of land, watersheds, ocean resources, cultural sites, and other natural resources is critical to building a Hawaiʻi that can feed generations of Native Hawaiians. The proposed change to the membership of the Land Use Commission will provide important additional voices to advocate for responsible and sustainable development of Hawaiʻi lands, including appropriate protection of our wai, in decisions made by the commission.

Founded by Prince Kūhiō in 1918, the Hawaiian Civic Club movement is the oldest Native Hawaiian community-based advocacy movement. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is a not-for-profit organization that is a confederation of 61 individual and autonomous Hawaiian Civic Clubs and 3,000 members located across Hawaiʻi and across the continental United States.

We appreciate your favorable consideration of this bill.



February 24, 2026

TESTIMONY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS
To the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
In Support of

HB2103 HD1 – RELATING TO THE LAND USE COMMISSION

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs **supports** HB2103 HD1 Relating to the Land Use Commission, which, in part seeks to revise the membership of the commission to include at least one member with substantial experience with traditional Hawaiian land usage and practices, and at least one member with substantial experience in water resource management; both to be appointed from a list submitted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

The well-being of ‘āina is essential to the well-being of our people. The preservation, protection, and stewardship of land, watersheds, ocean resources, cultural sites, and other natural resources is critical to building a Hawai‘i that can feed generations of Native Hawaiians. The proposed change to the membership of the Land Use Commission will provide important additional voices to advocate for responsible and sustainable development of Hawai‘i lands, including appropriate protection of our wai, in decisions made by the commission.

Founded by Prince Kūhiō in 1918, the Hawaiian Civic Club movement is the oldest Native Hawaiian community-based advocacy movement. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is a not-for-profit organization that is a confederation of 61 individual and autonomous Hawaiian Civic Clubs and 3,000 members located across Hawai‘i and across the continental United States.

We appreciate your favorable consideration of this bill.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:00:01 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Pieper	Hanai Kaiaulu	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I write in strong support of HB2103.

Recent events — including the jailing of high-level officials such as the former Honolulu Police Chief and the former Prosecuting Attorney — have deeply shaken public trust. When powerful leaders fall due to corruption and abuse of authority, it becomes clear that our systems of appointment and oversight must be stronger, more transparent, and rooted in integrity. The people of Hawai‘i deserve leadership that reflects service, not greed or consolidation of power.

HB2103 represents an opportunity to restore public confidence and ensure that those entrusted with significant authority are grounded in ethical accountability and community responsibility.

When it comes to positions that directly impact land, water, and Native Hawaiian rights, the most qualified leadership must include those who truly understand our cultural foundation. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs exists to carry forward the legacy and kuleana of our ancestors. Stewardship of ‘āina and wai is not simply administrative, it is ancestral kuleana.

A Native Hawaiian cultural and land expert, someone deeply rooted in ‘ike kūpuna and environmental stewardship would be best suited to guide decisions that affect our natural resources and traditional practices. Our future depends on leadership that understands that land and water are not commodities, but living systems that sustain our people.

HB2103 moves us toward stronger accountability and leadership aligned with the values of mālama ‘āina and public trust.

I respectfully urge your support.

Michelle Pieper, Hānai Kaiāulu



P.O. Box 8637, Honolulu, HI 96830 808.468.1686 www.mgfhawaii.org

TESTIMONY OF THE MOANALUA GARDENS FOUNDATION
To the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

February 24, 2026

In Support of

HB2103 HD1 – RELATING TO THE LAND USE COMMISSION

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee:

The Moanalua Gardens Foundation **supports** HB2103 HD1 relating to the Land Use Commission, which would revise the membership of the commission to include at least one member with substantial experience in traditional Hawaiian land use and practices, and at least one member with substantial experience in water resource management. Both to be appointed from a list submitted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

The preservation, protection, and stewardship of land, watersheds, ocean resources, cultural sites, and other natural resources is critical to building a Hawai‘i that can feed generations of Native Hawaiians. We are all inextricably tied to ‘āina. What happens to ‘āina happens to us. We must care for ‘āina as we do ourselves. To do this, we need the right people with the right knowledge and experience helping to make critical decisions about ‘āina. The proposed changes in this bill will provide absolutely vital knowledge and experience to advocate for responsible and sustainable development of Hawai‘i lands, including appropriate protection of our wai.

Founded in 1970, The Moanalua Gardens Foundation was established to preserve and perpetuate the history, native culture, and environment of Hawai‘i through education and stewardship.

The Moanalua Gardens Foundation urges the committee **to pass HB2103** Mahalo for your attention and consideration.

Me ke aloha,

Ian Keali‘i Custino
Executive Director
Moanalua Gardens Foundation
ian@mgfhawaii.org



Testimony Before The
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)
IN SUPPORT OF HB2103 HD1
February 24, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Room 325 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 HB2103 HD1 as a step toward ensuring 'āina momona.

Mōhala i ka wai ka maka o ka pua.

Unfolded by the water are the faces of the flowers.

Flowers thrive where there is water, as thriving people are found where living conditions are good.¹

This measure reaffirms the state's obligation to uphold the constitutional rights of its people by ensuring the expertise needed on our Land Use Commission regarding wai (water) resource management. The quality and sustainable management of our wai (freshwater) is essential for sustaining healthy environments and people. The communities we work with are intimately aware of the significance of wai to their traditional and customary practices, as a part of the public trust and most importantly to support all life itself. Particularly in this time of federal instability, our state must continue to exercise its inherent duty to mālama 'āina, preserve and protect its public trust lands and waters for future generations. Wai abundance and quality is essential for the health of us all, including both mauka and makai mālama 'āina practitioners, loko i'a, and likewise our nearshore life such as limu.

¹ Pukui, Mary Kawena, 'Ōlelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings, #2178 (1983).

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 maintaining protections for mālama ‘āina, including through this bill, to ensure the best decisions are made regarding sustainable and informed management of our wai and all the life and practices that it sustains. 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** HB2103 HD1.

Aloha ‘Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 1:05:53 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Kaaumoana	Hanalei Watershed Hui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, HB2103 HD1 requires at least one member of the Land use Commission to represent the knowledge and experience of our community based facts and issues. We SUPPORT this bill. Mahalo.

Makaala Kaaumloana

Executive Director

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 2:19:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Water is life. We need water managemen expertise on the LUC to allow them to make informed decisions. Bill HB 2103 helps ensure there are informed water and cultural expertisie in land use planning which is extreme important to Hawaii's future and resilience. STRONG SUPPORT for HB2103

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:22:55 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and honorable members of Committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, as Co Chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i I write to you on behalf of our members. We are in VERY STRONG SUPPORT of HB2103 HD1. Water is life . HB2103HD1 ensures that the Land Use Commission includes a water management expert, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to expertly fill the cultural expert seat. This is a win win for everyone.

it is with great respect that we urge the Committee to Pass this measure.

Mahalo,

Susan RobertsEmery

Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauilo

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 2:34:39 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

The indigenous people of Hawai‘i lived in these islands for centuries, yet when the islands were found by merchant traders, missionaries, and other foreign folk, these islands were in the utmost pristine conditions, abundant with food to feed the estimated 1 million people living on these islands, with more than enough fresh water and food to sustain the population and its visitors. There was more than enough.

Fast forward a couple hundred years and we barely have enough fresh water for our current uses and we barely produce enough food to sustain even a small sliver of this population.

The traditional practices and beliefs of the indigenous people need to be incorporated into the way we utilize our land today. The practices that have been honed over the centuries by the native people living in these islands which produced the wealth of natural and cultivated resources need to be considered in our planning and decisions on how land is used today.

The majority of the Land Use Commission (LUC) should be practitioners of Hawaiian culture. It is understandable to also have an expert with water usage and traditional water resource management. While this bill would require one of each, the majority of the LUC should really have the expertise and experience with Hawaiian cultural practices, as well as with traditional water resource management. There is no shortage of practitioners who could fill these roles, we should make a higher requirement than just 1 of each.

Mahalo for the consideration,
Keoni Shizuma

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 3:14:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monica Morris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in strong support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission by ensuring essential water expertise is required and designates the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB2103 HD1.

Monica Morris, Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 6:49:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support. Including I stand on testimonies from OHA 2/10/26 and Sierra Club 2/10/26.

2103 HB RELATING TO THE LAND USE COMMISSION

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 7:17:04 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ikaika Dwight	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. A member of OHA should be involved in all the major legislature and oversight committees. Too many pilau politicians are in office for one reason and one reason only, greed. They work to fatten their pockets when they have more than enough. But that's the thing about greed, once you get a little, you always want more. We need honest people who love our aina and its people. Furthermore having people with koko in positions of power is the best thing for this state.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 7:25:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nalani Hao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

Project Planning Must Consider Water Availability:

Water and land are connected, and this is especially apparent in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for denser development carries implicit assumptions about associated water resource availability. Sound land use decision-making requires deliberate consideration of water source availability and impacts. A dedicated water expert seat would help ensure that this type of careful deliberation occurs at the outset of project planning before project size and infrastructure decisions have been locked in.

Professional Best Practices Calls for Integrated Water and Land Use Planning:

Multiple professional associations, including the American Planning Association, encourage and support integrated water and land use planning as a best practice. As such, other states have also integrated water and land use planning processes to ensure water management is considered early in the project entitlement process. This model of planning best protects water sources over the long term and easily integrates into the existing regulatory structure.

Supporting the LUC's Constitutional Duties:

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights.

Strengthening its membership with a water expert will better equip the LUC to fulfill its duty to protect public trust water resources. Moreover, allowing OHA a role in recruiting, vetting, and nominating candidates to the traditional Hawaiian land usage seat would provide beneficiaries and the general public with the opportunity to provide early input on the selection of candidates. OHA nominees would be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public meeting prior to nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC's critical role in protecting our 'āina.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Nalani Mamoaliialapai Hao

Honolulu, Oahu, Hawai'i

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 8:11:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naomi Tachera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Dr. Naomi Tachera

Kamuela, Hawai'i

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2103, HD1, RELATING TO THE LAND USE COMMISSION

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
Members
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hearing: Feb 24, 2:00 p.m.

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs,

I submit this testimony in **strong support of HB2103** and also offer comments about the LUC and the State's Commission on Water Resource Management for your consideration.

The Land Use Commission makes decisions that have profound and lasting impacts on Hawai'i's finite land base, our water resources, the practice of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights, agricultural viability, housing patterns, and climate resilience. Ensuring that the Commission includes a member with demonstrated expertise in water resource management is both timely and necessary.

Wai is not merely a development constraint. It is a public trust resource and a cultural foundation for the Native Hawaiian people. Land use decisions often determine the location, intensity, and timing of future water demand. Without the benefit of informed analysis grounded in water resource management, the State risks approving land use changes that may later prove inconsistent with long-term sustainability and the constitutional obligation to protect water for present and future generations.

HB2103 also strengthens the integrity of the Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner seat by requiring that the appointment be made from a list submitted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Because the Land Use Commission is frequently the forum in which traditional and customary rights are evaluated in a contested case setting, it is essential that the individual serving in this role possess recognized cultural expertise and the trust of the broader Native Hawaiian community.

In addition, I respectfully offer a consideration for the Legislature as it moves this measure forward. The Commission on Water Resource Management has the constitutional kuleana to protect and allocate Hawai'i's water resources as a public trust. The Land Use Commission's decisions, in turn, often establish the land use patterns that drive future water demand. For this reason, the Legislature may wish to consider how best to ensure ongoing coordination between these two bodies. This could be achieved through the appointment of a commissioner with direct experience in the work of the Commission on Water Resource Management or through a more formal consultative relationship so that land use designations are consistently informed by the State's water resource planning and public trust responsibilities.

This measure does not expand the mission of the Land Use Commission. Rather, it strengthens the Commission's capacity to carry out its existing responsibilities in a manner that is informed, balanced, and pono.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB2103.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Me ke aloha,

Leimomi Khan

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 8:42:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Akeo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing in support of HB2104 HD1 for the following reasons:

Ensuring Island Burial Councils Conduct Business:

Quorum reform ensures Island Burial Councils (IBC) remain functional rather than merely symbolic. IBCs often struggle to fill all entitled seats, and current quorum requirements count vacant positions, which frequently prevents Councils from meeting and conducting business and results in repeated cancellations. Adjusting quorum to a majority of appointed members provides a simple, practical fix that allows Councils to fulfill their statutory duties.

A Modest Stipend Option Supports Recruitment and Participation:

IBC members currently serve without compensation, creating barriers for community members who must balance Council duties with work and family obligations. The option for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to provide stipends to moku representatives would make IBC service more accessible, reduce vacancies, encourage participation, and acknowledge the value of services provided by Native Hawaiians who serve as council members.

Strong Island Burial Councils Benefit All Parties:

Reliable, fully functioning Island Burial Councils help prevent unnecessary project delays while upholding the state's trust obligation to protect ancestral remains. Effective Councils allow families and cultural descendants to fulfill their kuleana to care for iwi kūpuna and provide

project proponents with clear, timely, and culturally responsible direction when burials are discovered.

Accordingly, I ask the Committee to support of HB2104 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Melanie Akeo

Makakilo, Hawaii

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 9:01:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Evans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

Project Planning Must Consider Water Availability:

Water and land are connected, and this is especially apparent in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for denser development carries implicit assumptions about associated water resource availability. Sound land use decision-making requires deliberate consideration of water source availability and impacts. A dedicated water expert seat would help ensure that this type of careful deliberation occurs at the outset of project planning before project size and infrastructure decisions have been locked in.

Professional Best Practices Calls for Integrated Water and Land Use Planning:

Multiple professional associations, including the American Planning Association, encourage and support integrated water and land use planning as a best practice. As such, other states have also integrated water and land use planning processes to ensure water management is considered early in the project entitlement process. This model of planning best protects water sources over the long term and easily integrates into the existing regulatory structure.

Supporting the LUC’s Constitutional Duties:

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights.

Strengthening its membership with a water expert will better equip the LUC to fulfill its duty to protect public trust water resources. Moreover, allowing OHA a role in recruiting, vetting, and nominating candidates to the traditional Hawaiian land usage seat would provide beneficiaries

and the general public with the opportunity to provide early input on the selection of candidates. OHA nominees would be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public meeting prior to nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC's critical role in protecting our 'āina.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Martha Evans

Honolulu O'ahu

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 9:19:56 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shaeralee-Tiare Manosa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

You don't send a mahiai i to the ocean and expect him to know the best place and season to find moi. However, he is the best person to ask how to make one stream of water grow you food to last a lifetime and keep the 'āina healthy, so we all can be healthy.

Everyday our water from the mountain go straight to the ocean. During rainy season, it's worse. Too much fresh water, mud and rubbish go into our ocean and little by little kill another lifecycle.

Expertise is always needed in everything humans touch. Water is a BIG part of everything. You have cycles within cycles that are all intricately connected. Constructions need to have a plan for that because it affects everybody below them. An expert on wai should have the ahupua'a system engrained in his brain. He should know construction and construction materials, so construction in one place doesn't affect others. It would benefit everyone if these experts can also help find ways to keep water on land as long as possible so that the land can benefit from the water and in turn help stop surface water runoff going straight into the ocean.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 12:42:36 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 5:54:45 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maxine L Akee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

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nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC's critical role in protecting our 'āina.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Maxine Akee

Mali, Oahu

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 7:00:25 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
János Samu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

János Keoni Samu

Kalaheo, Kauai

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 7:49:53 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandee Yuen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Brandee Yuen

Pearl city, HI oahu

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 8:08:34 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chai Blair-Stahn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.
Chai Blair-Stahn

Mānoa, O'ahu

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 10:57:44 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharoldine Sisneros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 2103

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 12:07:12 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 2:08:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Kiefer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee, I am writing in **support** of HB2103, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by ensuring essential water expertise is required, and designates the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

Project Planning Must Consider Water Availability: Water and land are connected, and this is especially apparent in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for denser development carries implicit assumptions about associated water resource availability. Sound land use decision-making requires deliberate consideration of water source availability and impacts. A dedicated water expert seat would help ensure that this type of careful deliberation occurs at the outset of project planning before project size and infrastructure decisions have been locked in.

Professional Best Practices Call for Integrated Water and Land Use Planning: Multiple professional associations, including the American Planning Association, encourage and support integrated water and land use planning as best practices. As such, other states have also integrated water and land use planning processes by ensuring water management is considered early in the project entitlement process. This model of planning best protects water sources over the long term.

The Health Imperative of Water-Informed Land Use Decisions: Access to clean, reliable water is not merely a resource management issue — it is a public health imperative. In Hawaii, where climate change is already driving sea-level rise, intensifying storms, and increased flooding, land use decisions that fail to account for water availability and quality place our communities at **direct health risk**. Contaminated runoff, overextended cesspools, and strained water infrastructure can expose residents to pathogens, heavy metals, and waterborne illness. Children, kupuna, and those with chronic illness bear a disproportionate burden when water systems are stressed. Ensuring a dedicated water expert seat on the LUC is a preventive health measure — one that protects communities before infrastructure failures and environmental hazards become health crises.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Elizabeth Kiefer MD MPH

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:51:41 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali‘i Pang, PhD. I am a Native Hawaiian practitioner and currently serve as the Native Hawaiian Organization representative for the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC). I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2103 HD1.

Land and Water as Our Ancestors

As a Native Hawaiian, my perspective is rooted in the understanding that our lands (*‘āina*) and waters (*wai*) are not mere commodities or "resources" to be managed for profit. They represent our oldest siblings and hold profound spiritual significance. Our genealogy ties us directly to the health of the environment; when the land is healthy, the people are healthy.

In my work and my personal life, I have seen that having a Native Hawaiian cultural background is not just a matter of representation—it is vitally important to provide critical knowledge that adds depth to discussions and integrity to decision-making.

Strengthening the Land Use Commission (LUC)

HB2103 HD1 is a necessary step in ensuring that the LUC can fulfill its *kuleana* to protect Hawai‘i’s unique heritage. I support this measure for the following reasons:

- **Integrated Water Management:** The *‘ōlelo no ‘eau* “Ola i ka Wai” (Water is Life) reminds us that land use cannot be separated from water management. By requiring at least one member to have water resource management experience, the LUC will be better equipped to protect the public trust and ensure that development entitlements do not compromise the sustainability of our *wai*.
- **Cultural Competency in Recruitment:** Designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to recruit for the existing traditional Hawaiian land usage seat is a logical and transparent way to find the most qualified candidates. OHA has the established networks to identify practitioners who carry the *‘ike* (knowledge) of our ancestors and can apply it to modern land-use challenges.

The Value of Cultural 'Ike

Decisions made by the LUC have permanent impacts on our ability to practice our traditions. Whether it is gathering, fishing, or spiritual worship, these practices depend on an intact and respected landscape. A commissioner with a Native Hawaiian cultural background brings a lens of "long-term stewardship" that looks generations into the future, rather than just years.

My experience with the KIRC has shown me how much can be achieved when we center cultural values in our restoration and management efforts. Applying this same standard to the LUC through HB2103 HD1 will ensure that the "public welfare" truly includes the protection of Native Hawaiian rights and the sanctity of our islands.

I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for your time and for the opportunity to share my personal mana'o on this vital issue.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Keali'i Pang, PhD

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:34:46 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janali Torees	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

Project Planning Must Consider Water Availability:

Water and land are connected, and this is especially apparent in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for denser development carries implicit assumptions about associated water resource availability. Sound land use decision-making requires deliberate consideration of water source availability and impacts. A dedicated water expert seat would help ensure that this type of careful deliberation occurs at the outset of project planning before project size and infrastructure decisions have been locked in.

Professional Best Practices Calls for Integrated Water and Land Use Planning:

Multiple professional associations, including the American Planning Association, encourage and support integrated water and land use planning as a best practice. As such, other states have also integrated water and land use planning processes to ensure water management is considered early in the project entitlement process. This model of planning best protects water sources over the long term and easily integrates into the existing regulatory structure.

Supporting the LUC's Constitutional Duties:

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights.

Strengthening its membership with a water expert will better equip the LUC to fulfill its duty to protect public trust water resources. Moreover, allowing OHA a role in recruiting, vetting, and nominating candidates to the traditional Hawaiian land usage seat would provide beneficiaries and the general public with the opportunity to provide early input on the selection of candidates. OHA nominees would be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public meeting prior to nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC's critical role in protecting our 'āina.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Janali Torres

Mountain View, Hawai'i Island

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 1:16:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brenten Kanoa Yamane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

Project Planning Must Consider Water Availability:

Water and land are connected, and this is especially apparent in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for denser development carries implicit assumptions about associated water resource availability. Sound land use decision-making requires deliberate consideration of water source availability and impacts. A dedicated water expert seat would help ensure that this type of careful deliberation occurs at the outset of project planning before project size and infrastructure decisions have been locked in.

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Supporting the LUC’s Constitutional Duties:

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights.

Strengthening its membership with a water expert will better equip the LUC to fulfill its duty to protect public trust water resources. Moreover, allowing OHA a role in recruiting, vetting, and nominating candidates to the traditional Hawaiian land usage seat would provide beneficiaries and the general public with the opportunity to provide early input on the selection of candidates. OHA nominees would be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public meeting prior to

nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC's critical role in protecting our 'āina.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Brenten Kanoa Yamane

Kapolei, O'ahu

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 4:23:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill, which ensures proper expertise on the Board, essential when discussing issues involving water!

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 5:20:54 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Umiamaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committees:

I submit this correspondence to unequivocally endorse HB2103 HD1 and to demand its prompt and favorable recommendation for passage. The bill methodically amends the renewable hydrogen program and hydrogen investment capital special fund to explicitly include long-duration clean energy storage, thereby effectuating Hawaii's binding clean energy objectives through targeted and efficacious measures.

Given Hawaii's insular geography, the state requires indissoluble clean energy systems to counteract grid disruptions, mounting fuel import expenditures, and intensifying climate hazards. HB2103 HD1 judiciously redirects funding toward storage mechanisms that preserve renewable output across extended intervals, materially diminishing fossil fuel imports, fortifying fiscal resilience, and enabling off-grid autonomy critical for statewide agricultural and communal enterprises.

Mahalo.

Deborah Umiamaka

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 5:32:45 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Christy Shaver and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Christy Shaver
Lahaina

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 6:26:24 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Mitsumori	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2103 HD1.

The issues around water stewardship are complex and impact generations. It is wise, if not overdue, to have water management expertise on the Land Use Commission. It is also wise to have a Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner on the LUC to understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights.

Mahalo for the the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of HB2103 HD1,

Michele Mitsumori
Hilo

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 6:28:00 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Andrew Isoda and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Andrew Isoda
Lahaina, Mau'i

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 6:49:44 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
emily gambino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Emily Gambino and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Emily Gambino

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 7:23:40 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Diane Ware and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Diane Ware Volcano Moku o Ka'u 96785

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 8:25:23 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 8:53:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Reese Liggett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is William Reese Liggett and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
William ReeseLiggett

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:25:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jeanne wheeler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha: I greatly approve of the scope of this bill - please PASS it! Mahalo, JW

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 9:42:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Noel Shaw and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Noel Shaw

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:04:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2103 HD1.

Water management expertise goes hand in hand with expert land management. They cannot be separated.

The LUC must have a memeber with water management knowledge, wisdom, and experience.

Please PASS this measure.

Thank you.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:12:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Guy Kudo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2103 HD1.

Please PASS this measure.

Thank you.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 11:27:55 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helene DeLillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee.

I am writing in **support** of HB2103_HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

Project Planning Must Consider Water Availability

Water and land are connected, and this is especially apparent in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for denser development increases the burden on our water resources. Sound land use decision-making requires deliberate consideration of the increased demand associated with different land use entitlements. A dedicated water expert seat would help ensure this type of careful deliberation occurs at the outset of project planning before project size and infrastructure decisions have been locked in.

Professional Best Practices Calls for Integrated Water and Land Use Planning

Multiple professional associations, including the American Planning Association, encourage and support integrated water and land use planning as a best practice. As such, other states have also integrated water and land use planning processes to ensure water management is considered early in the project entitlement process. This model of planning best protects water sources over the long term and easily integrates into the existing regulatory structure.

Supporting the LUC’s Constitutional Duties

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights. Strengthening its membership with a water expert will better equip the LUC to fulfill its duty to protect public trust water resources. Moreover, allowing OHA a role in recruiting, vetting, and nominating candidates to the traditional Hawaiian Land usage seat would provide beneficiaries and the general public with the opportunity to provide early input on the selection of candidates. OHA nominees would be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public meeting prior to nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC’s critical role in protecting our ‘āina, wai, and cultural practices.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS**HB2103_HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify

Helene DeLillo Honolulu Oahu

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 12:00:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmela Resuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:48:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Darcy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2103 HD1

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

Even though I have had limited experience with the LUC, it plays an important part in the process of protecting all actions relating to water. Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Lisa Darcy, Kula, Maui, HI

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 6:54:43 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maki Morinoue	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members of this committee,

This bill is an extremely reasonable and fundamentally Pono ask to ensure there future for generations are aligned with our laws and knowledge and sound decision making is established with a cohesive groups with expertise in cultural knowledge and water cycle systems.

Please pass HB2103!

Mahalo

Maki Morinoue

Hawai'i Island

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 7:47:56 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bo Breda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Bo Breda and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

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Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Bo Breda

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 7:53:03 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Peter Wilson and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

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Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Peter Wilson

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 7:58:21 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimana Kane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **support** of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

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Supporting the LUC’s Constitutional Duties:

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights.

Strengthening its membership with a water expert will better equip the LUC to fulfill its duty to protect public trust water resources. Moreover, allowing OHA a role in recruiting, vetting, and nominating candidates to the traditional Hawaiian land usage seat would provide beneficiaries and the general public with the opportunity to provide early input on the selection of candidates. OHA nominees would be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public meeting prior to nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC’s critical role in protecting our ‘āina.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Leimana Kāne

Kahului, Maui

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:23:21 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JoNelle Sood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee, I am writing in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

Project Planning Must Consider Water Availability:

Water and land are connected, and this is especially apparent in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for denser development carries implicit assumptions about associated water resource availability. Sound land use decision-making requires deliberate consideration of water source availability and impacts. A dedicated water expert seat would help ensure that this type of careful deliberation occurs at the outset of project planning before project size and infrastructure decisions have been locked in.

Professional Best Practices Calls for Integrated Water and Land Use Planning:

Multiple professional associations, including the American Planning Association, encourage and support integrated water and land use planning as a best practice. As such, other states have also integrated water and land use planning processes to ensure water management is considered early in the project entitlement process. This model of planning best protects water sources over the long term and easily integrates into the existing regulatory structure.

Supporting the LUC’s Constitutional Duties:

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights.

Strengthening its membership with a water expert will better equip the LUC to fulfill its duty to protect public trust water resources. Moreover, allowing OHA a role in recruiting, vetting, and nominating candidates to the traditional Hawaiian land usage seat would provide beneficiaries and the general public with the opportunity to provide early input on the selection of candidates. OHA nominees would be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public meeting prior to nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC’s critical role in protecting our ‘āina.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

JoNelle Sood

Native Hawaiian living in California

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:42:11 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 8:45:30 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brieanah Gouveia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

Project Planning Must Consider Water Availability:

Water and land are connected, and this is especially apparent in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for denser development carries implicit assumptions about associated water resource availability. Sound land use decision-making requires deliberate consideration of water source availability and impacts. A dedicated water expert seat would help ensure that this type of careful deliberation occurs at the outset of project planning before project size and infrastructure decisions have been locked in.

Professional Best Practices Calls for Integrated Water and Land Use Planning:

Multiple professional associations, including the American Planning Association, encourage and support integrated water and land use planning as a best practice. As such, other states have also integrated water and land use planning processes to ensure water management is considered early in the project entitlement process. This model of planning best protects water sources over the long term and easily integrates into the existing regulatory structure.

Supporting the LUC’s Constitutional Duties:

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights. Strengthening its membership with a water expert will better equip the LUC to fulfill its duty to protect public trust water resources. Moreover, allowing OHA a role in recruiting, vetting, and nominating candidates to the traditional Hawaiian land usage seat would provide beneficiaries and the general public with the opportunity to provide early input on the selection of candidates. OHA nominees would be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public meeting prior to nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC’s critical role in protecting our ‘āina.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Brieanah Gouveia

Honolulu, O'ahu

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:04:20 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony today in strong support of HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony today,

Noelle Lindenmann, Kalua-Kona

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:04:53 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2103 HD1 that amends the composition of the Land Use Commission to require at least one member who has substantial experience and expertise in water resource management and at least one member who has substantial experience or expertise in traditional Hawaiian land usage and knowledge of cultural land practices. Additionally, this measure would require the Native Hawaiian cultural expert to be chosen from a list of names submitted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure wise land use planning and decision-making.

I urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:30:35 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Nanea Lo**, and I strongly support HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in land use decision-making. Yet, the current lack of required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) often leaves the Commission without the technical capacity needed to fully evaluate developer assertions regarding water availability or to understand the broader impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security. This gap presents significant risks to our communities, ecosystems, and long-term sustainability.

The LUC also serves as one of the primary—and sometimes only—forums where Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners can assert their constitutionally protected traditional and customary rights and have those rights meaningfully considered in land use decisions. Recognizing this responsibility, the LUC includes a cultural expert seat intended to inform and protect Native Hawaiian practices and resources. However, because this position is appointed solely by the Governor, there is no formal mechanism to ensure that candidates possess deep cultural knowledge or strong community connections.

HB2103 HD1 addresses both of these shortcomings by requiring the inclusion of a Commissioner with water management expertise and by allowing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to assist the Governor in identifying qualified candidates to serve in the LUC’s cultural expert role. These are practical, common-sense reforms that will strengthen decision-making, improve accountability, and ensure that land use planning reflects both technical realities and cultural responsibilities.

By improving the LUC’s capacity to assess water impacts and better safeguard Native Hawaiian cultural practices and resources, HB2103 HD1 supports more responsible land use planning and helps protect the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS HB2103 HD1**.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai'i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:33:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dee Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2103 HD1.

Water is fundamental to every land use decision we make, yet the Land Use Commission is not required to include anyone with real expertise in water management. That means major development decisions can move forward without a clear, informed understanding of long-term water availability or the broader impacts on surrounding communities.

This measure also improves how the cultural expert seat is filled, helping ensure that Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights are genuinely understood and considered in the decision-making process.

HB2103 HD1 is a straightforward, reasonable step toward more thoughtful land use planning and better protection of our water and cultural resources. I respectfully urge you to pass this bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:46:07 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of HB 2103 HD1.

Decisions about how land in Hawaii is used have profound consequences for Native Hawaiian communities, for our watersheds, and for the people who depend on both. It is not too much to ask that the body making those decisions includes at least one person who actually understands traditional Hawaiian land practices and at least one person who understands water.

Right now neither is required. This bill fixes that. It also requires OHA to submit a list of nominees for the Hawaiian land practices seat, which means the community most affected by these decisions has a meaningful role in who gets that seat. That is how it should work.

Land use decisions made without that knowledge are land use decisions made in the dark. We have seen enough of those. I urge the committee to pass HB 2103 HD1.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:21:44 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Derek Soong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Derek Kamakanaaloha Soong and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

As a Native Hawaiian, I find it necessary to have integral and meaningful cultural representation in the Land Use Commission. Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Derek Kamakanaaloha Soong

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:47:14 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will ensure the LUC always has the mana'o' of experinced and knowledgeable experts in key areas, even in Executive Session.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:20:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Kanahale	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:33:15 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisette Akamine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nui e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee.

I am writing in support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring that at least one member have expertise in water management, and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land usage seat. I urge the Committee to pass this bill for the following reasons:

Project Planning Must Consider Water Availability:

Water and land are connected, and this is especially apparent in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for denser development carries implicit assumptions about associated water resource availability. Sound land use decision-making requires deliberate consideration of water source availability and impacts. A dedicated water expert seat would help ensure that this type of careful deliberation occurs at the outset of project planning before project size and infrastructure decisions have been locked in.

Professional Best Practices Calls for Integrated Water and Land Use Planning:

Multiple professional associations, including the American Planning Association, encourage and support integrated water and land use planning as a best practice. As such, other states have also integrated water and land use planning processes to ensure water management is considered early in the project entitlement process. This model of planning best protects water sources over the long term and easily integrates into the existing regulatory structure.

Supporting the LUC’s Constitutional Duties:

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights.

Strengthening its membership with a water expert will better equip the LUC to fulfill its duty to protect public trust water resources. Moreover, allowing OHA a role in recruiting, vetting, and nominating candidates to the traditional Hawaiian land usage seat would provide beneficiaries and the general public with the opportunity to provide early input on the selection of candidates. OHA nominees would be approved by the Board of Trustees at a public meeting prior to nomination, allowing for community input and feedback, and fostering greater awareness of the LUC’s critical role in protecting our ‘āina.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Lisette Puanani Akamine

Kahalu'u, O'ahu

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:46:45 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Likeke Scheuer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members,

My name is Jonathan Likeke Scheuer and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2103 HD1.

The lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) has meant that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water. Many thousands of approved housing units languish, in some cases because the LUC approved of them but now, as it turns out, water is not available.

During my eight years serving on the LUC, I heard blithe reassurances from project proponents that there was sufficient water available, even when readily available public information, to those who were aware of it, revealed that these statements were questionable at best. If we want good projects to be built and provide necessary housing and other development, we should be sure that they have the water necessary to be successfully developed. This will help our development process succeeds.

I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Likeke Scheuer, Ph.D.
Kahālāwai Consulting LLC

Managing Environmental Conflict

Read: [Water and Power In West Maui](#) (2021)

Listen: [Hawai`i News Now Be Akamai: Why wai?](#) (2024)

Watch: [What Does Sustainable Yield Sustain? What \(and Who\) is Left Out?](#) (2021)

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 12:28:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sunshine Eckstrom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 2103 to require water expertise on the Land Use Commission. This is obviously very important. Thank you.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 12:31:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Harter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Nancy Harter and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely, Nancy Harter, Lahaina, HI

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 1:38:21 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
janice palma-glenie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support HB2103 -- legislation that would require that at minimum one member of the Land Use Commission has experience or expertise in water resource management (in a past paid or volunteer capacity would be my preference), and also require that a Native Hawaiian cultural expert be chosen from a list of names submitted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

mahalo and sincerely,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona

February 23, 2026

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB2103 HD1, which strengthens the Land Use Commission (LUC) by requiring water management expertise among its members and by designating the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land use seat. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure for the following reasons.

Land Use Decisions Must Account for Water Availability.

Land and water are inseparable, particularly in an island context. Each LUC decision that allows for increased density or development necessarily relies on assumptions about the availability and sustainability of water resources. Sound land use decision-making therefore requires deliberate and informed consideration of water sources and impacts. Adding a dedicated water expert to the LUC would help ensure that these issues are addressed early in the planning process, before project scale and infrastructure commitments are finalized.

Integrated Water and Land Use Planning Reflects Professional Best Practices.

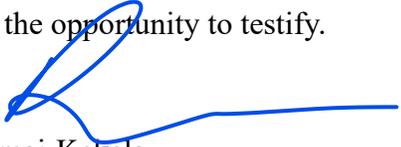
Leading professional organizations, including the American Planning Association, recognize integrated water and land use planning as a best practice. Other states have adopted similar approaches to ensure that water management considerations are incorporated early in the project entitlement process. This model better protects water resources over the long term and can be readily integrated into Hawai'i's existing regulatory framework.

The Bill Strengthens the LUC's Constitutional Responsibilities.

As a state agency, the LUC has affirmative constitutional duties to protect public trust water resources and Native Hawaiian rights. Strengthening the Commission's membership with water management expertise will better equip it to fulfill its public trust obligations. Additionally, authorizing OHA to recruit, vet, and nominate candidates for the traditional Native Hawaiian land use seat enhances transparency and public participation. OHA's nomination process—conducted through public Board of Trustees meetings—allows for meaningful community input and greater public awareness of the LUC's critical role in protecting our 'āina.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Rhonda Kamai-Kekela
Hawaiian Paradise Park
Kea'au, Hawaii 96749

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 2:44:08 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leah Kocher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Leah Kocher and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Leah Kocher

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 2:51:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Lorenzo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Anne M. Lorenzo and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Anne M. Lorenzo

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 3:24:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members,

I SUPPORT HB 2103 HD1.

Mahalo

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 5:12:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelcy Durbin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 2103, which seeks to amend the composition of the Land Use Commission to ensure the inclusion of members with critical expertise in water resource management and traditional Hawaiian land usage and cultural land practices. This legislation is a vital step toward responsible and culturally informed stewardship of Hawaii’s precious land and water resources.

By requiring at least one commission member with substantial experience in water resource management, the bill acknowledges the essential role that water plays in our islands’ sustainability and the importance of informed oversight in land use decisions. This expertise is crucial as we face increasing pressures from development, climate change, and the need to protect our natural resources for future generations.

Equally significant is the bill’s provision to include at least one member who possesses substantial experience or expertise in traditional Hawaiian land usage and knowledge of cultural land practices. Hawaii’s unique history and the deep connections between Native Hawaiian culture and the land must be represented in our land use decisions. The requirement that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs submit a list of nominees for this position further ensures that appointments are made with respect to cultural authenticity and community trust.

House Bill 2103 will strengthen the Land Use Commission’s ability to make balanced, informed, and culturally sensitive decisions. I urge the committee to pass this important measure and help ensure that Hawaii’s land use policies reflect both modern best practices and the invaluable wisdom of our host culture.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2103.

Sincerely,

Kelcy Durbin

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 7:00:54 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DIANE CHOY FUJIMURA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

/Cmd+VAloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Diane Choy Fujimura and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2103 HD1.

The Governor needs qualified guidance and input from an expert in Hawaiian cultural practices as it relates to water, and water security.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS** this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Diane Choy Fujimura

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:31:04 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Soo Sun Choe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

I would like to express my strong support for HB2103 HD1.

Having a member on the Land Use Commission with expertise in water management is critical for the LUC to fulfill its purpose effectively. Land Use decisions should be made with full consideration of the impacts to water resources, water availability, and Native Hawaiian traditional and customary cultural rights. Native Hawaiian practitioners must also have these rights incorporated into the process of land use decisionmaking.

Mahalo for your attention,

Soo Sun Choe

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:57:36 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexander McNicoll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of **HB2103 HD1**.

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:21:52 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jubilee Johanna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Jubilee Westergaard and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2103 HD1.

Water is one of the most critical considerations in any decision regarding land use, yet the lack of any required water management expertise on the Land Use Commission (LUC) means that the LUC must often make land use decisions without the ability to properly assess developer’s assertions regarding the availability of water – or to otherwise understand the impacts of large-scale land use changes on regional water security.

In addition, the LUC provides one of if not the only opportunity for Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners to assert their constitutional traditional and customary rights and to have these rights explicitly considered and protected in land use decisionmaking; accordingly, its membership includes a cultural expert to help the LUC understand and protect Native Hawaiian cultural practices and rights. However, this cultural expert is appointed by the Governor, who may not necessarily have sufficient expertise or community connections to identify the best candidates to serve in this role.

HB2103 HD1 accordingly ensures that the LUC includes a member with water management expertise, and allows the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to help the Governor identify potential Commissioners to appropriately fill the LUC’s cultural expert seat. These are common-sense fixes that will ensure much more prudent land use planning and decisionmaking, while better safeguarding the cultural practices and resources that are the foundation of our islands’ identity and future resilience.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jubilee Westergaard

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:00:20 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J. Kehau Lucas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee,

My name is Kēhau Lucas, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2103 HD1.**

Under existing law, the **Land Use Commission (LUC)** consists of nine members, including one member required to have substantial experience or expertise in traditional Hawaiian land usage and cultural land practices. HB2103 HD1 amends **HRS §205-1** to strengthen the Commission’s expertise in two key ways:

1. Water Resource Expertise

HB2103 HD1 adds a requirement that **at least one LUC member possess substantial experience in water resource management.** The bill text explicitly inserts this requirement into the Commission’s composition.

Because LUC decisions frequently involve large-scale land use changes that affect regional water availability, aquifer sustainability, and watershed systems, formalizing water resource expertise on the Commission ensures that these decisions are informed by technical knowledge rather than relying solely on developer assertions.

[\[data.capit...hawaii.gov\]](#)

2. Strengthened Cultural Expertise Through OHA Nomination Process

The measure also requires that appointments to the cultural expertise seat—reserved for a member with substantial experience or expertise in traditional Hawaiian land usage and cultural practices—must be made from a **list of nominees submitted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA).**

This change ensures that the individual filling this constitutionally significant role is identified through a process grounded in Native Hawaiian community knowledge and expertise, rather than relying solely on the Governor’s discretionary appointment authority. [\[data.capit...hawaii.gov\]](#)

These reforms are directly aligned with the bill’s stated purpose, as confirmed in the official description: HB2103 HD1 is intended to ensure water resource management expertise on the Commission and to involve OHA in nominating cultural experts for appointment.

[\[data.capit...hawaii.gov\]](#)

Water and cultural practices are foundational public trust resources in Hawai‘i. HB2103 HD1 provides structural assurances that LUC decision-making will be informed by qualified experts

in both areas—supporting better long-term planning, improved resource stewardship, and more defensible land use decisions statewide.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS HB2103 HD1.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha ‘āina,

J. Kēhau Lucas

HB-2103-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 9:48:52 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Shepherd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

YES